

June 9

Lesson 2 (NIV)

## JESUS SEALS THE NEW COVENANT

**DEVOTIONAL READING:** Psalm 22:1–8,  
21b–28

**BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE:** Mark 14:32–  
50; 15

### MARK 15:6–15, 25, 26, 33–39

<sup>6</sup>Now it was the custom at the festival to release a prisoner whom the people requested. <sup>7</sup>A man called Barabbas was in prison with the insurrectionists who had committed murder in the uprising. <sup>8</sup>The crowd came up and asked Pilate to do for them what he usually did.

<sup>9</sup>“Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?” asked Pilate, <sup>10</sup>knowing it was out of self-interest that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him. <sup>11</sup>But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have Pilate release Barabbas instead.

<sup>12</sup>“What shall I do, then, with the one you call the king of the Jews?” Pilate asked them.

<sup>13</sup>“Crucify him!” they shouted.

<sup>14</sup>“Why? What crime has he commit-

ted?” asked Pilate.

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

<sup>15</sup>Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

<sup>25</sup>It was nine in the morning when they crucified him. <sup>26</sup>The written notice of the charge against him read: THE KING OF THE JEWS.

<sup>33</sup>At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. <sup>34</sup>And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”).

<sup>35</sup>When some of those standing near heard this, they said, “Listen, he’s calling Elijah.”

<sup>36</sup>Someone ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. “Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to take him down,” he said.

<sup>37</sup>With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last.

<sup>38</sup>The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. <sup>39</sup>And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, “Surely this man was the Son of

**God!”**

### KEY VERSE

When the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, “Surely this man was the Son of God!” — **Mark 15:39**

## COVENANT IN GOD

### Unit 1: A Fulfilled Covenant

LESSONS 1-4

### LESSON AIMS

After participating in this lesson, each learner will be able to:

1. List the salient events that occurred on Good Friday.
2. Explain how Mark’s narrative identifies Jesus’ crucifixion as his suffering in place of sinful humanity.
3. State one way he or she will live out in the week ahead the reality that the suffering Christ is the world’s true king.

### LESSON OUTLINE

#### Introduction

- A. The Struggle to Rule
  - B. Lesson Context
- I. Exchanged for a Rebel (MARK 15:6-15)
    - A. Pilate’s Proposal (vv. 6-10)
    - B. People’s Demand (vv. 11-15)

#### Prisoner Exchange

- II. Enthroned on a Cross (MARK 15:25, 26)
    - A. Act of Crucifixion (v. 25)
    - B. Identity of the Crucified (v. 26)
  - III. Suffering in Affirmation (MARK 15:33-39)
    - A. Cry of the Righteous (vv. 33, 34)
    - B. Response of Mockers (vv. 35, 36)
    - C. Death of the King (v. 37)
    - D. Rending of a Curtain (v. 38)
- Rescued!*
- E. Testimony of a Soldier (v. 39)

#### Conclusion

- A. The King’s Way of Life
- B. Prayer
- C. Thought to Remember

### HOW TO SAY IT

Antonia	An-toe-nee-uh or An-toe-nyuh.
Assyria	Uh-sear-ee-uh.
Babylon	Bab-uh-lun.
Barabbas	Buh-rab-us.
Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani (Aramaic)	Ee-lo-eye, Ee-lo-eye, lah-mah suh-back-thuh-nee.
Herod	Hair-ud.
Pilate	Pie-lut.
Praetorium	Pree-tor-ee-um.
Sanhedrin	San-huh-drun or San-heed-run.

Zephaniah Zef-uh-nye-uh.

## Introduction

### A. The Struggle to Rule

Accounts of rulers coming to power often make for fascinating storytelling. Whether historical like the American Revolution or fictional like *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, we are captivated by the struggle to gain and maintain rule. We follow the alliances, the plotting, the intrigue, the betrayals. We weigh the characters in the balance of good and evil. Who will have the resources, the cleverness, the luck to come out on top? Once that person reaches power, how will it be used? Who benefits under the rule of this new leader?

### B. Lesson Context

The Roman Empire was one of a series of powerful empires that the Bible cites as having dominated Israel. It followed Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, and Persia in that regard (see [Exodus 1](#); [2 Kings 15:29](#); [16:7-9](#), [18](#); [24:15-17](#); [25:8-12](#); [2 Chronicles 36:22](#), [23](#); [Ezra 1](#); [Esther 1:1-4](#); [10:1-3](#)). Roman rule was not simply a *political* problem for Israel; it was a religious difficulty. The Romans claimed absolute authority for Rome, not for Israel's God. Many of Jesus' contemporaries hoped for

a mighty military leader who, with God's power, would rally Israel to overthrow their Roman oppressors. This leader was expected to establish God's rule over the entire world, beginning with Jerusalem. Revolt always seemed to be in the air (compare [Acts 5:36, 37](#)).

One way Rome demonstrated its determination to squelch such movements was crucifixion. This style of execution involved hanging or nailing a victim on a wooden frame and allowing the victim to die slowly from shock, exposure, dehydration, and loss of blood. Crucifixion was reserved for those whom Rome wanted to make a public example.

At the point where today's text begins, Jesus has repeatedly told his disciples of his forthcoming death and resurrection ([Mark 8:31](#); [9:31](#); [10:33, 34](#)). Knowing full well that he could avoid that death, Jesus submitted to the Father's will nonetheless. He felt all the fear that any person would have when facing execution ([14:35, 36](#)). He knew his death was to be a sacrifice for many ([10:45](#); [14:22-25](#)).

### I. Exchanged for a Rebel ([MARK 15:6-15](#))

Having appeared before "the high priest, and all the chief priests, the elders and the teachers of the law" ([Mark 14:53](#)), Jesus has been convicted of blasphemy

(14:64). This ruling council—which many commentators refer to by the transliteration “the Sanhedrin”—need the Roman governor to authorize Jesus’ execution.

### **A. Pilate’s Proposal (vv. 6–10)**

#### **6. Now it was the custom at the festival to release a prisoner whom the people requested.**

Rome wants peace in its provinces. To that end, Roman governors such as Pilate have established a practice at Passover of granting a pardon to one *prisoner* who awaits capital punishment for crimes against Rome (see [John 18:39](#)). The practice is intended to establish goodwill between Rome and the Jewish people during their most sacred annual festival.

#### **7. A man called Barabbas was in prison with the insurrectionists who had committed murder in the uprising.**

Violent movements to overthrow Roman power occurred repeatedly in Judea of the first century AD (see the [Lesson Context](#)). *Barabbas* has participated murderously in one such insurrection, though he is unknown outside of Gospel accounts. The contrast with Jesus could hardly be greater! For guilty *Barabbas* to be executed is understandable (see also [Matthew 27:16](#); [Luke 23:19](#)).

#### **8. The crowd came up and asked Pilate to do for them what he usually**

**did.**

Jesus is appearing before Pilate in or near a place called “the Praetorium” ([Mark 15:16](#)). There are two theories regarding its location. The first puts it at Herod’s palace, where Pilate resides when in Jerusalem. The second is the Fortress of Antonia, a Roman military building next to the temple. Both locations have courtyards where a *crowd* can gather (compare [John 18:28, 33; 19:9](#)).

Many people hostile to Jesus do indeed gather. To call on Pilate *to do for them what he usually did* is to request him to act on the custom of releasing a prisoner for Passover (see commentary on [Mark 15:6](#), above; also see [Luke 23:17](#)).

#### **9. “Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?” asked Pilate,**

At this point, Pilate has already declared Jesus to be innocent ([Luke 23:4, 13–16](#); [John 19:12](#)). Perhaps knowing that Jesus is popular with many who are visiting Jerusalem, *Pilate* offers to *release* Jesus according to custom.

The governor’s sarcasm in referring to Jesus as *king of the Jews* reflects Pilate’s own questions of [John 18:33, 37](#); Jesus’ response affirmed his role as king but also affirmed that his “kingdom is not of this world” ([John 18:36, 37](#); compare [Matthew 27:11](#); [Mark 15:2](#); [Luke 23:3](#)). Pilate ignores that part and sticks with *king of the Jews*.

Pilate's use of that title for the abused man standing before him (see [Mark 14:65](#); [Luke 23:11](#)) seems designed to tweak the noses of those who have brought Jesus to him. The council clearly despises Jesus, so calling him their king is a way for Pilate to show his disregard for their nationalistic concerns.

**10. knowing it was out of self-interest that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him.**

Pilate was interested in justice earlier (again see [Luke 23:4, 13-16](#); [John 19:12](#)). But now his aim is to one-up *the chief priests*. Neither is their aim justice; rather, they're trying to protect vested interests (see [John 11:48](#)) by retaining the loyalty of the Jewish people. Jesus is a pawn in a sordid power play.

**What Do You Think?**

What do you learn from today's text that will help you deal with unfair accusations?

**Digging Deeper**

How do these passages inform your answer: [Psalm 37:1-8](#); [139:21, 22](#); [Matthew 5:39](#); [23:37](#); [Romans 12:17-19](#); [1 Thessalonians 5:15](#); [James 1:2-4](#); [1 Peter 2:20b-23](#); [3:9-17](#); [4:14, 19](#)?

**B. People's Demand (vv. 11-15)**

**11. But the chief priests stirred up**

**the crowd to have Pilate release Barab-  
bas instead.**

A crowd of several hundred would be sizeable. But that would represent only a fraction of the thousands of religious pilgrims present for Passover. Encouraged by *the chief priests* to gather at the early morning hearing (see also [Matthew 27:20](#); [John 18:28](#)), these people appear quite willing to do as their religious leaders desire.

The ugly mood of *the crowd* is often contrasted with that of the crowd who greeted Jesus enthusiastically at his entry into Jerusalem days before ([Mark 11:8-10](#)). Has that crowd changed its view of Jesus? Or is this a different segment of the populace, a group with sympathies for the chief priests? The Gospels sometimes depict the people as fickle ([Luke 7:31-35](#)) and other times as divided ([John 7:43](#)). Mark does not make clear which of these scenarios is correct. Indeed, the people can be both fickle *and* divided.

**PRISONER EXCHANGE**

In 1960, U.S. pilot Francis Gary Powers (1929-1977) was shot down while flying a spy mission in Soviet airspace. A few years earlier, the FBI had captured Rudolf Abel (1903-1971), who was then convicted of espionage and imprisoned. The Soviets similarly convicted Powers of espionage and sentenced him to 10 years

of incarceration. The incident further cooled already chilly U.S. and Soviet relations.

Negotiations among the U.S., the Soviet Union, and East Germany resulted in a prisoner swap. On February 10, 1962, Powers was exchanged for Abel at the Glienicke Bridge in Berlin. Both men were guilty of espionage. Theirs was a fair exchange.

Almost 2,000 years earlier, however, an unfair exchange took place: Jesus for Barabbas. Barabbas was guilty, yet he went free; Jesus, though innocent, went to his death. Even more shocking was the death of Jesus in taking our sin-penalty upon himself. We can call it unfair—and it was. But Jesus experienced death voluntarily so we wouldn't have to. And there's a special word for that; it is grace.

—J. E.

**12. “What shall I do, then, with the one you call the king of the Jews?” Pilate asked them.**

Pilate is reluctant to do what the people ask (compare [Matthew 27:19](#); [Luke 23:22](#)). Perhaps hoping to put them in a dilemma about the fate of another of their countrymen, Pilate asks what the people want done with *the king of the Jews*. The air is supercharged with a mixture of mockery, challenges to conscience, and high emotion.

**13, 14. “Crucify him!” they shouted.**

**“Why? What crime has he committed?” asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, “Crucify him!”**

The response is not what Pilate expects. But it is just what the religious leaders have urged. To be crucified is to be marked as an enemy of the Roman Empire. What Jesus had told his disciples in advance is happening.

Challenging the people to name Jesus' crime is an attempt to thwart the council's wishes and uphold the rule of law that characterizes Rome's government. But Pilate's reasonable and logical question is met with the raw emotion of hatred: an intensified call for Jesus' crucifixion. If there ever was a “rush to judgment,” this is it.

**15. Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.**

*Pilate* now believes that he has no choice. Should he fail to keep the peace, he can at minimum lose his position. Worse yet, the people's unrest may spread through the city, overwhelming the Roman forces stationed therein. Pilate seeks to maintain power over the Jewish council, but his greater interest is keeping the peace. So with a “the end justifies the means” mentality, he hands Jesus over to a detachment of soldiers for crucifixion. *Barabbas*, on the other hand,

goes free.

**What Do You Think?**

How should you respond, if at all, to those who use emotional appeals to arouse opposition to Christ and the gospel?

**Digging Deeper**

Consider different contexts: at work/school, in the family, etc.

## II. Enthroned on a Cross (MARK 15:25, 26)

Jesus is severely abused in the intervening verses that are not part of our lesson text. Though there is no standard procedure for Roman crucifixion, it is not out of the ordinary that Jesus is severely beaten (Matthew 27:26; Mark 15:15; John 19:1) and stripped (Matthew 27:35; Luke 23:34) before being nailed to his cross. Eventually, Jesus is brought to the place of crucifixion, which is outside the city walls (Hebrews 13:12).

### A. Act of Crucifixion (v. 25)

#### 25. It was nine in the morning when they crucified him.

Jesus' crucifixion likely takes place where roads converge just to the north of Jerusalem. The Romans make crucifixions as visible as possible to serve as a deterrent to insurrection; thus a cross-roads is a logical place. *Nine in the morning*

indicates Jesus' crucifixion begins at midmorning.

### B. Identity of the Crucified (v. 26)

#### 26. The written notice of the charge against him read: THE KING OF THE JEWS.

The same mocking words that Pilate used at Jesus' trial are affixed over Jesus' head. John 19:19-22 shows the full import of Pilate's action in this regard: it's one further snipe at the religious authorities whom Pilate believes have forced his hand. But this pettiness obscures the fact that Pilate speaks and writes better than he knows: Jesus is indeed *the king of the Jews* (2 Samuel 7:12-16; Zechariah 9:9). But he is even more than that: he is the world's king (Isaiah 9:6, 7; 11:1-9; Romans 15:7-12). Jesus' crucifiers are involved in something far greater than they realize (Luke 24:44-49; Acts 10:43; 2 Corinthians 1:20; etc.). He is enthroned as king in his crucifixion (Acts 2:36).

**What Do You Think?**

What are some "everyday" ways to emulate Jesus' sacrifice in putting others' interests ahead of our own?

**Digging Deeper**

What limits, if any, are there to doing so? Why?

## III. Suffering in Affirmation

**(MARK 15:33-39)**

Our next segment of lesson text takes us forward in time by three hours. During that period the dying Jesus is mocked by the religious authorities, various onlookers, and by two criminals also suffering crucifixion.

**A. Cry of the Righteous (vv. 33, 34)**

**33. At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon.**

The *darkness* that comes *over the whole land* is further described in [Luke 23:45](#) as “the sun stopped shining.” This cannot be a solar eclipse for two reasons. First, solar eclipses do not last anywhere close to three hours, which is the length of the time of the darkness. Second, the crucifixion takes place in conjunction with Passover, which occurs at the time of a full moon; by contrast, a solar eclipse requires the opposite—a new moon.

Darkness is sometimes an image of God’s judgment ([Joel 2:2, 31](#); [Amos 8:9](#); [Zephaniah 1:15](#)). It is also an expression of despair ([Psalms 88:12, 18](#); [143:3](#)). Certainly all who witness this darkness are compelled to acknowledge that something extraordinary is occurring.

**34. And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” (which means**

**“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”).**

Jesus cries out with the words of [Psalm 22:1](#). The psalm laments the suffering of a righteous person being mocked and tortured by enemies. The righteous one’s situation appears hopeless; God seems distant. These words from the beginning of the psalm express the deep anguish of a person in such a situation. Jesus has now entered fully into that experience of rejection, mockery, torture, and seeming abandonment.

But like many psalms of lament, [Psalm 22](#) turns from anguish to expressions of hope. In verse [19](#) the psalmist cries out for God’s help, and in verse [22](#) begins a declaration that the psalmist will praise God for his sure and faithful deliverance of his people. Jesus’ words express anguish yet are deliberately not without hope. His earlier declarations that God would raise him from the dead ([Mark 8:31](#); [9:9, 31](#); [10:33, 34](#); [14:28](#)) remain true. This is so even though Mark chooses not to restate them in the moments of Jesus’ suffering.

Thus the hopeful ending notes of confidence from [Psalm 22](#) remain in the background. But they offer the one who is familiar with that psalm a hint: all is not as it seems while Jesus dies. God will be present to deliver the true king whom he has enthroned.



### **What Do You Think?**

What are some ways we can encourage people in seasons when they feel God has abandoned them?

### **Digging Deeper**

Consider how your approach may differ in situations when the suffering is due to one's own poor choices vs. suffering undeserved.

## **B. Response of Mockers (vv. 35, 36)**

**35. When some of those standing near heard this, they said, "Listen, he's calling Elijah."**

The ignorance of Jesus' opponents is revealed: they mistake the Aramaic word *eloi* as being a cry to the ancient prophet *Elijah*. In so doing, they are depending on a tradition that Elijah helps those in need rather than recalling Jesus' words as a quote from their own psalms.

**36. Someone ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down," he said.**

*Vinegar*, though unpleasant, is an acceptable drink in Old Testament Israel ([Numbers 6:3](#)). But offering vinegar to someone suffering shock and dehydration could be but another form of mocking torture. It may also be a way to try to prolong Jesus' suffering by giving him

some sustenance but no relief. It seems that Jesus' cry has gone unanswered. The torturers and mockers seem to have prevailed. [Psalm 69:21](#) is fulfilled.

## **C. Death of the King (v. 37)**

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

Jesus' death finally comes, as he had so many times predicted.

## **D. Rending of a Curtain (v. 38)**

**38. The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.**

*The curtain of the temple* separates the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place ([Exodus 26:33](#)). The latter may be entered only once a year, on the Day of Atonement, when the high priest symbolically presented to God the blood of a sacrifice offered for the sin of all Israel ([Leviticus 16; 23:26-32](#)). Clearly the rending of this curtain demonstrates God's involvement in Jesus' death! Some understand that the tearing shows that Jesus has offered the sacrifice that fulfills what the temple's sacrifices pointed to. The implication is that the way is now open for all to enter God's presence freely ([Hebrews 9:6-8; 10:19, 20](#)). Others look to Jesus' warnings that the temple will be destroyed as a sign of judgment against the temple leadership who plotted Jesus' death ([Mark](#)

12:9–12; 13:2). Indeed, the temple will be destroyed in AD 70. Both understandings are consistent with New Testament teaching regarding fulfillment of God’s plan.

### **RESCUED!**

In August 2010, a cave-in at a mine in Chile trapped 33 miners 2,300 feet below the surface. In attempting to locate survivors, the mining company began drilling holes. Seventeen days after the accident, a note was found taped to a drill bit pulled back to the surface. It read, “We are well in the shelter, the 33 of us.”

This sparked a massive rescue effort. On October 13, an estimated 1 billion people worldwide witnessed the dramatic rescue. One by one, all 33 miners were pulled safely to the surface.

An even greater rescue happened when the barrier of sin that trapped humankind from the presence of God was penetrated. Jesus’ death made it possible to be reunited with God. How do you bear witness to your miraculous rescue?

—J. E.

### **E. Testimony of a Soldier (v. 39)**

**39. And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, “Surely this man was the Son of God!”**

A *centurion* holds a highly responsible

position in the Roman army. Seeing all that has happened, this particular centurion recognizes that this is no ordinary crucifixion and no ordinary *man*. In Jewish usage, to be *the Son of God* often means to be God’s king (2 Samuel 7:14; Psalms 2:7; 89:26–28). But on the lips of a Roman soldier, is this a confession of faith or no more than a cry of fear?

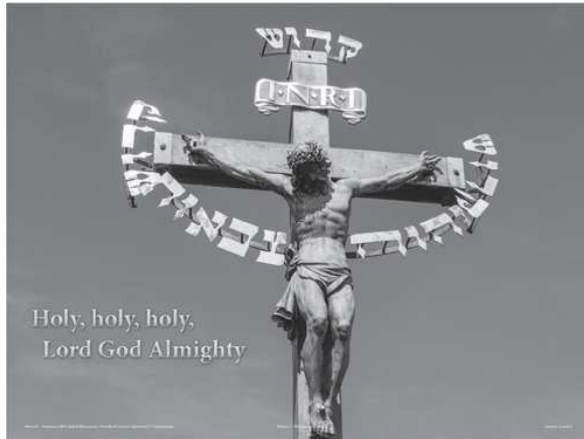
It’s easy to get cynical and write it off as no more than fear on the part of a pagan Roman soldier, one who is worried more about his own skin than anything else. But we must pause to remember that it was of a centurion that Jesus declared, “Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith” (Matthew 8:10; compare Luke 7:9). And, looking forward, it will be a centurion through whom the gospel will be opened to Gentiles (Acts 10:1–11:18).

#### **What Do You Think?**

How can our church help people move from a basic comprehension of Christ to a fuller understanding of his identity?

#### **Digging Deeper**

Consider how your answer will differ for those who have no prior experience with church vs. those who have been in church for a while.



Visual for Lessons 2 & 3. Point to the paradox between image and declaration as you pose the discussion question associated with [Mark 15:39](#).

## Conclusion

### A. The King's Way of Life

The story of Jesus' death prompts us to ask ourselves important questions. One is, "Who is my king?" Am I ruled by selfish impulses, others' opinions, culture's conformity, the past's burdens? Or is the crucified Christ my king?

Another way to ask that question is, "What do I see as power?" Is it following my dreams, getting my way, having it all, impressing others? Or is it giving myself for the benefit of others, as King Jesus did?

Jesus came to power not through a bloody insurrection or other worldly means. He humbled himself and was crucified. In this way, Jesus demonstrated that he is the Son of God. Are you following in the way of the king? In the end, the

gospel calls all people to repentance and submission to the crucified and risen king, Jesus. Everyone needs his mercy, and no one is beyond the reach of it.

### B. Prayer

Father, awestruck before your Son's cross, we honor him as our true king. Empower us to serve others. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

### C. Thought to Remember

In Christ's kingdom, the way up is down.

# INVOLVEMENT LEARNING

Enhance your lesson with [NIV Bible](#)  
Student

## Into the Lesson

Place index cards and pencils in each seat. Have the following sentences written on the board and displayed as learners enter: “Think of a time you were at odds with someone you loved. How did that make you feel? Write those feelings on your index card.” Ask learners to call out those feelings as you record them on the board.

Then say, “If you were able to reconcile the relationship, how did that happen?” Record responses next to the feelings. Say, “We will return to these lists at the end of the lesson.”

*Alternative.* Have a copy of the hymn “And Can It Be That I Should Gain?” by Charles Wesley on seats as learners enter. Have them identify words that refer to our condition before salvation and words that refer to God’s redemptive action. As they call them out, write them on the board.

After either activity state, “Today we will spend time looking at how God reconciled us and what our response is to that gift of redemption.”

## Into the Word

Write the following Scripture references from [Mark 15](#) down the left side of the board: verses [6–8](#) / verses [9–11](#) / verses [12–15](#) / verses [25, 26](#) / verses [33, 34](#) / verses [35, 36](#) / verses [37–39](#).

Have one volunteer read [Mark 15:6–15](#) aloud. Discuss the thought processes, evident or implied, per the verse segments as noted. Ensure coverage of the following:

- Barabbas was imprisoned for insurrection (vv. [6–8](#)).
- Pilate tried to release Jesus, but the Jewish leaders stirred up the crowd to ask for Barabbas (vv. [9–11](#)).
- Pilate allowed the innocent one to be killed and the guilty one set free as the crowd’s cries of “crucify” stood in stark contrast with those that had greeted Jesus with “Hosanna” just days before (vv. [12–15](#)).

Have another volunteer read [Mark 15:25, 26, 33–39](#) aloud. Discuss the following concepts:

- Jesus’ crucifixion can be seen as a king’s enthronement as he exerts his kingly power by giving himself for others (vv. [25, 26](#)).
- Anyone can see Jesus’ use of [Psalm 22:1](#), but only the discerning will detect [Psalm 22:19–22](#) as well (vv. [33, 34](#)).
- Some reveal their ignorance when they think Jesus is calling for Elijah

(vv. 35, 36).

- Jesus' death results in two testimonies (vv. 37-39).

*Alternative.* Have students present the reader's theater activity titled "Various Viewpoints" from the reproducible page, which you can download. Give each student a copy. Compare the various perspectives of the events that took place in the lesson text.

Follow either activity by (1) identifying those involved in the events leading up to the crucifixion and (2) comparing what their actions revealed about their character. *Anticipated identity responses:* those of the Jewish leadership, the Roman leader Pilate, Barabbas, the crowd, a centurion, Jesus himself. *Possible character responses:* a mentality of "the end justifies the means" among the Jewish leaders as well as Pilate; people in the crowd swayed by the emotion of the moment; the revealing of either fear or confession of faith in the centurion's cry. (Note: expect some disagreement on the question of character!)

## Into Life

Return to the lists of words from the Into the Lesson segment. Connect the first list of words to our condition before we became Christians and the second list to what Jesus did for us on the cross. (If

you used the Alternative activity, review those lists and connect them to the lesson text.) Open the floor for discussion.

*Alternative.* Distribute copies of the "My Response" activity from the reproducible page. Allow no more than one minute to record answers. Discuss as time allows.