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This free e-Chart is taken from the book *Journey to the Resurrection - Rose Visual Bible Study* ISBN 9781628628081. C This book is packed with charts, graphs, images, and fascinating facts. These Bible studies are easy enough that the new believer understands, but in-depth enough that the longtime churchgoer still comes away learning something new.

Victorious Failure



Irony is a communication or literary technique where what appears to be true on the surface actually reveals an opposite truth. Today, we often use irony in humor. However, in the Greek tradition, irony was most often used in dramatic, tragic plays.

The scene described in Mark 15 appears on the surface to be a tragic failure and an end to life. Jesus is standing before his accusers and offering no defense. Jesus is sentenced to death, flogged, and nailed to a cross where he gives up his last breath.

But, ironically, there is a hidden victory that forms the backdrop to this tragic scene. In reality, it is the beginning of an entirely new way of living. The cross of Jesus becomes the victory of God's love over all.

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1



Key Bible Passage

For this session, read the crucifixion story in Mark 15:1–39.

Optional Reading

Each gospel author provides different details of the same event from their unique perspective. Read all of their accounts of the crucifixion (it takes only twenty minutes or so) in Matthew 26–27, Luke 22–23, and John 18–19.

"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



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2



Explore It

Mark tailored his gospel for a Roman audience and included significant details, easy for us to miss, that would have been clear to his original audience. When Roman armies won a great victory and returned to Rome, they would take part in a triumphal march. Victorious generals would lead a procession through the streets of Rome in a civil and religious celebration of the might of the Roman Empire. Some generals even used these triumph marches as a springboard to claim Rome's throne and rule the empire. Every Roman triumph march was carefully planned and followed the same pattern. This pattern is also found in Mark's account of Jesus' crucifixion.



The Triumph of Titus by Lawrence Alma-Tadema

3

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ROMAN TRIUMPH MARCH	CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS Mark 15:16–24
The march began at the Praetorium.	"The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium)
The whole cohort was called together and formed up.	and called together the whole company of soldiers.
The general was clothed in purple, a royal color illegal for those of lower ranks to wear.	They put a purple robe on him,
The general received a victor's crown.	then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him.
Soldiers announced their allegiance, while placards or signs were carried proclaiming the general's victory.	And they began to call out to him, 'Hail, king of the Jews!' Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on him. Falling on their knees, they paid homage to him
An official in the parade would carry a double-bladed ax, followed by a sacrificial bull.	Then they led him out to crucify him. A certain man from Cyrene, Simon was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross.
They marched through the streets until reaching the Capitoline Hill, or literally, "the place of the head," at the temple of Jupiter.	They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means 'the place of the skull').
The general was offered wine to drink, but he would refuse and pour it onto the altar or the bull.	Then they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it.
The bull was then sacrificed.	And they crucified him."

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The Temple Veils

The temple in Jerusalem was seen as the gateway between heaven and earth in the Jewish mind-set. It was the place that represented God's presence in this world.

Mark 15:37–38 states, "Jesus breathed his last. The curtain of the temple was torn [*schizo*] in two from top to bottom." There were actually two temple veils (or curtains): the outer veil that separated the outer court from the outside world, and the inner veil that separated the innermost sanctum of the temple (the Holy of Holies) from the outer courtyards. Based on Paul's commentary about the tearing of the veil (see Ephesians 2:11–22), it seems that at least the outer veil was torn at this moment, if not both veils.

This was no flimsy curtain or delicate bride's veil. The outer veil was as thick as a man's hand, up to seventy-five feet high and at least thirty feet wide. It was a massive, woven curtain, beautifully decorated. Depictions of the basic elements of life—fire, earth, air, and water—covered the veil.

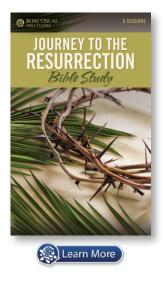
Mark uses the verb *schizo* one other time. In Mark 1:10, the heavens were "torn open" (*schizo*) for the Spirit of God to descend upon the Son of God just after his baptism at the beginning of his public ministry. Here in Mark 15, as Jesus' life ended, the veil was ripped in two from top to bottom, as if the finger of God sliced it in half.

The veil's purpose was to separate sinful humanity from a holy God. When Jesus' body was torn, the separation between God and humanity was removed. God is unleashed into the world and is making for himself a renewed people of all those who trust in Jesus' finished work on the cross!

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