

Mark 15.1-20

A King?!...*Really?*

Helpful to WALK the VIA DOLOROSA AFTER Easter Season has Passed
To CONSIDER the Sufferings of our Savior – Without Sentiment or Tradition
After we PUT AWAY our EASTER Dresses ask: *What does the Cross Mean?*

Can we say with PAUL “May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”

Galatians 6:14

1. Sentence

2. Suffering

3. Silence

1. Sentence

Jesus went thru 2 BOGUS Trials – before CHURCH and STATE

Heard 2 UNJUST Sentences Pronounced AGAINST Him

a. The Sanhedrin

Mark traces CONFLICT between Jesus & Jewish Religious Leaders from Chapt 1
BEGINS w/ John BAPTIZER > BOLD Message Attacked Jewish Establishment

“when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue” Mark 1.21

1st time Mark cites REPEATED Idea > Going to Synagogue Jesus’ CUSTOM

Should be Place of BLESSING & Fellowship – often BATTLEGROUNDS, Fights

Jewish LEADERS came to HEAR Jesus Teach to fill ARSENAL of ATTACK

TRIED HARD to MAKE Jesus TRAP HIMSELF by OWN WORDS > FAILED!
BY Chapt 3 > Jewish Leaders HEARD ENOUGH > DETERMINED their Plan

Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might
kill Jesus.

Mark 3.6

THEN Treacherous PLANNING of LEADERS of Israel > TRICK QUESTIONS
Jesus LAST PUBLIC WORDS about JEWISH Leaders > Strong INDICTMENT

The large crowd listened to him with delight. As he taught, Jesus said, "Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted in the marketplaces, and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. Such men will be punished most severely." Mark 12.37-40

Sanhedrin STEERING Comm met to CLARIFY Charges with LEGAL EXPERTS
NOW PLENARY Session of SANHEDRIN Made FORMAL Charges

v. 1 Very early in the morning, the chief priests, with the elders, the teachers of the law and the whole Sanhedrin, reached a decision.

NOW > Church & State Aligned in EVIL to GET JESUS KILLED!

Romans > Held ULTIMATE POWER to DO Final DIRTY WORK

Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession... 1 Timothy 6.13

b. The State

Mark's READERS in ROME > Especially INTERESTED in Jesus before PILATE

Jerusalem was SUBJECT Territory > Under FIRM GRIP of ROMAN Empire

Mutual HATRED between JEWS and ROMANS

SANHEDRIN – RULE by CONSENSUS / Roman GOV. Ruled as DICTATOR

SANHEDRIN > had CIVIL Jurisdiction over MANY Issues > NOT Death Penalty

Pilate said, "Don't you realize *I have power* either to free you or to crucify you?"
John 19.10

Pilate's OFFICIAL RESIDENCE outside of City in Caesarea Maritima

NOW in Jerusalem for PASSOVER Feast > Be CLOSE if RIOTS Broke Out

Stayed in JERUSALEM at PALACE of King HEROD > NORTHWEST of City

Led BOUND Jesus from home of HIGH PRIEST to HEROD'S Palace

v. 1 They bound Jesus, led him away and handed him over to Pilate.

PILATE > Special Group of IMPERIAL Administrators > Below Class SENATOR
Came to JERUSALEM in 26 AD – Served 10 years – CRUEL, SEVERE Rule

WORKING Day began at SUNRISE > Most of DAY devoted to LEISURE

REASON for SANHEDRIN's HASTY, ILLEGAL Night Trial of Jesus

If JEWS waited too LONG > PILATE'S DOOR would be CLOSE

1) Deliberation

Pilate sitting on JUDGEMENT SEAT, Already INFORMED of Details of Charges

Knew HATED JEWS would SPIN TRUTH > So he Asked with SCEPTICISM

v. 2 "Are you the king of the Jews?" asked Pilate. "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied.

KING of Jews > SECULARIZED form of MESSIAH > Leader of RESISTANCE

Trial > STATEMENTS of DEFENDANT and EVIDENCE of WITNESSES

Magistrate CONSIDERED Case – Consulted ADVISORS – Sentence – Execution

vs. 3,4 The chief priests accused him of many things. So again Pilate asked him, "Aren't you going to answer? See how many things they are accusing you of."

CHARGED by SANHEDRIN > WORTHY of DEATH for BLASPHEMY

The high priest tore his clothes. "Why do we need any more witnesses?" he asked. "You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?" They all condemned him as worthy of death.

Mark 14:63-64

'TRANSLATED' for PILATE as SEDITION > Rebellion against EMPEROR

Mark most ECONOMICAL of 4 Gospel Writers – Story is Clear, Concise

Mark TELESCOPES Proceedings which are OPENED UP in Other Gospels

CHARGES explained by Luke: And they began to accuse him, saying, "We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Christ, a king."
Luke 23.2

2) Diversion

vs. 6,8 Now it was the custom at the Feast to release a prisoner whom the people requested...The crowd came up and asked Pilate to do for them what he usually did.

Pilate thought Jesus INNOCENT > but Sought EXPEDIENT way to RELEASE
CUSTOM of Release > Provided Perfect OPPORTUNITY to Get Out of JAM
Thought SURELY People would seek Release of POPULAR RABBI Jesus

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

Matthew > JESUS Bar-abbas // lit. "Jesus Son of the Father"

Pilate asked them, "Which one do you want me to release to you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?"
Matthew 27:17

IF true > Question Was: WHICH Jesus want Released? – Christ or Barabbas?

vs. 9,10 "Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?" asked Pilate, knowing it was out of envy that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him.

Pilate NOT Motivated by JUSTICE or HUMANITY >> HATRED of JEWS

DEFAULT Response > OPPOSE anything suggested by JEWISH LEADERS

Not ROCKET SCIENCE on Pilate's part to Know > Jews not being Loyal to Rome

Wanted to Eliminate Troublemaker > Wanted Romans to do it FOR THEM

v. 11 But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have Pilate release Barabbas instead.

JEW HATED ROME & PILATE > Naturally CONTRADICTED his WISHES
Would CHEER Man who DARED throw his SHOES at HATED PILATE

vs. 12,13 "What shall I do, then, with the one you call the king of the Jews?" Pilate asked them. "Crucify him!" they shouted.

FULLEST Punishment of ROMAN LAW > EXECUTION of NON-Citizen

FICKLE Crowd? Probably NOT those who Shouted HOSANA on Palm Sunday

MILLION People in PASSOVER Jerusalem > PIOUS Not Defile Selves at Pilates

DEVOUT Worshippers NOT in PILATE's Compound Early AM before Passover

v. 14 "Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!"

3) Decision

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

Romans RELUCTANT to SENTENCE when man UNDEFENDED

Point of CONTROL passed from MAGISTRATE to MOB > Pilate YIELDED

Pilate was no unnatural monster; he was a man in so many ways like all others. This is what makes his story such a warning, and also so credible. R. Alan Cole

You shall mount the cross (*ibis in crucem*)

I consign you to the cross (*abi in crucem*)

Physical Suffering > Beyond DESCRIPTION or IMAGINATION

Invented by PERSIANS, developed by CARTHAGINIANS, perfected by ROME

‘the most wretched of deaths’

Josephus

‘a most cruel and terrible penalty...incapable of description by any word, for there is none fit to describe it’

Cicero

NAILED to Cross, SUSPENDED in Air > BREATH by Pushing Self Up & Down

Some HUNG on Cross FOR DAYS before FINALLY DYING

SMASHING Legs of Sufferer led to IMMEDIATE SUFFICATION

It is probably the most cruel method of execution ever practiced, for it deliberately delayed death until maximum torture had been inflicted.

John Stott

Pilate FORCED to CONDEMN an INNOCENT MAN

PILATE is CONDEMNED every time we RECITE APOSTLE’S CREED

2. Suffering

v. 16 The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium) and called together the whole company of soldiers.

GROTESQUE VAUDEVILLE > Sadistic Entertainment

FOREIGN Soldiers – TENSE, DANGEROUS Assignment in Hostile Palestine

Glad to have SOMEONE to KICK and BEAT > ABSORB their FRUSTRATIONS

Like American Soldiers in ABU GARIB Prison in IRAQ

WELCOMED Gruesome Diversion from the CONSTANT TENSION

v. 17 They put a purple robe on him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him.

Dressed Jesus in MOCK ROYAL ATTIRE > paid SADISTIC HOMAGE

These men displayed one of the most frightening traits in the human personality: discipline of an unusual degree in one area, and gross moral indiscipline in another.

Sinclair Ferguson

v. 18 And they began to call out to him, "Hail, king of the Jews!"

A KING so WEAK and VULNERABLE > TOO Easy a TARGET for ABUSE

Beyond PITIFUL to a RIDICULOUS APPEARANCE

Tattered Robe / Broken Figure / Weird, Spiky Headdress

More like a clown than a King.

G.R. Beasley-Murray

NO ONE has Looked LESS KINGLY > No APPARENT Evidence to CLAIM

Nothing PENETRATES our SELF-ESTEEM than MOCKING LAUGHTER

To the End RINGING in His Ears > MOCKING Soldiers & RIDICULE of Crowd

v. 19 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.

SPITTING > MOCK KISS of Homage customary in EAST

ROYAL PRETENSION of Jesus COLLIDES w/ VULGAR Mentality SOLDIERS

INTENSE Roman HATRED of JEWS Fully UNLEASHED on THIS JEW

A Roman scourging was a terrifying punishment. The delinquent was stripped, bound to a post or a pillar, or sometimes simply thrown to ground, and was beaten by a number of guards until his flesh hung in bleeding shreds. William Lane

v. 20 And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

NAKED, BLEEDING, Jesus was ALLOWED to DRESS

Normally > Men who were Crucified carried Crossbeam Naked > Flogged as Went
IF they FLOGGED Jesus AGAIN > could DIE before reach Place of Crucifixion

Hang on Tree > WORST PUNISHMENT for both ROMANS and JEWS

After JEWS STONED a Serious LAW-BREAKER > Body HUNG on TREE

If a man guilty of a capital offense is put to death and his body is hung on a tree, you must not leave his body on the tree overnight. Be sure to bury him that same day, because *anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse.*

Deuteronomy 21.22-23

CROSS > Ultimate SHAME to Roman / Eternal CURSE to the JEWS

3. Silence

a. Curse

Mark's FOCUS on HOW Son of GOD SAVED the WORLD

SAME Misery from Jews & Romans: Interrogation, Condemnation, Mockery

The irony of the situation is overpowering: Jesus, who is, indeed, king of the Jews in a deeply spiritual sense, has refused to lead a spiritual uprising. Yet now, condemned for blasphemy by the Jews because of his spiritual claims, he is accused by them also before Pilate for being precisely what he had disappointed the crowds for failing to be – a political insurgent. Jesus refused either to plead guilty or to defend himself.

C.F.D. Moule

v. 5 But Jesus still made no reply, and Pilate was amazed.

SILENCE of Jesus > Mark's FOCUS on Jesus as SERVANT // ISAIAH

He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

Isaiah 53.7

He was SILENT FOR US – In our PLACE – WHAT can we say to a JUST GOD?

We Stand before Him GUILTY – NO EXCUSES – NO DEFENSE for our SINS

Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, *so that every mouth may be silenced* and the whole world held accountable to God.

Romans 3:19

b. Confidence

Jesus SILENT amidst INJUSTICE > when GIVEN Opportunity to Speak

Shows TREMENDOUS Self-Control > I would have CRIED OUT – FOUL!!

Working OUT of PROPHECY > Important Text in Mark about Cross:

"We are going up to Jerusalem," he said, "and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise."

Mark 10:33-34

Mark's reader senses in Jesus' passivity and silence that the sovereign Lord of history is accomplishing his mysterious purposes to which even the Son of Man must be submissive.

William Lane

TRUE HISTORY – God entering History to Save the World – Our Redemption

No one takes it (my life) from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.

John 10.18

The Crucified One is the true king, the kingliest king of all; because it is he who is stretched on the cross, he turns an obscene instrument of torture into a throne of glory and reigns from the tree.

F.F. Bruce

Don't Miss the MORAL LESSONS – God wants us to LEARN from This...

One by One > See MORAL Inadequacies of ALL who met Jesus

SELFISH Desires of RELIGIOUS LEADERS

v. 10 “it was *out of envy that the chief priests* had handed Jesus over”

COLLAPSE of PETER’S PROUD Claims

Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows twice you will disown me three times." And he *broke down and wept*. Mark 14:72

POLITICAL EXPEDIENCY of PILATE

v. 15 *Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate* released Barabbas

Except for Jesus > NAME of Pilate would be Long FORGOTTEN

Each One THREATENED by SILENT Person in CENTER of this NARRATIVE

Only Jesus stands with his dignity intact as he takes another step forward to his terrible, yet divinely ordained, destiny. Sinclair Ferguson

GOD Weaves TAPESTY of GRACE colored by BLOOD of His Only SON

Mark 15:1-20

15:1 Very early in the morning, the chief priests, with the elders, the teachers of the law and the whole Sanhedrin, reached a decision. They bound Jesus, led him away and handed him over to Pilate. 2 "Are you the king of the Jews?" asked Pilate. "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied. 3 The chief priests accused him of many things. 4 So again Pilate asked him, "Aren't you going to answer? See how many things they are accusing you of." 5 But Jesus still made no reply, and Pilate was amazed. 6 Now it was the custom at the Feast to release a prisoner whom the people requested. 7 A man called Barabbas was in prison with the insurrectionists who had committed murder in the uprising. 8 The crowd came up and asked Pilate to do for them what he usually did. 9 "Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?" asked Pilate, 10 knowing it was out of envy that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him. 11 But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have Pilate release Barabbas instead. 12 "What shall I do, then, with the one you call the king of the Jews?" Pilate asked them. 13 "Crucify him!" they shouted. 14 "Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!" 15 Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified. 16 The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium) and called together the whole company of soldiers. 17 They put a purple robe on him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him. 18 And they began to call out to him, "Hail, king of the Jews!" 19 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. 20 And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.