

Mk series pt 63

- Today we're studying the conspiracy that led to Jesus being crucified
 - Skeptics claim that the account of Jesus' trial before Pilate is fiction
 - Pilate would never yield to Jewish leadership manipulating him
 - Barabbas is a made up person with a fake name
 - They say Pilate never had a custom to release a prisoner at Passover
 - I'll answer those claims.
 - And share how ugly and beautiful this event was

Mark 15:1–15 (NASB95)

¹Early in the morning the chief priests with the elders and scribes and the whole Council, immediately held a consultation; and binding Jesus, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pilate.

²Pilate questioned Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" And He answered him, "It is as you say."

³The chief priests began to accuse Him harshly.

⁴Then Pilate questioned Him again, saying, "Do You not answer? See how many charges they bring against You!"

⁵But Jesus made no further answer; so Pilate was amazed.

⁶Now at the feast he used to release for them any one prisoner whom they requested.

⁷The man named Barabbas had been imprisoned with the insurrectionists who had committed murder in the insurrection.

⁸The crowd went up and began asking him to do as he had been accustomed to do for them.

⁹Pilate answered them, saying, "Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?"

¹⁰For he was aware that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy.

¹¹But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to ask him to release Barabbas for them instead.

¹²Answering again, Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Him whom you call the King of the Jews?"

¹³They shouted back, "Crucify Him!"

¹⁴But Pilate said to them, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify Him!"

¹⁵Wishing to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas for them, and after having Jesus scourged, he handed Him over to be crucified.

Brilliant political maneuvering

Beautiful Gospel presentation

Not just in the fact that Jesus died

It's in every aspect of Jesus' death

Mark 15:1–15 (NASB95)

¹Early in the morning the chief priests with the elders and scribes and the whole Council, immediately held a consultation; and binding Jesus, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pilate.

- The plan
 - They can't kill Jesus
 - Get Pilate to kill Jesus
 - But how?
 - Pilate cares little for their religious debates
 - So they leverage something Pilate does care about

- Rivaling Caesar
 - There is not king of the Jews at the time
 - Herod the Great was the last with that title
 - He died, his kingdom was split up (to limit power)
 - Herod Archelaus got Judea
 - However Augustus withheld the confirmation of his kingship until Archelaus proved himself.
 - The confirmation never occurred because Archelaus began his reign by slaughtering 3,000 prominent citizens.
 - two years later – removed
 - The Emperor then took away the rule of Judea from the Herod family.
 - Herod Antipas (Galilee)
 - Tetrarch – lower ruler
 - Jerusalem (Judea) have a ROMAN Governor, no king but Caesar
- All historically consistent
 - Jews – Messiah
 - Romans - King
 - Reinforced by the
 - Romans calling Jesus “King of the Jews”
 - Jews “King of Israel”
 - Every time his kingly title is used by Jews in the 4 Gospels it is said this way
 - Here, during Jesus’ Roman trial, it is used a bunch (2, 9, 12, 18, 26)

²Pilate questioned Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?” And He answered him, “It is as you say.”

- Pilate is the Roman governor
 - If Jesus confirms it, it’s treason against Rome
 - He confirms it... but in a very clever way
 - Jesus says “it is as you say”
 - Greek: *su legeis*
 - Newer scholarship on this
 - D. R. Catchpole’s did a study of this phrase as it appears in ancient Jewish sources as well as the NT.
 - R.T. France, this persuades the majority of contemporary scholars of a particular, nuanced meaning of “*su legeis*” when Jesus uses it
 - To affirm the content of a statement but not its context.
 - I am the king of the Jews, but not in the way you think!
 - The way a Roman governor would think of Jesus as king of the Jews is NOT how Jesus wants us to think about it
 - Much of Jesus’ ministry is about fixing Messianic expectations
 - Here, fixing kingdom expectations
 - Which is consistent with Mark’s brief “yeah, but not like you think”

- “su legeis” is not only in Mark, it’s in Mt and Lk as well
 - Lk 22:3, Mt 27:11
 - What’s implied in Mark is more clear in John
 - *John 18:33–37 (ESV)*
 - ³³So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, “Are you the King of the Jews?”
 - ³⁴Jesus answered, “Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?”
 - ³⁵Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?”
 - ³⁶Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.”
 - ³⁷Then Pilate said to him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.”
 - *Luke 17:20–21 (ESV)*
 - ²⁰Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them, “The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed,
 - ²¹nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There!’ for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.”
 - Now it’s in people... later it’s governmental
 - Jesus is your king/lord, later he rules
- Pilate sort-of gets it
 - Which is why he sees Jesus as a non-threat to Rome

³The chief priests began to accuse Him harshly.

⁴Then Pilate questioned Him again, saying, “Do You not answer? See how many charges they bring against You!”

- *Luke 23:2 (NASB95)* ²And they began to accuse Him, saying, “We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, and saying that He Himself is Christ, a King.”
 - The accusations are tailored to Roman concerns

⁵But Jesus made no further answer; so Pilate was amazed.

- Why is Pilate amazed?
 - He has seen many who stand trial for a capital crime
 - They probably have a lot to say
 - Jesus offers no defense

⁶Now at the feast he used to release for them any one prisoner whom they requested.

- Some skeptics say this is made up
 - Against
 - Pilate was a bloodthirsty man who would never bow to the Jews
 - to crucify Jesus
 - or release Barabbas
 - For example
 - Pilate once got money from the Temple treasury and used it for a city project

- This was money “korban” and considered only to be used for sacred Temple duties
 - The Jewish people staged a protest
 - Pilate sent soldiers dressed as civilians among them
 - When the soldiers got the signal they started beating and killing people
 - Luke 13:1 briefly mentions a group of Galileans “whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices”
- YET
 - Pilate seems to have been in league with the Jewish leadership in several of these cases
 - The temple money probably came from the high priest, whose group is never mentioned in the account. It’s the common people who protest
 - In that case the protest was against Pilate AND the priests
 - In one case Pilate backed down
 - He put Roman standards in the Temple and upon a protest he took them out
 - If the high priest wrote a letter to Caesar saying,
 - “great Caesar, to preserve your unchallenged kingship over Israel we delivered to Pilate a man named Jesus who was stirring a Galilean rebellion and proclaiming himself king. But Pilate let him go. FYI”
- For
 - Roman rulers did have this sort of flexibility in their rule
 - Customs LIKE this existed
 - Rulers releasing prisoners for civic celebrations
 - Herod Archelaus did something like this
 - He ruled briefly over the same region as Pilate
 - Released prisoners to get the goodwill of the people
 - After Pilate, another governor of Judea did it
 - Albinus, r. 62-64 AD
 - He did it twice, once during a feast
 - A papyrus from a Roman governor of Egypt in 85AD
 - “you were worthy of scourging... but I gave you to the crowds”
 - Mishnah MIGHT allude to it
 - “they may slaughter the Passover lamb for one... who they have promised to release from prison” – m. Pesahim 8:6
 - Roman gladiatorial contests would sometimes poll the audience to ask if a particular contestant should live or die
 - So Pilate does have the ability to do this, there are examples of prisoners being released, even to crowd votes, and it would make sense historically given the tension between Jews and their Roman rulers
 - It is Passover – this is riot and rebellion season!
- Barabbas
 - Means “son of the father”
 - Hit and run – you fill in the implications
 - It gets thin here
 - What’s the obvious meaning of this? This man is called the son of the father to signify what?
 - Jesus is the Son of God, not Barabbas
 - Who is Barabbas supposed to be the son of?
 - What does it represent?
 - It seems that it doesn’t fit

- OR
 - Barabbas is a nickname for this insurrectionist
 - A later insurrectionist was called Bar Kochba (son of the star)
 - Barabbas is a legit name
 - As early as the 5th century BC through 500 years after Christ
 - Barabbas = his name after his father
 - Abba
 - Tel Ilan's top 100 names list (21)
 - According to some manuscripts of Mt 27:16-17 his name is Jesus, son of Abba (see NET translation)
 - Jesus is the 6th most common name at the time
 - So it would require a disambiguation
 - Especially in contrast to Jesus of Nazareth
- To parallel the day of atonement
 - Barabbas = scape goat
 - Doesn't seem likely
 - The scape goat was driven to the wilderness (and off a cliff)
 - It bore sin out of the camp
 - But JESUS bears our sin!
 - It's the wrong feast
 - Passover, not Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)
 - But it wouldn't mean much
 - The parallel could be by God's design
 - Assumption of anti-supernaturalism may be the rule here
 - There is a lesson in Barabbas, but it's better than the scape goat

⁷The man named Barabbas had been imprisoned with the insurrectionists who had committed murder in the insurrection.

- Elsewhere he is called a "robber" but that's a slang term that could be applied to an insurrectionist as well.
- The other two on the cross were possibly the other "insurrectionists"
 - What insurrection?
 - No details given

⁸The crowd went up and began asking him to do as he had been accustomed to do for them.

- The crowd asked for it... that's peculiar...
 - Previously I thought it was Pilate's idea
- But why would they ask?
 - The crowd was under the influence of the high priest
 - My theory –
 - Political savvy
 - They know it will be a challenge to get Pilate to kill Jesus
 - But they have been plotting it for a while
 - The crowd asks,
 - Pilate thinks, "ah, I can release Jesus and avoid this situation"
 - The crowd turns
 - It's possible they could have cried out "release Jesus" and when Pilate agreed they said "no, Jesus Barabbas!"
 - Now Jesus' must be condemned

- That's consistent with the next verse

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- Jesus is crucified for political expediency, not real guilt.
- How this is sometimes preached
 - "same crowd that shouted Hosanna now shouts crucify!"
 - Well, maybe not
 - The Hosanna crowd was visitors to Jerusalem and many Galileans
 - Many from the city of Jerusalem didn't shout Hosanna, they said "what's this?"
 - It's early morning, this crowd is possibly brought BY the Sanhedrin to help crucify Jesus
 - A powerful preaching point, but not likely
 - If any are there who said "Hosanna" they may just be silent
- Big picture stuff
 - Jesus is condemned for two things
 - Messiah and king
 - They reject their Messiah
 - Tragic
 - Consistent with OT
 - Cain rejected righteous Abel
 - Sodom and Gomorrah rejected Lot, who preached righteousness to them
 - Joseph's brothers rejected him
 - Moses is rejected at first, and later
 - David
 - Gideon, Jephthah,
 - Isaiah is rejected, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, etc...
- Critics
 - The Romans are innocent and the Jews are forever condemned!
 - Pilate is a good guy
 - **Matthew 27:25 (NASB95)** ²⁵*And all the people said, "His blood shall be on us and on our children!"*
- Are the Romans innocent?
 - No
 - They mock and ridicule Jesus!
 - Pilate condemns Jesus to be crucified
 - He didn't have to... he chose to
 - Washing his hands is about as honest as him saying "what is truth?"
 - Pilate had Jesus "scourged" – Mk 15:15
 - Pilate sent Jesus to Herod Antipas to be mistreated
 - They all have a hand
- The point?
 - Not, you all are condemned!
 - No, the gospel is for the condemned

- Nicodemus, a Pharisee becomes a believer
- Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the Sanhedrin becomes a believer
- A Roman soldier who helps CRUCIFY Jesus becomes a believer
- A man condemned to die with Jesus becomes a believer
- Peter who denies Christ multiple times becomes a chief apostle
- Paul who persecutes the church becomes the apostle to the Gentiles
- The Jews forever condemned?
 - The disciples are all Jews
 - The first gospel presentation
 - **Acts 2:22–24 (NASB95)**
²²*“Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know—*
²³*this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.*
²⁴*“But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.*
 - **Acts 2:36–39 (NASB95)**
³⁶*“Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified.”*
³⁷*Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?”*
 Does Peter say, “nothing, you are forever condemned”?
³⁸*Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*
³⁹*“For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.”*
 - You did it, it’s your fault, now come and get forgiveness and the HS!

- Barabbas

- Jesus is on HIS cross, in his place
- Jesus remained silent in the face of His accusers
 - So He could silence your accuser

- **Romans 8:33–34 (NASB95)**

³³*Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies;*

³⁴*who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.*

- Next week – the cross

- Historically, what Jesus went through
- And what it meant prophetically

FLOGGING - Flogging was a cruel and merciless preparation for crucifixion. The NT shows no inclination to sensationalize the passion of Jesus by recounting its horrors. Its restraint and discretion, however, may leave modern readers ignorant of the savagery that preceded and attended a Roman crucifixion. As a prelude to crucifixion, Josephus (War 2.306) says the prisoner was stripped and bound to a post and beaten with a leather whip woven with bits of bone or metal. No maximum number of strokes was prescribed. The scourging lacerated and stripped the flesh, often exposing bones and entrails. One of its purposes was to shorten the duration of crucifixion, but scourging was so brutal that some prisoners died before reaching the cross. Women were exempted from either suffering or witnessing the flagellum, which, according to Suetonius (Domitian 11), even horrified the emperor Domitian. It was this terrifying verberatio flagellation, to which Jesus is delivered in v. 15. Again, Mark says that Jesus was “handed over,” that is, what was done from wickedness was still done “by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge” (Acts 2:23).

For “My God, My God why have you forsaken me?” <https://www.bible.com/bible/1/1Ki/19/23>

Add 14:49 if not already there. Jesus, clearly knows what He will face (death by crucifixion) and says that it’s according to the SCRIPTURES – when He later quotes the best passage on the topic from the OT it is folly to ignore the connection.

¹ Edwards, J. R. (2002). *The Gospel according to Mark* (pp. 464–465). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.