

The Gospel of *Mark*

The Servant Leadership of Jesus

The Servant's Ministry in Jerusalem (continued) (11 – 16)

Arrest, Trials and Crucifixion: *Peter Disowns Jesus Three Times* (14:66-72)

14:66-71 Having followed Jesus when He was taken to the house of the high priest Caiaphas ^{v.53-54}, Peter was in the courtyard when a servant girl saw him and declared him to be a friend of Jesus. Peter emphatically denied knowing Jesus and began moving toward the entryway. However, the same servant girl saw Peter again and continued to point him out as a follower of Jesus. Once again, Peter rebuked the servant and her claim. A short time later, others in the crowd recognized Peter as a Galilean from his accent ^{Matthew 26:73} and also accused him of being one of the friends of Jesus. In his defense, Peter “called down curses on himself” ^{v.71} and again defiantly denied knowing Jesus.

When the servant girl referred to Jesus as “that Nazarene” ^{v.67} (someone from Nazareth), it was her way of conveying the commonly held contempt for people from that Galilean city ^{John 1:46}.

There are many interesting contrasts in the Bible. For example, compare the openness of the demons ^{Mark 1:24} to the fear of Peter ^{v.66-71} in proclaiming publically who Jesus Christ was/is.

72 The crowing of the rooster, as well as the Lord turning and looking “directly at Peter” ^{Luke 22:61}, changed Peter’s fear to weeping, because he was reminded of Jesus’ words ^{v.30} at the Last Supper.

In some of the manuscripts, Mark’s account mentions that the rooster crowed twice. However, the other accounts refer to only a single crowing ^{Matthew 26:34, 74-75, Luke 22:34, 60-61, John 13:38, 18:27}.

Peter was devastated ^{v.72b} for his failure as a member of Jesus’ inner circle ^{Mark 5:37, 9:2, 14:13, 33}, especially since he had made such bold claims to follow Jesus even to death ^{Mark 14:31}.

However, in one of His post-resurrection appearances, Jesus had a private talk with Peter, and during their exchange, Peter was encouraged, forgiven and his ministry restored. ^{John 21:7-19}

Arrest, Trials and Crucifixion: *The Third Religious Trial and Two of the Civil Trials* (15:1-15)

15:1 Later that morning, following the interrogation (“trial”) at the home of Caiaphas ^{Mark 14:53-65}, the Sanhedrin attempted to legitimize their actions by finding Jesus guilty at a hastily held trial. They hoped their decision would appear legal, so they would not anger the Passover crowd ^{Mark 11:18, 12:12}. Jesus was “bound”, “led away” and immediately “handed over” to the civil authority, Pontius Pilate.

One of the ways the Sanhedrin tried to convince the people they were handling every aspect of Jesus’ treatment legally was to convene the third and last religious trial at “daybreak” ^{Luke 22:66}. Also, they assumed blasphemy when Jesus admitted to being God (“Son of God” ^{Luke 22:70}).

The Jewish leaders took Jesus to Pilate, because under Roman law, the Jews were not allowed to put anyone to death ^{John 18:31, Jerusalem Talmud (Sanhedrin, folio 24), Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* (20:9)}.

Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea (A.D. 26-36), during the ministries of both John the Baptist and Jesus. He was a bloody ruler, including his killing Galileans while they offered temple sacrifices ^{Luke 13:1} and the slaughtering of Samaritans ^{Josephus, *Antiquities*, 17:13} when they were on Mount Gerizim. Pilate eventually committed suicide. ^{Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, II, VII}

After the Sanhedrin condemned Jesus, Judas Iscariot was “seized with remorse”, threw the “blood money” (30 silver pieces ^{Matthew 26:15}) into the temple and “hanged himself”. ^{Matthew 27:3,5}

The money could not go back into the treasury, so the priests used it to purchase “the potter’s field” (then called the “Field of Blood”) for burying foreigners. ^{Matthew 27:6-8 (Zechariah 11:12-13)}

2 Soon after Jesus’ arrival and having been informed of a charge of rebellion against Rome ^{Luke 23:2}, Pilate asked Jesus the direct question: “Are you the king of the Jews? Jesus simply replied: “Yes”.

John’s account explained that when Jesus answered Pilate’s question, Pilate had an earthly perspective, while Jesus had a mainly heavenly perspective (“not of this world”). ^{John 18:33-37}

Another interesting contrast: the Magi proclaimed Jesus as the “King of the Jews” ^{Matthew 2:1-2}, but the Jewish chief priests, who were Scripture experts, fervently rejected this claim ^{John 19:21}.

3-5 The chief priests came up with as many charges as possible. Pilate asked Jesus to defend Himself by responding to the accusations, but Jesus said nothing, which took Pilate by surprise.

Once Jesus admitted He was a king, the chief priests thought a guilty verdict for rebellion against Rome was inevitable, so they began to pile on their accusations against Him ^{Luke 23:2,5}.

A better rendering of the phrase “Jesus still made no reply” is “Jesus made no further answer”. Jesus responded to Pilate’s initial question about kingship ^{v.2}, but he refused to defend Himself against the accusations of the Jewish leaders ^{Matthew 27:14}, thus fulfilling prophecy ^{Isaiah 42:1-2,53:7}.

Pilate was surprised by Jesus not defending Himself ^{1 Peter 2:21-24}, because it was opposite of a normal human response to accusations (superhuman restraint), especially false ones ^{Psalms 35:20}.

The account in Luke’s gospel indicates that between verses 5 and 6, Jesus was sent to Herod Antipas by Pontius Pilate ^{Luke 23:6-11}, in hopes that Herod would make a ruling, so Pilate would not have to. However, Herod only wanted to see Jesus perform a miracle. When Jesus remained silent and refused to entertain Herod, He sent Jesus back to Pilate ^{Luke 23:11b}.

6-11 There was a custom for the governor to release a prisoner in honor of the Passover. The crowd encouraged Pilate to do it, so he asked the crowd if he should release their “King”, hoping they would say “Yes”. However, the chief priests “stirred up the crowd” to have Barabbas released ^{Acts 3:14}.

Barabbas means “son of abba” (‘son of the father’ or ‘...daddy’) ^{Mark 14:36, Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:6}. He was called “notorious prisoner” ^{Matthew 27:16}, “insurrectionist/murderer” ^{v.7}, “rebel” ^{John 18:40}.

Pilate recognized in the midst of the Barabbas issue the Jewish authorities had not handed Jesus over out of loyalty to him and/or Rome, but out of “envy” ^{v.10} (of His power/popularity).

12-15 In response to the shouts to release Barabbas, Pilate asked the crowd what he should do with “the king of the Jews”, and the crowd immediately responded “Crucify him!”. Pilate asked them what crime He had committed, but their shouts were insistent and loud, so Pilate yielded to the mob by having Barabbas released, and to avoid a riot, he directed his soldiers to scourge and crucify Jesus.

Pilate recognized the accusations were false ^{Matthew 27:19, Luke 23:13-14,22, John 18:38, 19:4} and were motivated by the envy of the Jewish leaders. However, after many failed attempts to avoid giving a verdict on the case against Jesus (sending Jesus to Herod ^{Luke 23:6-11a}, offering to release Jesus ^{v.9-10} and pretending he was not responsible for the verdict by symbolically washing his hands of the affair ^{Matthew 27:24}), Pilate ordered Jesus flogged and crucified.

Note! Jesus innocent, Barabbas guilty; Jesus died, Barabbas set free. ^{1 Thessalonians 5:10, 1 John 4:9}

The flogging (scourging) was performed with a ‘flagellum’ made of leather straps with embedded pieces of bone and metal, and attached to the end of a wooden handle.

Arrest, Trials and Crucifixion: *The Soldiers Mock Jesus* (15:16-20)

16-20 Immediately after Jesus was flogged, the Roman soldiers mixed feigned worship (putting a purple robe and a crown of thorns on Him, calling Him the “King of the Jews” and paying mock homage to him on their knees) and insolent, painful attacks (spitting on Him and striking His head). After their abuse, the soldiers put His own clothes back on Jesus and led Him out to be crucified.

The Praetorium was the Roman governor’s Jerusalem residence, probably located in the Fortress Antonia, adjacent to the Temple. The fortress was manned by a cohort: 600 soldiers.

Purple was the traditional color of royalty ^{Judges 8:26, Daniel 5:29}. The thorns in Jesus’ crown were symbols of God’s curse on the land ^{Genesis 3:18} and of the “messenger of Satan” that bothered Paul ^{2 Corinthians 12:7}. Their cry “Hail, King of the Jews!” ^{v.18} was a parody of Caesar’s title.

The staff the soldiers beat Jesus with was earlier given to Him as a mock scepter ^{Matthew 27:29}.

The lack of self-defense, mocking, suffering, crucifixion, death and burial of Jesus were graphically detailed in Old Testament prophetic passages ^{Psalms 22, Isaiah 53}.

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