

Pentwater Bible Church

Gospel of Mark
Message 60
July 5, 2015



Ecce Homo by Titan Cir. 1543

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Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Mark

Message 60

Events Preceding the Crucifixion-Return to Pilate, Jesus Crowned With Thorns

July 5, 2015

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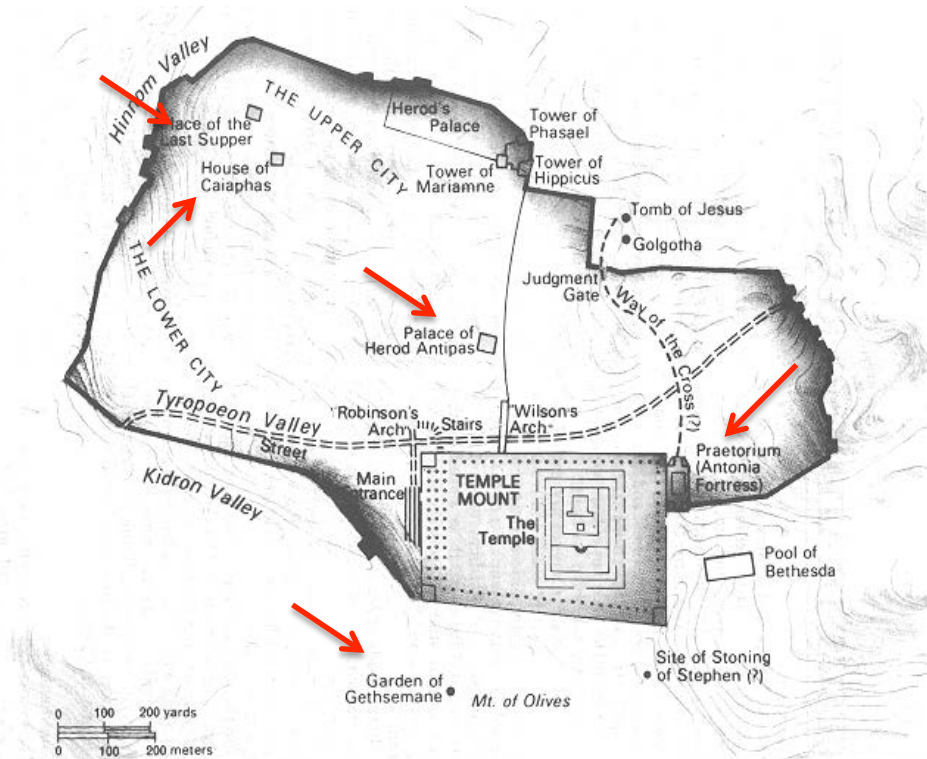


Ecce Homo by Juan de Juanes Cir. 1570

Mark 15:6-21

⁶ Now at that feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired. ⁷ And there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection. ⁸ And the multitude crying aloud began to desire him to do as he had ever done unto them. ⁹ But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews? ¹⁰ For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy. ¹¹ But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them. ¹² And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews? ¹³ And they cried out again, Crucify him. ¹⁴ Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him. ¹⁵ And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified.

¹⁶ And the soldiers led him away into the hall, called Pretorium; and they call together the whole band. ¹⁷ And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head, ¹⁸ and began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews. ¹⁹ And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees worshipped him. ²⁰ And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him (KJV).



Jerusalem at the Time of Jesus

Map of Ancient Jerusalem from Logos Software

PILATE WANTS TO RELEASE JESUS

Mark 15:6-9

⁶ Now at that feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired. ⁷ And there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection. ⁸ And the multitude crying aloud began to desire him to do as he had ever done unto them. ⁹ But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews (KJV)?

Each of the gospels tells how hard Pilate tried to avoid condemning Jesus. Pilate sent Jesus to Herod as a courtesy, which he appreciated, and they became close friends as a result of this (Luke 23:12). Coupled with the fact that Pilate's wife warned him not to harm Him because He is innocent Pilate was very uncomfortable about having Jesus executed. She had a dream, which frightened her. As a result she sent a message to Pilate while he was in the Praetorium with Jesus and the angry crowd.

Matthew 27:19

¹⁹ When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him (KJV).

In order to try and please the Jews somewhat the Romans had a practice of releasing one prisoner at Passover. The Jews had come to expect this and thought of it as “their custom” (John 18:39). This was no more than a goodwill custom of the Roman governor of Judea in furtherance of the Pax Romana over a conquered and occupied nation. Instead of granting Jesus an acquittal, Pilate chose to grant the customary Passover amnesty, thinking the people would request the release of Jesus. Together with Jesus in the Pretorium was a criminal named Barabbas (Hebrew from Bar Abba, “son of the father”). He was a known freedom fighter and murderer. He had stirred up much opposition toward Rome and was known as an insurrectionist. He was awaiting the order of execution from Pilate. While he was a criminal to Rome many of the Jews regarded him as a hero trying to throw off the yoke of enslavement of Rome over the Jews.

The crowd that had assembled at his palace though was the group of Jewish religious leaders that were not favorable toward Jesus and wanted to be rid of Him. He exposed their chicanery and the spiritual enslavement they put the common Jews under with their rabbinic law. They ignored the Mosaic Law and didn’t know God who they professed to represent in Israel. They also did not recognize the Messiah He sent (John 5:39-47). The crowd being incited by the chief priests was chanting for Pilate to release to them one criminal. They had come to see Jesus executed. Pilate wanting to not execute Jesus said, “*Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?*” He did not expect or appreciate their response.

THE CHIEF PRIESTS ORCHESTRATE JESUS

Mark 15:10-11

¹⁰ For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy. ¹¹ But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them (KJV).

Pilate was well aware of the envy the chief priests had toward Jesus. Envy a strong motivator is grief or anger caused by another’s success. He took this opportunity to show his contempt for them by offering to release the King of the Jews but they chose Barabbas instead. The powerful chief priests had incited the crowd to approach his judgment seat with their request to release Barabbas. In the trial before Pilate opposition to Jesus came largely from the Sanhedrin. The actual arrest and trial of Jesus, however, as this text explains, were the responsibility of the high priest. Mark is very specific and objective: the prime mover in Jesus’ trial and arrest is the high priest, who “stirred up” or incited the crowd to demand the release of Barabbas.

THE JEWS DEMAND JESUS’ CRUCIFIXION

Mark 15:12-14

¹² And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews? ¹³ And they cried out again, Crucify him. ¹⁴ Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him. (KJV).

Pilate was now in a quandary. He had the warning of his wife. He knew Jesus was innocent but did not understand why He chose not to defend Himself. In a sort of mocking to them he refers to Jesus as “*him whom ye call the King of the Jews.*” These verses show how Mark focused on the culpability of the religious leaders in Jesus’ execution. When their efforts to have Jesus killed appeared to be stopped by Pilate, the religious leaders persuaded the crowd to cry out loudly to crucify Him. This plot would never have worked with the huge crowds that loved and followed Jesus. It was only because He had been so popular that the religious leaders were prevented from moving against Him earlier. They had to conduct an illegal trial at night so that His supporters were unaware of what was transpiring (Mark 11:18; 12:12; 14:2). Their plot against Jesus was also aimed at placing the blame on the Romans. Pilate ruled as governor in an out of the way region, which according to Rome was of minor importance. They only provided him with a small army that put him at a disadvantage if the Jews actually rebelled. He had to do what ever he could to maintain the peace or incur the wrath of the emperor in Rome. Although he did not see any reason to kill Jesus he went along with them because they threatened to report him to Tiberius Caesar (John 19:12). If they did that and rioted his career would be severely limited or ended. Pilate did not need a riot at Passover with thousands of additional Jews in Jerusalem to add to his grief. In his frustration he asked them, “*what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him.*” The irony of all of this is that Jesus will hang on a cross between two genuine insurrectionists and die as a substitute for one more, Barabbas. The only reason Jesus is there is because he is *not* one of them. Barabbas is one of them and this is the first person for which Jesus died as the substitutionary Lamb that takes away the sins of the world. Matthew adds the fact of Pilate washing his hands in symbolic gesture of having no responsibility over this execution (Matthew 27:24-25). In fact the Jewish religious leaders take full responsibility for His death and affirm to pass it on to successive generations; *then answered all the people, and said, “His blood be on us, and on our children.”* In fact when Pilate asked the crowd if he should crucify their king they said, “*We have no king but Caesar*” (John 19:15).

PILATE RELEASES BARABBAS AND SENTENCES JESUS

Mark 15:15

¹⁵ *And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified (KJV).*

Jesus’ last of six trials ends with Pilate wanting to appease the angry crowds more than administer justice. If Pilate wanted to release Jesus it was not going to happen without causing a riot. He knew they had no sustainable charge against Jesus but he was willing to satisfy them and crucify Jesus. So he washed his hands of the matter but would remain guilt ridden over this. As a true magistrate he had no good reason to crucify Jesus other than political appeasement of the crowd in avoidance of a riot and angering Caesar. So he released the criminal Barabbas and had Jesus flogged. Pilate had Jesus flogged in hope that the people would take pity and be satisfied. The flogging did not move them at all; they still insisted He be crucified (John 19:1–7). Flogging was done as a measure to accelerate the prisoner’s death on the cross. It was done with a multi-stranded whip. Into the ends were fastened pieces of metal or sharp bones or pottery. Typically several soldiers carried out the flogging and there was no limit on the length of the flogging. The person scheduled for execution seldom survived the flogging. In Jesus case He had to go to the wooden cross in fulfillment of a prophecy. Paul explains in Galatians.

Galatians 3:13

¹³ *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree (KJV).*

Paul is referencing the Mosaic Law in Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy 21:23

²³ *his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt surely bury him the same day; for he that is hanged is accursed of God; that thou defile not thy land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance (ASV, 1901).*

THE ROMAN SOLDIERS ASSEMBLE

Mark 15:16

¹⁶ *And the soldiers led him away into the hall, called Pretorium; and they call together the whole band (KJV).*

Immediately after the flogging, which probably took place out in the public square outside the Antonia Fortress the Roman soldiers, took the badly beaten Jesus back into the palace of the governor called the Praetorium. Once they got Him inside they summoned the whole company of soldiers. This was anywhere from 200 to 600 men. They for the most part knew little or anything about Jesus. With their intense hatred of the Jews this was just another one of them condemned to die. The Romans generally despised the Jews who despised them as well. So Jesus ends up being mocked, brutally tortured and killed by brutal and vulgar men who were ignorant of His genuine mission.

THE ROMAN SOLDIERS MOCK JESUS

Mark 15:17-19

¹⁷ *And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head,* ¹⁸ *and began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews.* ¹⁹ *And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees worshipped him (KJV).*

They did know of all the talk of Jesus being a king. First they put a purple robe on Him symbolically depicting royalty. Purple is the most expensive and prestigious of ancient dyes, symbolizing royalty. Then they pressed a hand made crown of thorns on to His head causing further punctures to His body. If this were a genuine crown it would have been made of gold signifying royalty or military valor. Jesus' crown is a painful satire probably woven from the spiny stems of the acanthus plant, which is common in the Mediterranean region. They then placed a stick in His hand as a scepter, which further indicates royalty and it also represents prophetic fulfillment (Genesis 49:9-10). Then they proceeded to *salute him, Hail, King of the Jews.* ¹⁹ *And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees worshipped him.* The degree of insult was

astonishing as they mocked, spit upon and hit Him on the head with a stick. This too was a fulfillment of prophecy.

Isaiah 50:6; 52:14-53:6

⁶ I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting (ASV, 1901).

52 ¹⁴ Like as many were astonished at thee (his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men), ¹⁵ so shall he sprinkle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they understand. 53 ¹ Who hath believed our message? and to whom hath the arm of Jehovah been revealed? ² For he grew up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. ³ He was despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and as one from whom men hide their face he was despised; and we esteemed him not.

⁴ Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. ⁵ But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. ⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all (ASV, 1901).

JESUS IS LED TO CRUCIFIXION

Mark 15:20

²⁰ And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him (KJV).

When the soldiers tired of making sport of Jesus they removed the purple robe and put His own clothes back on. The text does not say they ever removed the crown of thorns. They then led Him out to be crucified. There were probably only four soldiers under the command of an officer because John lets us know that four of them divided His clothing (John 19:23).

NEXT WEEK: MARK: JESUS IS CRUCIFIED

Please call or e-mail with any questions or comments

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