

## OUTLINE - THE GOSPEL OF MARK - PRESENTATION 14

### THE PASSION AND DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST

I. Putting the descriptions of all four Gospels together, the overall series of events occurred as follows.

A. Jesus was arrested, probably between 2:00 and 3:00 a.m.

B. The group of soldiers first brought Him before Annas as his home.

1. Annas had been high priest from 15-5 B.C. The Romans removed him and made his son-in-law Caiphas high priest. The action violated the principles of Judaism and many Jews still regarded Annas as the real high priest.

2. There, they conducted an initial inquiry with a large portion of the Sanhedrin, but Caiphas was apparently present. The Sanhedrin was a council in Jerusalem, composed of the chief priests, and many scribes and elders, along with a few Pharisees. It came about by the mid-second century B.C. See 1 Macc. 11:23, 12:6, 14:28; 2 Macc. 4:44. It had doctrinal authority in Judaism and some political authority in Judea.

3. After they had trouble getting two witnesses to agree to any definite accusation, as is required by Deuteronomy 17:6, Annas asked Jesus whether He is the Messiah and the Son of the Blessed One. Jesus says He is and that they will see the Son of Man coming in power upon the clouds. See Daniel 7; Psalm 110:1. In what was probably a theatric gesture, Annas tore his garments. Priests were forbidden from this very action as a violation of priestly dignity. See Leviticus 10:6. Led by Annas, the council condemned Jesus and physically abused and mocked Him.

4. While this trial was occurring, Peter denied Jesus twice, at the end of which the cock crowed once, a short time before dawn.

C. At about daybreak, they brought Jesus to Caiphas and either question Him again or read a record of the last session. Here, they decided to bring Him to Pilate.

1. Near the beginning of this session, Peter denied Jesus a third time and the cock crowed again.
2. According to a second century A.D. document, trials were supposed to be during daytime, and were supposed to be at the Temple. In addition, any trial for a capital crime was supposed to be at least two days. These rules were disregarded in the rush to kill Jesus, in part because the Passover was approaching, and in part to prevent any reaction.
3. The council brought Jesus to Pilate, in part because they had no authority to execute Him and in part because they wanted the Romans to be involved to give them protection in case there was an organized opposition. It is not clear whether the Sanhedrin had no authority to execute people in Jerusalem, or whether they could do so but were required to follow procedural norms that they had disregarded.
4. When the Sanhedrin was bringing Jesus to Pilate, Judas, realizing the implications of what he had done, went to some of the chief priests and tried to get them to stop their plot. But they rejected him. And then he went off and committed suicide, probably as Jesus was being tried by Pilate and Herod.

D. Pilate, knowing Jesus was innocent of any real crime, and knowing something of the disputes between Him and the religious leaders, questioned Jesus and attempted to release Him. When that was not working, he sent Jesus to Herod, hoping to put the problem on Herod's doorstep. This first trial before Pilate occurred at about 7:00.

1. Herod's palace was about a half-mile from the fortress where Pilate was probably staying. They brought Him there, but He refused to answer Herod's questions. Herod and his soldiers also mocked Him and sent Him back to Herod.
2. Sometime between 8:00 and 9:00, Jesus returned to Pilate. Pilate took the return as an indication that Herod also found Him innocent. He again tried to release Jesus, but the Sanhedrin and the increasing mobs would not accept that.
3. At about this time, some people came asking that Pilate release a prisoner, as was custom on the Passover. At about the same time, Pilate's wife sent him a message saying that she had had a dream about Jesus and that He should be released. Believing (or at least hoping) that they wanted Jesus released, Pilate offered to do so. If Barabbas was a common murderer, Pilate may have set up the choice between Jesus and Barabbas, hoping that the crowd would be revolted at the idea of releasing Barabbas. If instead Barabbas was a popular revolutionary, it was the chief priests who used him to circumvent Pilate's attempt to release Jesus on the occasion of the Passover. In any case, the crowds chose

Barabbas and demanded that Pilate crucify Jesus.

4. Pilate then proposed scourging Jesus instead of crucifying Him. The crowds would not accept the compromise. But Pilate tried to carry out this plan and had Jesus scourged. The time was probably between 9:00 and 10:00. He then brought Jesus back before the crowds, hoping that the sight of Him scourged would evoke their sympathy, or at least assuage their rage. But the crowds still demanded that Jesus be crucified.

5. After an unsuccessful attempt to persuade the crowds, Pilate handed Him over to be crucified. The time was probably between 11:00 and 12 noon.

6. Probably as a last defiance of the religious leaders, Pilate inscribed on a board to be hung above the Cross, "The King of the Jews." Either immediately, or while Jesus was carrying the Cross, some of the chief priests asked him to revise the message to say "He claimed he was king of the Jews." Pilate rejected the request, probably in anger.

Jesus was nailed to the cross at about noon. At that time a darkness covered the land, either around Jerusalem, or possibly in all of Judea, fulfilling especially the prophesy of Amos 8:9. See also Isaiah 13:10ff, 24:23; Joel 3:3.

1. The soldiers offered Jesus a drugged myrrh, possibly out of compassion or possibly to keep Him from speaking further. He refused to take it.

2. At first, both thieves crucified with Him reviled Him, but one repented, defended Jesus, asked for forgiveness of his sins, and received the promise of the kingdom.

3. At first, some women including Mary Magdalene were at the foot of the Cross, but by the time of Jesus' death they were further off, possibly because the soldiers or the crowd drove them off, or possibly because the Blessed Mother came, and they wanted to give Jesus time alone with her and John.

4. Just before 3:00, Jesus quoted the beginning of Psalm 22, "My God, my God, why have You abandoned me?" a psalm that ends with a note of triumph, with a prediction that all nations will worship God. Someone then offered Jesus sour wine

or vinegar, which He drank, possibly reflecting the cup of suffering that He was taking on and possibly reflecting that He was now drinking of the fruit of the vine, for His kingdom was now being established. He then gave a loud cry and said, "Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend My spirit" and "It is consummated."

5. Jesus then died on the cross. There was an earthquake, many graves were opened, and souls of the dead visited some of the living. The veil of the Temple, which separated the Holy of Holies from the people, was torn in two, reflecting the end of the Old Covenant and establishment of the New Covenant, available to all people. The centurion then declared, "Truly this man was the Son of God" and affirming His innocence.

6. At about the same time, people sent a message to Pilate, asking that the soldiers break the bones of Jesus and the thieves so that they would die before the Passover and their bodies could be taken down. Pilate or one of his officials gave this permission.

7. Right after Jesus' death, Joseph of Arimathea, and probably some associates and servants went to Pilate asking for Jesus' body so that they could bury Him. The bodies of people who were crucified were usually thrown into a pit. Pilate, after being sure that Jesus was dead, gave this permission. Joseph and some of the women who ministered to Jesus took the body, did some quick preparations for the burial, and buried Him in a new man-made cave Joseph had ordered made, probably a short time earlier. The burial was a short time before sundown.

II. Overall, Mark very much emphasizes Jesus' loneliness and true suffering up to the time of His death. He does not describe anyone sympathetic near Jesus (except Simon who was conscripted), as the other evangelists do, nor the repentant thief. The only words of Jesus on the Cross that Mark records are "My God, my God, why have You abandoned me?"

A. But then, after Jesus' death, there is a dramatic reversal. Nature honors Jesus with earthquakes at His death. Mark then describes the women, including Mary Magdalene who ministered to Jesus and mourned His death. Joseph of Arimathea courageously asked for His body. And, perhaps most dramatically, the centurion declared that Jesus truly was the Son of God, reflecting the theme of the Gospel as stated at the beginning.

B. Matthew's account is very similar to Mark's with a few additions such as the death of Judas Iscariot, the dream of Pilate's wife, and the dead rising at Jesus' death. Matthew does emphasize the supernatural a bit more.

C. Luke very much emphasizes the theme of compassion, describing, for example the women comforting Jesus on the way to Calvary, the repentant thief, and the words of Jesus, "Forgive them Father, for they know not what they do."

D. John focuses more on Jesus as triumphantly marching to the Cross, including His discourse with Pilate on His kingdom and truth, His message to Mary and John, His last words, "It is consummated," and Pilate and the oppressors afraid of Him.

### III. Overall, Mark describes the day as a series of rapid and confused scenes.

A. In the first, and most crucial session before Annas, described here only as "the high priest" there is such confusion that they cannot even get two witnesses to agree. The high priest then creates the occasion for the alleged blasphemy, and then is outraged by it.

B. Passing over the second session quickly, Mark describes the scene before Pilate very briefly, presenting Pilate as a weak figure who knew that Jesus was innocent but was afraid of the crowds. The cruelty of the soldiers follows upon this failure of leadership.

C. Simon of Cyrene is the only figure whom Mark describes as helping Jesus. Cyrene was the capital of Lybia, and the soldiers probably deliberately chose a foreigner to carry the cross. Mark specifically mentions Simon's sons, Alexander and Rufus. They were probably well known among the early Christians. See Romans 16:13 (sending greetings to a Rufus.)

D. Contrasting with the abandonment of Jesus before His death is the dramatic triumph at His death, with the earth coming to His support and the centurion (named in non-Biblical sources as Longinus) recognizing His divine origin. This conversion, along with Joseph of Arimathea's pious reverence for Jesus by requesting the body, indicates that the first fruits of Jesus' sacrifice had already begun.