

Jesus Before Pilate
Mark 15:1-15
September 14, 2014

Introduction

When we get to the trials, it seems that Jesus is helplessly being carried away by injustice. It seems that Jesus receives no help from anyone. It seems that God has abandoned Jesus because He has no power to help His Son. We can never think this way.

John 10:17-18 *The reason My Father loves Me is that I lay down My life—only to take it up again. 18 No one takes it 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.*

Jesus allows Himself to be arrested and caught, so that He will go to the cross and die according to God's eternal purpose and plan. He has told the disciples numerous times that He has to die according to Scripture. He has to do what God has decreed from eternity past.

Acts 4:27-28 *Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against Your Holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed. 28 They did what Your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.*

Jesus is strengthened by God to endure. He has accepted the cup and will drink it in a few hours. The Jews and the Gentiles both kill Jesus, but Jesus' death is ultimately because of God, so that through faith in Jesus Christ and repenting from our sins, we can have eternal life. His sacrifice is completely sufficient for our eternal salvation.

We pick up in the gospel of Mark that the Sanhedrin has declared Jesus to be guilty and has condemned Him to death. However, their trial occurs at night and in secret, and it is not legal. **The question is how are they successful in having Jesus executed?** They are able to manipulate one man into executing Jesus, and that man is Pontus Pilate.

Mark 15:1-15

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.*

- Very early in the morning
 - About 5 AM (sunrise)
 - Hypocritical veneer of "justice"
 - They were trying to legalize their own unlawful trial by having it during the day
- Reached a decision
 - Third phase of the Jewish trial
 - Jesus should die
- Handed Him over to Pilate
 - Why?
 - They did not have the authority to execute anybody

John 18:31 *Pilate said, "Take Him yourselves and judge Him by your own law." "But we have no right to execute anyone," the Jews objected.*

- They had to find compelling reasons for Rome to execute Him

- Blasphemy was not considered a compelling reason for Rome (Romans were polytheists)
- Pontus Pilate
 - Governor of Judea
 - Appointed by Caesar in 26 AD and ruled until 36 AD
 - Jews hated him
 - He was responsible for several massacres and causing riots
 - He hated the Jews as well
 - He could not afford another riot in Jerusalem—especially during Passover

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.

- This is the first phase of the Roman trial
- Jesus is before Pilate

John 18:28-32 Then the Jews led Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness the Jews did not enter the palace; they wanted to be able to eat the Passover. **29** So Pilate came out to them and asked, "What charges are you bringing against this Man?" **30** "If He were not a criminal," they replied, "we would not have handed Him over to you." **31** Pilate said, "Take Him yourselves and judge Him by your own law." "But we have no right to execute anyone," the Jews objected. **32** This happened so that the words Jesus had spoken indicating the kind of death He was going to die would be fulfilled.

- Hypocrisy of the Sanhedrin
- The Sanhedrin want Pilate to execute Jesus
 - Note their brazen response (v 30)
 - They want Pilate to go ahead and execute Him
 - Do not question their authority
 - Why?
 - They are afraid of the people
 - They do not want people to riot against them for killing Jesus
- Charges against Jesus

Luke 23:1-2 Then the whole assembly rose and led Him off to Pilate. **2** 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."

- They are lying!
- Jesus is now before Pilate

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

- Interestingly, Pilate ignores the first two charges
- Why? He knows Jesus' reputation
- The questioning continues in John

John 18:33-38 Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" **34** "Is that your own idea," Jesus asked, "or did

others talk to you about Me?" **35** "Am I a Jew?" Pilate replied. "It was your people and your chief priests who handed You over to me. What is it You have done?" **36** Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, My servants would fight to prevent My arrest by the Jews. But now My kingdom is from another place." **37** "You are a king, then!" said Pilate. Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to Me." **38** "What is truth?" Pilate asked. With this he went out again to the Jews and said, "I find no basis for a charge against Him.

Mark 15:3-5 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.

Luke 23:5 But they insisted, "He stirs up the people all over Judea by His teaching. He started in Galilee and has come all the way here."

- Despite all the questions and accusations, our Lord is silent
 - He makes no defense
- Pilate is amazed

Note: This is Mark's favorite word because Mark is stressing that Pilate knows Jesus to be completely innocent and is amazed that Jesus offers no defense against their accusations.

Note 2: For an event that occurs between **verses 5 and 6**, Luke records that Jesus is taken to Herod (**Luke 23:6-12**) because Jesus is from Galilee which is Herod's jurisdiction. This is the second phase of the Roman Trial. Herod has never met Jesus and wants to meet with Him; however, Jesus answers nothing from the questions of Herod and the Sanhedrin. Herod sends Jesus back to Pilate. Why? He finds Jesus innocent, not deserving of death.

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.

- This is the third phase of the Roman trial
- Pilate finds Jesus innocent of charges

Luke 23:13-16 Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers and the people, **14** and said to them, "You brought me this Man as one who was inciting the people to rebellion. I have examined Him in your presence and have found no basis for your charges against Him. **15** Neither has Herod, for he sent Him back to us; as you can see, He has done nothing to deserve death. **16** Therefore, I will punish Him and then release Him."

- Pilate does not want to deal with Jesus anymore, so he figures a way to release Jesus
 - He knows of the chief priests' envy and jealousy
 - He is trying to release Jesus so he is appealing to Jesus' popularity (from Jesus' entry of Jerusalem)
 - He offers them a choice between Jesus and Barabbas (a murderer)
 - He thinks he is on safe ground

- However, he did not account for the chief priests stirring up the crowd

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.

- When Pilate offers pardon for Jesus, the chief priests are leading the cries

Luke 23:18 *With one voice they cried out, "Away with this Man! Release Barabbas to us!"*

- Pilate does not want Jesus killed
 - He is appealing to the crowd's mercy
 - He keeps telling them of Jesus' innocence
 - He begs them 3 times

Luke 23:20-22 *Wanting to release Jesus, Pilate appealed to them again. 21 But they kept shouting, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" 22 For the third time he spoke to them: Why? What crime has this man committed? I have found in Him no grounds for the death penalty. Therefore I will have Him punished and then release Him."*

- Crucify Him
 - Everyone—chief priests and people; mass hysteria
 - Passover murder
 - They came to Jerusalem to worship God
 - They are demanding that the Son of God die
- Wishing to satisfy the crowd
 - Pilate broke down, finished
 - He does not want a riot and keep the peace over Judea
 - He is more concerned about his own head than releasing the innocent Man
- Jesus is flogged
 - This was done to speed up death
 - Whips that cause laceration