

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

SESSION 17: CHAPTER 14:43- 15:20

“ARREST & TRIAL”



Read Mark 14: 43 - 52.

QUESTIONS:

1.(a). How does Jesus respond to his betrayal?

(b). Who had come out to find him in the Garden?

Why had they come to this place and at this time?

(c). Why is a kiss the sign of betrayal?

(d). Why did the rest of the disciples forsake him and flee?

Why didn't they put up more of a fight?

(e). What is the significance of the mention of the young man in v.51-3?

(f) How does his predicament reflect the warnings of Jesus about the cost of discipleship (8: 34-38)?



Read Mark 14: 53 - 65.

2.(a). What aspects of the trial before the Sanhedrin does Mark emphasise?

(b). What is the role of the witnesses?

What do we learn from their testimony?

(c). Up to this point Jesus has regularly disguised his identity, but in v. 62, he makes an open confession of his power. Why does he do so now?

What does this verse refer to and mean?

(d). What was the reaction to this statement?

On what charge is Jesus finally condemned?

How is this charge both justifiable and unjustifiable?



(e). How is Jesus, in contrast to his disciples, an example of the kind of discipleship he desires in us?

NB Tearing one's garments was an ancient way of expressing distress and mourning. The gesture is a fitting response to blasphemy and a dramatic way of getting the others to agree with him ARNOLD

Read Mark 14: 66 - 72.

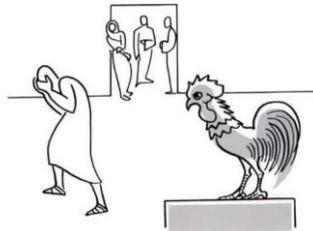
3.(a). What possible mixture of motives brought Peter into the High Priest's courtyard, yet kept him from acknowledging his relationship with Jesus?

(b). How was Peter recognised?

NB In rabbinic literature, Galileans are portrayed as simpletons and ruffraff. They can be identified by their Aramaic accents (cf Matt. 26:73). Jerusalem merchants taunt a Galilean wanting to purchase an *amar*:

"Foolish Galilean," they said to him, "do you mean an 'ass' for riding [*hamaār*], 'wine' to drink [*hamar*], 'wool' for clothing [*amar*] or a 'lamb' for killing [*jimmar*]?"

Geza Vermes explains with an example from modern British English: "In careless everyday conversation the Galileans dropped their aitches." ARNOLD



(c). What is the significance of the cockcrow?
What is Peter's reaction to it?

NB The text does not say that Peter called down curses on himself. The verb has no object in the Greek text, and it is possible to construe it that he goes so far as to curse Jesus. Pliny the Younger was appointed by the emperor Trajan to govern Bithynia-Pontus and reported that he asked suspected Christians three times with threats of punishment, "Are you a Christian?" The accused proved their innocence by cursing Jesus, which, he says, "those who are really Christians cannot be made to do." In the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 9:3, the proconsul adjures Polycarp, "Swear and I will release you." Polycarp replies, "How can I blaspheme the King who saved me?"

(d). How is Judas's betrayal different from Peter's?

What might be the reason for including such failure in the gospel?

NB

The double picture is put together in another of Mark's 'sandwiches'. Peter arrives in the high priest's courtyard; but the reader already knows that Jesus has prophesied that he will renounce him three times. Jesus is then accused before the high priest of

being, among other things, a false prophet. After the verdict, Jesus is taunted: he's such a hopeless prophet that when blindfold he can't tell who's hitting him. We then switch back to Peter: he does exactly what Jesus had said he would. That night, says Mark, Jesus was vindicated as a true prophet. N T WRIGHT

Read Mark 15: 1 - 15.

- 4.(a). Why did the Jewish leaders send Jesus to Pilate?
Does Deut. 21:23 have any relevance?
- (b). From the accounts what kind of man was Pilate?
How did he assess the Jews motives?
- (c). What evidence is there that he wanted to do what was right?
What kept him from doing what he wanted?
- (d). What do you make of Jesus' answers or lack of them (v.5) to Pilate?

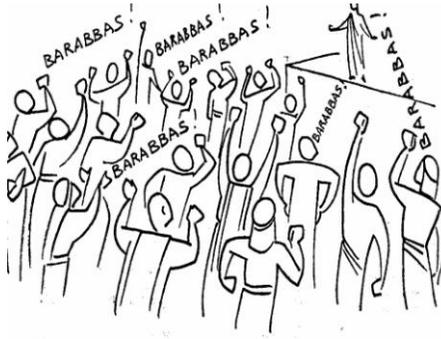


NB

Pilate's official title was prefect (see inscription found in Caesarea identifying him as *Praefectus Iudaeae*).

The governors were called procurators only after A.D. 44. As governor, Pilate had the power of life and death over all the inhabitants of his province. He was of equestrian rank (knight, wealthy enough to own a horse). In this rank, he would have had no assistants of a similar status and no team of Roman officials to handle all of the administrative matters. A large part of the everyday chores of government and administration was thus carried out by the local councils and magistrates. They had the power to arrest, take evidence, and make a preliminary examination in order to present a case before a governor for a formal trial. The Roman authorities held them accountable for outbreaks of violence and would replace them. The governor, however, was ultimately responsible for ensuring that order was maintained and for deciding the death penalty.

- 5.(a). What was the role of Barabbas in the story?
- (b). How can it be said that he is a stand in for every believer?
- (c). Why did the mob cry "Crucify" after their cries on Palm Sunday (11: 9-10)?
- (d) How does the Barabbas story help us understand some of the significance of Jesus' crucifixion?



Read Mark 15: 16 - 20.

6. (a). Why was this torture done?
- (b). Why does Mark describe it in such detail?
- (c). What does it say about the "Roman" involvement in Christ's crucifixion?

NT Scourging was a customary preliminary to crucifixion. The prisoner was bound to a pillar or post and beaten with a *flagellum*. This whip consisted of leather thongs plaited with pieces of bone, lead, or bronze or with hooks and was appropriately called a scorpion. Gladiators sometimes fought with them. There was no prescribed number of lashes so that in some cases the scourging itself was fatal. The balls would cause deep contusions as the flesh was literally ripped into bloody ribbons. It was so horrible that Suetonius claimed even Domitian was horrified by it. Significant blood loss could also occur, critically weakening the victim.

