

Mark 15:1-20
The Condemned King

Introduction

1. As we've been studying these last few days of Jesus' earthly life we've seen Him presented as the Sacrificial Lamb, the Stricken Shepherd and the Rejected Messiah
2. In our passage today we see Him as the Condemned King
3. According to Jeremiah 23:5-6 God promised to raise up a descendent of David who would one day rule His people as an Earthly and Eternal King: **"Behold, the days are coming," declares the LORD, "When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; And He will reign as king and act wisely And do justice and righteousness in the land. 6 "In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell securely; And this is His name by which He will be called, 'The LORD our righteousness.'"**
4. The New Testament revealed Jesus to be that King:
 - a. We see that not only in Jesus's words in our passage today, but Paul referred to Him as the **"King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God"** (1 Timothy 1:17) and the **"only Sovereign the King of kings and Lord of lords"** (1 Timothy 6:15)
 - b. In the book of Revelation He is referred to as **"King over the nations"** (Revelation 15:3) and twice as **"Lord of lords and King of kings"** (17:14; 19:16)
5. In another Old Testament passage, Isaiah 53, we learn of the condemnation this King would face (READ Isaiah 53:7-12)
6. We see this Condemnation of the King fulfilled in our passage today

A. The Sanhedrin delivers the King over to Pilate to be condemned to death (15:1-2)

1. After their all night kangaroo court, the Sanhedrin gets together for a final meeting first thing in the morning (5:1a): **"Early in the morning the chief priests with the elders and scribes and the whole Council, immediately held a consultation;"**
 - a. According to Luke's account, their purpose was to accuse and question Jesus one more time (READ Luke 22:66-71)
 - b. Matthew states that their true purpose was to condemn Him to death (Matthew 27:1)
2. Immediately following their meeting, they bound Jesus and delivered Him over to Pilate (15:1b): **"immediately held a consultation; and binding Jesus, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pilate."**
 - a. Pilate was the prefect, or governor, of Judea from 26-36 A.D.
 - b. When it came to judicial matters like this, the governor was both judge and jury so all final decisions rested with him
3. Unlike their own trial, where they accused Jesus of blasphemy, when they deliver Him to Pilate they accuse Him of High Treason (Luke 23:2): **"And they began to accuse Him, saying, "We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, and saying that He Himself is Christ, a King."**
 - a. There are three charges here:

- 1) Misleading, or as the NET and NIV render it “subverting” the nation which is basically disturbing the peace
 - 2) Encouraging the Jews not to pay taxes to Rome, already a contentious issue among the Jews)
 - 3) Claiming to be a king which made Him a threat to Rome
- b. These amount to High Treason or crimes against Rome:
- 1) The Sanhedrin knew there was no precedent to have Jesus put to death for violating their religion because Rome could care less about that
 - 2) So, they came to Pilate in deceit with trumped up charges
 - 3) We learn later that Pilate wasn’t fooled and that he knew their real reason was “envy”— they wanted to eliminate a threat to themselves (Mark 15:10)

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| <p>B. Pilate questions the King and finds Him innocent (15:2-5)</p> |
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1. Initially, when the Sanhedrin first delivers Jesus to Pilate he refuses to accept their charges, tells them to deal with the matter themselves (John 18:28-33):
 - a. Pilate was no friend of the Jews
 - b. He was known to be insensitive to their concerns
 - c. In fact, according to Josephus he was known to antagonize the Jews, and even ordered their slaughter
 - d. We see his indifference to their charges here when he attempts to turn them away

2. Pilate relents and questions Jesus, only to find Him innocent of the Jews false charges (15:3-5):
 - a. He asks Jesus outright whether He was the King of the Jews (2): **“And Pilate questioned Him, ‘Are you the King of the Jews?’**
 - b. Jesus answered him directly in the affirmative (2b): **“It is as you say.”**
 - c. Mark’s account is a summary, but John’s account provides more detail (READ John 18:33-38):
 - 1) In a nut shell, Jesus affirms His role as King of the Jews but indicates that He has no interest in overthrowing Rome because His kingdom is not of this world
 - 2) As such, Pilate doesn’t see Him as a threat or an instigator and finds Jesus guiltless regarding the false claims of the Jewish leaders
 - d. The Jewish leaders obviously object so Pilate relents and questions Jesus again (15:3-5):
 - 1) V. 3 states, **“And they chief priests began to accuse Him harshly”**—which is better understood as accusing him repeatedly (NET) or with many things (NIV, ESV, CSB)
 - 2) In John 18:30 they called Him an “evil doer”
 - 3) In Luke 23:5 they claim He was **“stirring up the people”** everywhere from Galilee to Jerusalem
 - 4) But through all the accusations, Jesus stays silent (4-5) **“Then Pilate questioned Him again, saying, “Do You not answer? See how many charges they bring against You!” 5 But Jesus made no further answer; so Pilate was amazed.”**
 - a) Jesus wasn’t interested in declaring His innocence because that wasn’t part of God’s plan
 - b) Mark 8:31: **“And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.”**

C. Pilate attempts to release the King (15:6-14)

1. Pilate had already made it known that He rejected the claims of the Jewish leaders and that his intent was to release Jesus
2. However, rather than do the right thing and release an innocent man, he tries to pass the buck:
 - a. His first attempt was to send Jesus to Herod, the governor of Galilee—this is recorded in Luke 23:6-12
 - 1) Jesus was from Galilee so Pilate figured Herod could deal with Jesus, and Herod just happened to be in Jerusalem at this time
 - 2) However, Herod was more interested in seeing Jesus perform some miracles for Him, and when Jesus didn't oblige him Herod simply had Jesus mocked and sent back to Pilate
 - b. His second attempt was political, and it backfired on him as well—and even backed him into a corner (6-15):
 - 1) Every year at Passover, Pilate would release a prisoner of the crowds choosing as an act of good will
 - 2) When the Jews approach him this time, he presents them with a choice between Jesus and a man named Barabbas (READ 6-10):
 - a) Barabbas was a known murderer and member of the insurrection (an uprising against Rome)
 - b) Pilate knew that the Jewish leaders had handed Jesus over because they were envious of His popularity among the Jews
 - c) So, in giving the people a choice between a known murderer and a popular figure like Jesus, one many regarded as their possible future King, he was certain the people would choose Jesus and he would be off the hook
 - d) Notice that Pilate presents the choice not as one between Barabbas and “Jesus”, but Barabbas and the “King of the Jews”—in fact, twice in John's account Pilate refers to Jesus as “**Your King**” (John 18:14-15)
 - 3) However, the plan backfired: (READ 11-14):
 - a) The chief priests convinced the crowd not only demand Barabbas but to demand Jesus' crucifixion
 - b) John's account provides much more detail regarding the lengths to which Pilate went to convince the Jewish leaders and crowd to allow him to release Jesus (READ John 18:39-15)
 - c) Pilate's miscalculation resulted in him being backed into a corner—according to Matthew's account he was facing a near riot
 - d) He could release Jesus, face a riot and be labeled an enemy of Caesar and Rome (something John tells us frightened Pilate) or condemn an innocent man

D. Pilate orders the condemnation of the King (15:15-20)

1. We all know the choice Pilate made: READ 15-20
2. As shocking as it is to see Pilate condemn an innocent man, and the soldiers mock and torture Jesus, we shouldn't be surprised

3. Jesus predicted this very event, in exacting detail and precision, in Mark 10:32-34 (READ)
4. It was all part of God's plan—READ Acts 4:27-28:
 - a. Herod, Pilate, the Jews and the Romans all acted according to God's hands
 - b. God predestined the events and the outcome
5. And, we know that this wasn't a defeat for the King, but a victory because He ultimately conquered death and will ultimately conquer His enemies!

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| Conclusion |
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1. So, what do we do with this?
2. How should this affect our faith?
3. Well, take a look at how it encouraged and emboldened the early church (READ Acts 4:29-37):
 - a. They asked the Lord to help them speak His Word with confidence
 - b. They asked the Lord to heal and perform signs and wonders through them
 - c. They were filled with the Spirit and began to speak the Word of God with boldness
 - d. They gave testimony of the resurrection of Jesus
 - e. They were filled with grace, unity and charity