

The Jewish Trial

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[0 : 00] You can take your copy of God's Word again as we prepare to hear it preached and turn to the gospel according to Mark.!

Verse 53, Mark 14. This is the word of the Lord. They took Jesus to the high priest, and all the chief priests, elders, and teachers of the law came together.

Peter followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. Then he sat with the guards and warmed himself at the fire. The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus so they could put him to death, but they did not find any.

Many testified falsely against him, but their statements did not agree. Then some stood up and gave this false testimony against him. We heard him say, I will destroy this man-made temple, and in three days will build another not made by man.

Yet even then their testimony did not agree. Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?

[1 : 31] But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer. Again the high priest asked him, Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One? I am, Jesus said.

And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven. The high priest tore his clothes. Why do we need any more witnesses?

He asked. You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think? They all condemned him as worthy of death. Then some began to spit at him.

They blindfolded him, struck him with their fists, and said, Prophecy! And the guards took him and beat him. This week we have again witnessed evil, close up, and personal.

Close up because of mass media that brings it right into our phones. And personal because whether or not you knew Charlie Kirk, he was a brother in Christ.

[2 : 35] As he openly confessed his sin and his trust for salvation in Christ's perfect life and his substitutionary death for him.

Charlie openly confessed his political views, whether you agree with them or not. But he openly confessed his commitment to God's natural and moral law.

That God's law is the abiding standard of what is right and wrong. God's law defines what is good and evil.

And upholding God's law, he wasn't afraid to expose the many evils of our day. And for it, he was hated and he was silenced on Wednesday afternoon by a sniper's bullet at the young age of 31.

I'm here to tell you about another young man in his early 30s. Jesus of Nazareth. The eternal son of God who 2,000 years ago visited our planet.

[3 : 44] The planet he created. Taking our human nature while retaining his divine nature. And for the first 30 years here, his heavenly father was preparing him for his life's work.

Teaching him. Teaching him. Shaping him. Fashioning. Concealing him like a polished arrow in his quiver. And then he shot him into his public ministry at age 30.

For three years, he went about doing nothing but good. Preaching the gospel. The good news of the kingdom of God. And upholding God's moral law. And with it, exposing man's evil.

And calling them to repent. For the kingdom of God is at hand. And he showed men that their evil is not just some outward things that they do.

But it's something that is within them. That murder is not just something committed with a knife or a sword. A club or a bullet. But murder can be committed by hatred and anger in the heart.

[5 : 01] He told them that adultery is not just something committed in bed. But can be committed in your mind and your heart by lust. He told them that what defiles a person and makes them totally

unfit for God.

Is not something outside of them, but inside of them. For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts. Sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit.

Lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance, and folly. All these evils come from inside. And make a man unclean. That was Jesus' message.

Showing that man's greatest problem is his sin problem against this holy God that made him. And it arises out of our sinful nature that is obnoxious to God's holy nature.

And therefore, there's no way for you to fix your sin problem. You need a Savior. That's why my Father has sent me. You need me, he said. So come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

[6 : 07] Those sinners didn't like the light of the world shining God's law in their face. For men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil.

And everyone who does evil hates the light and will not come into the light lest his deeds should be exposed. Jesus told his own brothers in John 7, 7, the reason the world hates me is because I testify that what it does is evil.

And so they despised and hated him. And silenced his voice by killing him at the young age of 33. Sound familiar? If you don't like the message, then kill the messenger. It's a story as old as time.

A true story of Jesus of Nazareth. And Mark in his gospel is telling us how this happened in his life. And so last week we saw the betrayal of Jesus by Judas Iscariot.

[7 : 21] In the wee hours of Friday morning. But that was just the first domino that set into motion a whole series of events. It was followed by the arrest, which was followed by the Jewish trial, which was followed by the Roman trial.

And the sentencing of Jesus. And all of this was pushed through so rapidly that by 9 o'clock in the morning they got Jesus nailed to a cross outside of Jerusalem.

Of course the hurried speed of these events was an important part of the plan of the Jewish religious leaders. They wanted to avoid a riot of the people. The people would see the injustice of it and would cry out against it.

So they did their dark deed under the cover of darkness. Lest their deed should be exposed. It really is staggering how much they got done before the masses even got up for breakfast.

So we come this morning to the Jewish trial. First of all, Mark sets the scene. He's been arrested. And verse 53 and 4 say, They took Jesus to the high priest.

[8 : 33] And all the chief priests, elders, and teachers of the law came together. Peter followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. There he sat with the guards and warmed himself at the fire.

So Jesus is being brought to the personal home of the high priest, Caiaphas. And here all the chief priests, elders, and teachers of the law gathered.

That's the Sanhedrin. That's Israel's religious supreme court. Seventy men with the chief priests presiding. And you can be sure that 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning was not the usual time to hold trial. They loved their sleep as much as any other man. But they gladly gave up sleep this morning for this. And here they come, one by one.

They didn't have phones. Somehow they're brought early in the morning together to the chief priest's house. And others of them had gone out earlier with the arresting mob and were supposed to be bringing back their number one enemy, Jesus of Nazareth.

[9 : 49] So as the 70 were gathering at the home of the high priest, you can be sure the mood was upbeat, if not giddy with excitement. For a long time they had hated Jesus.

They plotted how to kill him. We read it back in Mark chapter 3. Here we are in 14. And finally it looks like they got him. They're bringing him in.

Well, these are the same men that just three days earlier put 30 pieces of silver in Judas' hand to betray Jesus. These are the same men that had met a week earlier laying plans to kill Lazarus as well as Jesus because on account of Jesus raising him from the dead, many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and putting their faith in him.

And I say all this just to show that shedding innocent blood is something that this chief priest and his cronies are quite willing to do just to achieve their own purposes.

These are the bloodthirsty sinners now set to judge none other than the sinless, holy, blameless Jesus.

[11 : 04] And then the arresting mob arrives back with him. Then we have this verse about Peter. It appears that initially Peter, like all the rest, forsook the Lord and fled. For it says they all forsook him and were scattered. But at some point he doubles back and follows Jesus at a distance. And he follows him right into the courtyard of the high priest to see the outcome. Mark will record the whole ordeal of Peter's threefold denial immediately after this record that we're studying this morning of his trial.

But he mentions it now to signal to us that these two things are happening at the very same time. As Jesus is being tried upstairs in the house of the high priest, Peter's faithfulness to Jesus is being tried downstairs in the courtyard of the high priest.

And Mark sets them side by side that the contrast might stand out all the clearer. Christ's true confession. And Peter's vile denial.

[12 : 19] So that sets the scene then for the trial, the Jewish trial of Jesus. Let's look at three things then. First of all, the travesty of justice.

This trial is a farce. It's a mockery of justice. If ever the DOJ was weaponized against an opponent, it was the Sanhedrin against Jesus.

Look at verse 55. The chief priest and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death.

What's wrong with this picture? A trial is meant to examine the evidence and then to come to a verdict based on the presented evidence.

But they've already made up their minds about the verdict. He's guilty, worthy of death, must be put to death. And now they're going looking for evidence against Jesus to make their verdict look valid.

[13 : 21] That's exactly backwards. Kids, Lady Justice is a worldwide symbol of justice and it dates back to the Romans even before Jesus' birth.

You'll see her sometimes, a statue of her on the courtyard, the courthouse. She's blindfolded, which signifies impartiality, not bringing any prejudices to the trial.

She has in one hand the scales of justice denoting fairness. Only the facts are allowed in this court. And in the other hand, a sword representing authority to carry out the sentence.

This high court of the Jews had no blindfold. Their prejudice against Jesus going into the trial is very clear.

Secondly, they have no scale of justice. This was the greatest travesty of justice. The sword of authority is all they have in that they grossly abused.

[14 : 33] Since before the trial even starts, they're already judging Jesus as worthy of death and they use this trial to keep looking for evidence to support their verdict.

But they have a problem. Verse 55 says, but they didn't find any. They tried to find it, but they didn't find any. Try as they might, they kept coming up empty.

No wonder. They're searching to find evil in the holy, blameless, and pure Son of God. Good luck with that.

So the kind of witnesses they were looking for and finding were false witnesses. No doubt willing to pay them even as they had paid Judas. Now the law required that in order for someone to be found guilty of a capital offense and therefore deserving the death penalty, there must be at least two witnesses who agree in their testimony against the suspect.

And verse 56 says, many testified falsely against him, but their statements did not agree. They would bring each witness separately in before the court and they would ask, what did you hear and see?

[15 : 54] And they would give their testimony and then leave. They would then bring the next witness in. Now what did you see in here? And none of them agreed.

If their testimony matched, it was valid evidence, but if there was any difference, it was thrown out of court. And though many did testify falsely against him, their statements did not agree, causing one commentator to say, it's harder to agree on a consistent lie than on telling the simple truth.

These religious leaders were out to get him. Mark next gives us an example of their lying witnesses and inability to agree. Verse 57 through 59, then some stood up and gave this false testimony against him.

Well, we heard him say, I will destroy this man-made temple and in three days will build another not made by hand, not made by man.

Yet, even then, their testimony did not agree. Now the temple in Jerusalem was the pride of the nation and especially of these chief priests. And even in the Roman world, desecrating a place of worship was a capital offense deserving of the death penalty.

[17:20] So this was a serious charge being made against Jesus that he's going to destroy this temple. But it was a lie, wasn't it? You remember when he cleared the temple the first time, it's recorded back in John chapter 2, Jesus said this three years earlier, destroy this temple and I will raise it again in three days.

But John says the temple he had spoken of was his body, which he did raise in three days, didn't he? He wasn't even talking about the physical temple of the building, but the temple of his body. Furthermore, Jesus did not say, I will destroy it, as they falsely testified. He said, you destroy this temple and I will raise it in three days.

Jesus didn't even have to point out that discrepancy. He's just letting their own lies unravel and cancel each other out. These agents of the father of lies are telling lies about him who said, I am the way, the truth, and the life.

Caiaphas, the high priest, is growing frustrated with all this. He's frustrated with Jesus' silence. He's frustrated with the way that the trial is going and so he's going to take matters in his own hands.

[18:43] Verse 60 and 61. Then the high priest stood up before them, asked Jesus, are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?

But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer. Just as Isaiah wrote of him 700 years earlier, Isaiah 53, 7, he was oppressed and afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth.

He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shears is dumb, silent, so he opened not his mouth. So we've seen then the travesty of justice that this trial was.

Secondly, let's notice Jesus' good confession. The high priest is losing patience now. He puts Jesus under an oath according to Matthew 26, saying, I charge you under oath by the living God, and he cuts right to the main issue.

Verse 61b. Again, the high priest asked him, are you the Christ? Are you the Messiah? Isaiah, the son of the blessed one.

[19:55] Now the blessed one is just a substitution for the name of God because the name of God was considered too holy to say it and to avoid the risk of breaking the third commandment and misusing the name of the Lord, their God.

They substitute the blessed one. To put Jesus under oath was a great humiliation for him to bear. He who is the truth.

He who, every time he spoke, spoke as if he was under oath. In the presence of God as his witness. And to require him to swear an oath.

Listen, if you have to say, I swear, I swear this, I swear that, it shows your word is unreliable. Jesus said, if you let your yes be yes and your no, no, and that's what he would have done, but they put him under an oath.

And so our Lord responds. We noticed earlier in our study of Mark that throughout his public ministry, Jesus kept his claim to be the Messiah somewhat silent.

[21:02] There was a hiddenness of it. Yes, he said, write boldly out to that Samaritan woman at the well when she said, Messiah is coming, he'll teach us. And he said, I am he.

But among the Jews, it was kept more silent other than to his disciples, his inner band, for two reasons.

First, because they had their own misconceptions about Messiah. If he came saying, I'm the Messiah, they were all thinking, a political Messiah, some mighty conqueror to ride into Rome and to stomp on these Romans who have us under their heel.

And Jesus didn't want to encourage their excitement about having such a Messiah. But secondly, he knew that if he made this bold claim that I am the Messiah, it would stir the anger and hostility of the Jewish leaders to kill him before his hour had come.

He still had much to teach, much to do. He kept it somewhat hidden. But his hour has now come.

And so, he answers boldly, I am.

[22:13] I am the Messiah. Telling the truth when doing so meant losing his life. That's the courage of our Savior.

Perhaps the high priest asked the question with this emphasis, Are you the Christ? The Son of the Blessed One?

With disdain? I mean, look at you. Worn and weary. Even your disciples have forsaken you and fled.

You're not looking much like a glorious Messiah, King, conquering Savior of Israel. You're our prisoner. Are you the Messiah?

Jesus says, Yes, I am. And, though it may not look like much, you will see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.

[23 : 21] He's applying Old Testament prophecies to himself, claiming himself to be this promised divine Messiah. Psalm 110, where David writes, The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand.

Quoting from Daniel 7, 13 and 14, A Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven led into the presence of the Ancient of Days. He was given authority, glory, and sovereign power.

All peoples, nations, and men of every language worshipped Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away. His kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

And Jesus is claiming to be the fulfillment of David's words and of Daniel's vision. To be that exalted Son of Man seated, where?

On the very throne of God. Given sovereign power and authority over all and worshipped by men of all languages. Only God was to receive worship.

[24 : 24] You see what He's claiming here before the high priests. I am the divine Messiah and you will see it.

You will see me on the throne of God coming in the clouds of glory to judge you. That's His good confession.

And for it, He will be crucified. And so we come lastly to the sentence and the abuse. The claims to be the divine Messiah evokes this horrified reaction in the high priest, whether genuine or just put on, I'm not sure.

But verse 63 and 4 says the high priest tore his clothes. Why do we need any more witnesses? He asked. You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?

And they all condemned Him as worthy of death. And in so doing, they simply fulfilled Jesus' earlier prediction to His disciples in Mark 10, 33.

[25 : 29] We're going up to Jerusalem and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn Him to death. Now indeed, if Jesus is not the Messiah, if He is not the Son of God to be worshipped, then He is guilty of blasphemy.

He is guilty of defaming God's name, infringing on God's majesty and prerogatives, taking divine glory to Himself. And so, if He's not the Messiah, He is rightly condemned as worthy of death.

But on the other hand, what if Jesus really is the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One? Well, then He's committed no crime, and all 71 of them ought to fall on their face and worship Him.

But that was never even up for consideration, folks. Jesus, the Messiah? No way. Our minds are already made up.

Don't confuse us with the facts. They dismissed all the evidence that proved that He was indeed God and Messiah. that He was who He claimed to be.

[26 : 58] You can read of it back in John 5 and John 8. He told them there was the testimony of Scripture. It talked of Him in ways that He was fulfilling.

There was the testimony of His Father who sent Him at His baptism, a voice from Heaven saying, this is my beloved Son in whom I'm well pleased. There was Jesus' own testimony, the testimony of the words that He spoke, the testimony of the works that He did that only God could do.

He gave them all this evidence, but none of it was even allowed into the courtroom. And so they condemned Him to death as a blaspheming liar in what must be the greatest injustice ever done, sinners condemning the sinless Messiah to death.

But not satisfied with that, they now proceed to physically abuse Him. Verse 65 says, then some began to spit on Him.

They blindfolded Him, struck Him with their fists, and said, prophesy. They drop all the pretended decorum.

[28 : 15] They now show their true colors, their hostility, their cruelty. And they do to Him the greatest indignity and insult by spitting in His face.

They mock His messianic office of prophet. He is the great prophet that Moses said was coming, the Messiah prophet to teach us the will of God.

And they mock Him for claiming to be a prophet. He just made a prophecy. You will see the Son of Man come. And they mock Him for being a prophet. They mock Him by blindfolding Him.

And then different ones go up and strike Him and say, prophesy. Tell us the name of the one that hits you. If you're a prophet, you should know.

And so even as they mock His prophetic role, they are fulfilling the 700-year-old prophecy in Isaiah 50 and verse 7 where Jesus is, where words are put into the mouth of the coming Messiah.

[29 : 17] I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who plucked out my beard. I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting.

Yes, the scriptures attest that He is the Messiah. So what have we seen today? Well, viewed from man's perspective, we've seen the greatest injustice ever committed in this trial and death of Jesus Christ.

No one ever more righteous treated more unrighteously. And Peter never got over it. He writes, He committed no sin. No deceit was in His mouth. When they hurled their insults at Him, He did not retaliate.

When He suffered, He made no threats. Instead, He entrusted Himself to Him who judges justly. Christian, when you're treated unjustly in this world, don't think it's something strange, Peter said. Your Master, the perfect, righteous One, was treated most unjustly. Remember Him. Remember who it was that was slandered and lied about and laughed at and mocked and spit upon and beaten and condemned and crucified.

[30 : 28] It was your Lord of glory and He did it for you. and He wants you to entrust yourself to Him who now judges justly and who will right every wrong and to follow His example of not retaliating, not trading insult for insult, but rather blessing and praying for those who wrong you and so not being overcome by evil, but overcoming evil with good.

Folks, we're in a day when it is easy to be overcome by evil. It is very easy to respond to the evil we've witnessed with our own evil and God's word is vengeance is mine.

I will repay. Don't you act like God. Rather, you act like Jesus Christ, not letting yourself be overcome by evil.

Don't let evil win. Rather, overcome evil with good. Yes, pray for justice to be satisfied and if the proof is such, that could even be taking the life of one who took another.

Yes, that's right, but we ought to be praying for mercy even for this enemy. So, you have a friend, you have a Savior who knows all about being treated unjustly, the innocent one condemned as worthy of death, but there's another perspective in which we need to view this trial.

[31 : 55] and Jesus' death. And if we miss this perspective, we miss the gospel because a man dying on a cross by cruel Jews and Romans, that doesn't save you.

Just, they're doing that to him. No, no. And so, this perspective we need is God's perspective that Jesus' death and condemnation was not unjust at all, but was the most perfect justice ever meted out.

What do I mean? I mean Messiah Jesus was standing in as the substitute for sinners. sinners. I mean that God is not indifferent toward our sins.

It is so offensive to God that he says because of these the wrath of God is coming, Colossians 3, 6. His wrath, his consistent, instinctive response to evil is wrath, anger against evil.

That's the heart of God. But sinners foolishly think that they can somehow pacify God's wrath by doing a few good deeds, thinking, well, if I do enough good, maybe it will overcome my bad and God's wrath will be pacified.

[33 : 21] Going to church, being baptized, taking communion, putting money in the church, in the offering, doing good to your neighbor, keeping the Ten Commandments, doing your best to treat your neighbor as you would want to be treated.

And ever thinking by doing these things, God's wrath will be pacified against me. How sad it was to hear Ben Shapiro say that his good friend Charlie Kirk is in heaven because he was a good man. He's a Jew. He doesn't believe that the blood of Jesus did anything for anybody. Oh, I pray for Ben that he would replay those messages of his friend Charlie. Nobody made it plainer that no amount of good works will ever save you.

I quote him. It doesn't matter if you're a good person. It doesn't matter how much you've given to a hospital. It doesn't matter if you've always done the best you can. It doesn't matter because eternal life is God's gift, a gift of grace.

You can't earn it. You can't pay for it. Amen. It's not because of what we do but because of what Jesus did. His perfect life and death on the cross to all who believe that we might be saved and be made right with God.

[34 : 41] How sad that this lie of the devil is so full in our nation today that if we're just a good person, he was a good person, he surely went to heaven.

That's a lie from hell and will take people to hell. No, if your sins are going to be forgiven, they must be paid for.

They must. Sin must be punished. Justice demands it. God's justice demands it. It's only Jesus who can do helpless sinners good.

He alone can save us from the coming wrath. The only way for God's wrath to be pacified is for God's justice to be satisfied.

I'll say it again. The only way for God's wrath to be pacified is for God's justice to be satisfied.

[35 : 37] And that's what Jesus did for all of his people. All who turn from their way and cast themselves upon the mercy of God in Jesus Christ. Christ. The Father laid on him the iniquities of us all and then he bore our sins in his body to the tree where Christ then died for sin.

The righteous for the unrighteous to bring us to God. Where he received the punishment that brought us peace. Where he drank the cup of God's wrath that it might be turned away from us. that's propitiation. God showed his love for us in this that he sent his one and only son into the world to be the propitiation for our sins.

The one to propitiate God's wrath to pacify satisfy God's wrath. And how does he do it? He does it by saying let it fall on me and it falls full force on Jesus that it might not fall on all who get into Christ by faith.

A newlywed couple was snorkeling at the great barrier reef on their honeymoon when a shark started circling around them just dialing in on its prey and then suddenly turned and rushed directly toward them.

[37 : 03] And at the last minute the husband was able to pull his wife back toward the boat and step between her and the shark. It meant he took the full force of the fury of that shark and lost his life.

But it meant that nothing of that shark's fury hit his bride. And that's what Jesus did for his bride. From heaven he came and sought her to be his holy bride with his own blood.

He bought her and for her life he died. He died what? Not just under Roman wrath, not under just the envy of the Jews. He died under the wrath of God for sin against you and me that we would have born forever in hell.

But if we come to trust in Jesus, there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Why not? Because he was condemned.

Yes, by this Jewish court. But when he took our sins upon him and stood in the place of judgment, God Almighty poured justice upon him and he bore God's wrath in our place.

[38 : 18] My sinner friend, there's nothing more important for you to do than to get into Christ because there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

How do I get into Christ? By faith. By confessing your sin and saying there's nothing I can do to make myself right with this God to pacify his wrath. Only your blood, Jesus, and I trust in what you have done taking that wrath for me.

You're united to Christ. You're in him and then you can say in my place condemned he stood. Sealed my pardon with his blood.

Hallelujah. What a Savior. They thought they silenced him but three days later he rose and by the power of an indestructible life as we heard in Scripture he lives today to intercede on behalf of all who come to God through him.

There is salvation. salvation. You know there's salvation even for those priests that condemned him to death. Later in the book of Acts just perhaps months later as the gospel is filling Jerusalem we read that many of the priests were obedient to the faith.

[39 : 36] Praise God for the power of the cross. On the night of his arrest he told his gathered twelve I'm going to leave you but he said in this world you will have trouble you will have tribulation but be of good cheer I have overcome the world.

The darkness does not overcome the light the light has overcome darkness. Amen. Amen.