



Sermon Overview

In the narrative of Jesus' trial by the Roman prefect Pilate, Mark was not concerned to produce a detailed report of the proceedings, but to sketch a course of events significant for the salvation of mankind. Analogous to the account in 14:53–65, the tradition clusters around the interrogation, condemnation and subsequent mockery of Jesus. Yet between the two narratives there are profound differences. While Jesus was prosecuted under the Jewish law and condemned for blasphemy by the Sanhedrin, he was tried before Pilate under the Roman law governing high treason. Other details in the two accounts correspond to this fundamental distinction. Thus, Jesus is mocked by the attendants of the Sanhedrin as a messianic prophet, while the rude treatment he received from the Roman soldiery showed contempt for his pretensions to kingship. What is of utmost significance to Mark is that *both the Sanhedrin and the Roman governor consigned Jesus to die as the Messiah*, and that this course of events conformed to the will of God expressed forcefully in the solemn passion prophecy in 10:33–34.

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Getting Started

1. Can you remember the first time you heard of Jesus' atoning death? Many of us cannot. Do your best to imagine what it would be like to hear the hope of the gospel for the very first time and make a list of emotions that you think may flood your mind. How do you think you would process this information?

Starting with God

2. Mark 15 shows Jesus being mocked and mistreated in monstrous ways. It would appear that Jesus is completely at the will and whim of his Jewish and Roman captors. Read Isaiah 53:1-12 with the understanding that Isaiah wrote it more than 600 years before the birth of Jesus. How does the Isaiah passage change your mind regarding who is in control?

3. Read Mark 15:15. Why did Mark include the interesting note that Barabbas was released instead of Jesus? What does the release of Barabbas teach us about Jesus' work on the cross?

Living God's Word

4. Pilate didn't believe Jesus was deserving of death. However, he didn't believe Jesus was "King" either. What does Pilate's ultimate indifference to Jesus' fate teach us about our commitment to Jesus?

Prayer

*Father God,
Thank you for your gracious plan of salvation. Thank you for Jesus, that he came to live a perfect human life, suffer an unjust, excruciating death and be raised to life again to put an end to death. Please change my heart to value you above all that I may glorify you and point others to the hope of your glorious grace.
Amen.*