

### **Mark 15v1-21 Attitudes to The Christ.**

The gospel or the good news of Mark is about Jesus Christ, the Son of God, 1v1. It focuses upon him. Nowhere more so than in this chapter. Mark wishes to emphasize 3 things about Jesus in the first part of this chapter.

**(1) Jesus was FALSELY CONDEMNED. v1-15.**

**(2) Jesus was CRUELLY HANDLED. v16-20.**

**(3) Jesus is to be WHOLEHEARTEDLY FOLLOWED. v21.**

#### **(1) Jesus was FALSELY CONDEMNED.**

This is clearly emphasized by Mark in the first 15 verses where in a number of different ways the innocence of Jesus is made clear.

In v1 the Sanhedrin was called to push forward with the decision to have Jesus put to death. The trial during the night was an illegal trial. Also, no-one should be put to death at a major feast. These rules were trampled upon to secure his death.

They brought him to Pilate bound, bound that we might be set free, Jn.8v36. Pilate's main residence was in Caesarea but he would be in Jerusalem in the fortress of Antonia surrounded by his soldiers in order to keep the peace at Passover time. The Jewish leaders would bring him there, to the fortress in the north west side, up the stairway from the temple. Now begins what A. Cole has claimed is not the trial before Pilate but the trial of Pilate.

v2 Pilate asked him if he was indeed a king. Before the Sanhedrin he had been accused of blasphemy, 14v64; now they do not immediately press this charge but a more definitely political accusation rather than the religious one which would have a better chance of being considered legally valid. The Jewish leaders knew very well that they were lying for not once during his ministry had Jesus spoken or acted as a political rebel, 12v17; Jn. 6v15. His innocence is clear.

The Jewish bring a confused mass of accusations. There was no reason for him to be put to death.

When he was accused of many things he answered nothing - so different from the first Adam. Jesus was guiltless, yet made no defense at all.

On four separate occasions during the last hours of his life Jesus "opened not his mouth"; before Caiphas, 14v60-61; Pilate, 15v4-5; Herod, Lk.23v9; before Pilate again, Jn.19v9. These silences spoke louder than words and were proofs of his identity as the Messiah, Is. 53v7.

But he was also so different from the normal prisoner who would no doubt plead for his life, v3-5. Pilate marvels. In the ancient world often the accused person would be assumed to be guilty unless he could prove his innocence. So when someone was on trial he would be excited and vocal - and no doubt the Jewish leaders had presented the case that this particular prisoner was troublesome and aggressive, while Pilate saw him as quiet and dignified.

Pilate could find no fault in him and knew that he was innocent. Note now Pilate is on trial. He wavers struggling to satisfy his own conscience. Mark tells us, v10 he is sure that it was "for envy" that Jesus was there - not for any crime but because they were envious of his fame and following. So Pilate feebly struggles to obtain the Lord's acquittal and so to satisfy his own conscience. (It was at this point that Pilate sends Jesus to Herod, Lk.23v12f. But he sends him right back).

He has the plan that he will offer them the release of a prisoner which happened traditionally at this time of year. The idea of setting a prisoner free would be appropriate at Passover time - as they were remembering the release of Israel from the house of bondage. He was holding Barabbas. It is interesting that he is called in Matt27v17 in brackets in the Gk. text Jesus Barabbas, who had been involved in rebellion and murder. Many textual scholars are inclined to think that it is original - who would ever have put it in if it was not already there? The name Barabbas most likely means "son of the teacher or Rabbi".

He is sure that if the choice is between Jesus and Barabbas they will ask for Barabbas, But it was at the insistence of the Jewish leaders that the murderer be released and Jesus be delivered to be crucified, v15 "willing to content the people". Pilate would thus please the Jewish establishment lest he lose his prestige, position and popularity.

There were no grounds for Jesus to have been condemned. By means of Pilate God declared his complete and utter innocence, his perfect righteousness.

We were the guilty ones but he was condemned and we go free. Is. 53v5; 1Pet 3v18.

## **(2) Jesus was CRUELLY HANDLED. v16-20**

He was delivered up by Pilate that we might be never be delivered up to judgement. These verses describe the sufferings of Jesus. He is first of all scourged by Pilate. This punishment involved flogging with an implement which had leather thongs with ends tipped with lead or bone. Two men would frail the criminal from both sides.

This is followed by the mockery of the soldiers having already suffered the mockery of the priests and their servants, 14v65. They gathered the whole band, v16, the entire cohort of 600 men. They remembered that he had claimed to be a king so they taunted him in the garb of a rival to Caesar. See the purple or scarlet cloak of the Roman cavalrymen which would hurt his torn back, the crown and the scepter, like the commander in chief himself to whom they bowed the knee as soldiers. See Is. 50v6.

**(3) Now we see that Jesus is to be WHOLEHEARTEDLY FOLLOWED. v21.** Simon bears the cross. Should be taken as a picture of what Mark considers every disciple should do. We are to take up the cross.

Simon was pressed into state service, Matt5v41. The crucifixion always took place outside the city. Those condemned had to carry their cross. Jesus at the beginning carried his, but not for long, Jn.19v16-17.

Simon was a Cyrenian Jew - they had their own synagogue in Jerusalem (Acts 6v9). He is confronted with Jesus for the first time. Do you remember the first time you were confronted with Jesus? It must have made a tremendous impact upon him.

Mark here informs us that his sons were known to the Christian community, at the time the gospel was written and so probably were Christians, Rom.16v13.

This "chance" meeting with Jesus seems to have marked the beginning of discipleship for Simon. When he went home it appears that this meeting resulted in his whole family finding the Lord. Mk. 8v34, be prepared to take your stand, deny yourself and let the Lord rule in your life - live his life through you.