

JESUS, CONDEMNED TO DIE

Mark 15:1-15

Intro: Especially throughout the chapter in Mark which we have just completed, chapter 14, we have all realized that we have been getting closer and closer to those terrible words which we will find in verses 24 and 25. (Read.)

What the Lord had been teaching His disciples, had finally happened. The Lord seems to have mentioned it the first time after Peter's great confession of the Lord Jesus, "Thou art the Christ" (Mark 8:29). Or, as it is recorded in Matthew 16:16, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Immediately after this the Lord, speaking to the disciples, "began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again" (Mark 8:31).

We find similar words in Mark 9:31 where we read,

31 For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day.

I don't think that statements like this are found again in the Gospel of Mark, yet I believe that we are safe in assuming that the Lord frequently taught His disciples about His death. The first time He did it, the disciples argued with Him; the next time they still did not believe His Words, nor did they understand what He meant, but they were afraid to ask Him.

In our text for today we see the second phase of what both Jews and Romans would have said were responsible trials in which the Lord was given the punishment which they said that He deserved. What it amounted to was actually a trial of the character of our Lord. Did He do anything worthy of death? And even if He did not do anything that was worthy of death either in Jewish courts or Roman courts, was He a sinner just like all other men? This is a very fundamental question because if He had ever sinned, in deed, or word, or even in thought, then He was disqualified from doing the very work that He repeatedly said that His Father in heaven had sent Him to do: "to seek and to save that which was lost."

The big question which even the Devil tried to find the answer to, was, did becoming a man, entering by physical birth into the human family,

make Him a sinner like everyone else?

The angels who heralded the birth of the baby Jesus did not believe that His birth had changed His Deity at all. You will remember that they said, “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11). The demons repeatedly were saying something when they were confronted by the power of God, such as what we find in Luke 4:34, where we are told that the demon was

Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God.

And when the Lord Jesus was being baptized in the River Jordan, you will remember that on that occasion it was the Father Himself Who spoke from heaven to the Lord Jesus, saying, “Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased” (Luke 3:22).

Even when Joseph learned of Mary’s pregnancy, and immediately thought that she had been unfaithful to him, although he had much trouble believing that she would do such a thing, while he was thinking about breaking his relationship with her, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream telling him that the child in Mary’s womb had been conceived by the Holy Spirit. And then he went on to say,

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins (Matt. 1:21).

And Matthew went on to give us this explanation:

22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,
23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us (Matt. 1:22-23).

Matthew was quoting from Isaiah 7:14 which was a prophecy of the birth of the Messiah. Added to that in Isaiah 9:6 this further evidence that the Messiah would be Deity:

For unto us a child is born [His humanity], unto us a son is given [His Deity]: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

We read in Mark 14 that the only charge that they could bring against the Lord Jesus was that He claimed Deity. He claimed that God was His Father. To the Jews this meant that He was making Himself equal with

God. See John 5:18. And to the Jews, this was blasphemy. And in the incident recorded for us by the Apostle John, at that time they took up stones to stone the Lord to death. But going back to Mark 14:61, the high priest asked the Lord, “Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” And the Lord responded with, “I am.” Now when the Lord responded to the high priest, He could have just used the verb alone without the “I” because the verb means, “I am.” But when the Lord used the preposition “I” with the verb, it made His statement very intensive. It meant indeed I am, most certainly I am, without any doubt at all I am. The Lord could not have said more clearly that He was equal in His nature with God the Father. The conception and birth of the Lord Jesus Christ in no way changed His divine nature. He was God in human flesh, with one exception: His flesh was not sinful flesh. The Lord had a human nature, but it was not a sinful nature. At the end of our Lord’s ministry upon earth He was still the sinless Son of God. If I were to claim to be the Son of God, it would be blasphemy, and I would deserve to die. But it was not sinful for the Lord to make that claim because that is exactly Who He was, the eternal Son of the living God.

IF THIS WERE NOT TRUE, THE DEATH OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST WOULD ONLY HAVE BEEN A MARTYR’S DEATH. HE WAS BORN, LIVED, AND DIED WITHOUT ANY SIN AGAINST HIS RECORD. He died taking our sins upon Himself, taking upon Himself the penalty that should have fallen upon you and me. But if He had committed a single sin, then He could not have been our Savior; He would Himself have needed to be saved.

Let me repeat for you four statements, or phrases, which most of you have heard many times, but, if you are like I am, and I am sure that you are, you cannot hear these statements too often.

The first one that I will mention is from the Apostle Peter, written approximately thirty years after the Lord had gone back to heaven. He who had been most intimately related to our Lord as one of His disciples, in fact, His first disciple, said this about our Lord, and you will find it on record in 1 Peter 2:22. He said of our Lord, “Who did no sin.”

The second statement is from the Apostle John sixty or seventy years after the Lord went back to heaven. He had had plenty of time to think over all that he had learned from the Lord, and about the Lord. This is what he said, writing to the people of God:

And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin (1 John 3:5).

Notice that John spoke of the past, and then spoke of the present. He came “to take away our sins,” and this is what He did on the Cross. And even though God laid our sins upon Him, as Isaiah predicted He would, yet they are not still on Him because He has put them away as we read in Hebrews 9:26. Because of Christ’s death on the Cross, our sins are gone and will be remembered against us no more! Look into the life of the Lord Jesus, and you will never see any sin. Listen to all that He said; sin is not there. Even in God’s thoughts, there was never anything sinful or defiling. Sin is in us, but sin is not in Him. That is why we need a Savior, and that is why He could save us.

But let me give you as the third statement what the Apostle Paul said about the Lord Jesus and sin. The statement I am thinking about is in 2 Corinthians 5:21:

For He [God] made Him [our Lord] to be sin for us, Who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

Bishop Handley Moule explain that statement about our Lord as meaning that “sin never entered for one moment the region of His personal experience” (p. 54).

The fourth of these statements is found in the book of Hebrews, chapter 4, where the writer was speaking of our Lord as our “great High Priest.” As our High Priest He represents us to God, interceding for us with God. In Hebrews 4:15 and 16 we read these wonderful words:

15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

I hope a look into these verses helps all of us to love and appreciate our Lord even more. The only sins that were ever charged against Him, were mine and yours. And He has put them all away by His sacrificial death for you and me. And there never has been, nor will there ever be, One like our Lord Who had all of the qualifications for a Savior, and who offered Himself to God that every sinful charge against us might be forgiven and forgotten. You and I remember our sins in the hope that we will never repeat them, but God has forgiven and forgotten them all. As we often sing, “Jesus paid it all. All to Him I owe. Sin has left a crimson

stain; He washed it white as snow.”

But now let me take a few minutes to speak of what some who did not know the Lord, did not belong to the Lord, have said about Him.

When the chief priests demanded that Pilate condemn the Lord to crucifixion, what did He say to them according to our text? He said, “Why, what evil hath He done?” (Mark 15:14). Pilate also said, “I find no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse Him” (Luke 23:14). He also said, “I find no cause of death in Him” (Luke 23:22), therefore he was prepared to let the Lord go.

How did Pilate’s wife advise him? She said this which we find in Matthew 27:19:

When he [Pilate] was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.

When the Lord Jesus had died, Matthew gives us this account of what took place:

51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the

top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;

52 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,

53 And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

54 Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.

This centurion may have been in charge of the men who actually crucified the Lord Jesus. Their response was not that Jesus was the Son of God because there is no “the” in the Greek text, but we can translate it *a Son of God*. A. T. Robertson said that he could have meant that the Lord was the Son of God Whom He claimed to be, but there is no way to tell exactly what he did mean. He obviously was affected, though, with Jesus as a Person.

We go to the thieves who were crucified with the Lord. At first both of them ridiculed the Lord, but then one of them changed. Luke gives us this account in Luke 23:39-43:

39 And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him,

saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.

40 But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?

41 And we indeed justly ; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.

42 And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

But I can't leave these testimonies without giving you one more: the final testimony of Judas Iscariot.

The account is given to us in Matthew's Gospel. And it was right after the Lord was led away to stand trial before Pilate. I want to read to you what is recorded in Matthew 27:1-5:

1 When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death:

2 And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

3 Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,

4 Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that.

5 And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

Our text in Mark 15, the first fifteen verses, gives us a brief account of the Lord's trial before Pilate. Notice these points:

1) The only charge that the Lord responded to was the charge against His Messiahship, or claim to be "the King of the Jews." This He readily admitted because it was true.

2) The other charges brought by the Jews He did not respond to. This in itself was a judgment upon those Jews from the Lord. It was not given to them to know the truth. But Pilate, an unregenerate himself was amazed, not knowing the way of the Lord. But the Lord is under no responsibility at all to explain Himself, or defend Himself, before the ungodly.

3) The evil compromise suggested by the Jews, choosing Barabbas, an insurrectionist who was guilty of murder (and probably more than one murder). It shows the deep depravity of the religious leaders of the Jews

in the Lord's time here on earth. And it was this very sin that Peter brought before the Jews in Acts 3, and yet showed that the grace of God was extended to them for even this terrible sin.

4) Note from the Apostle Peter's message on the Day of Pentecost that it was not the Jews who were in charge that day, nor was it Pilate who demonstrated his own weakness, but God was in charge. His purpose was being carried out by those evil people, and yet it is very possible that some of those who were the strongest against the Lord were brought to Christ, not by the Lord answering them point by point, but by Peter and the preaching of the Gospel.

Concl: Let us remember that we don't argue people into the kingdom of God; they are drawn in by the mighty power of God. We are not to let the world get us sidetracked as many are today. It is the proclamation of the Gospel that God uses to draw sinners to Himself. So let us by our lives and by word of mouth spread the message of salvation wherever we are.