

Jesus Stands Before Pilot

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 17 November 2024

Preacher: Nathan Rambeck

[0 : 00] Open up our Bibles, we're in the book of Mark. So Mark chapter 15, we finished up Mark 14 last week, and we are in Mark 15.

Last week what we looked at was Jesus being interrogated. He was arrested, betrayed by one of his own followers, Judas, taken away by guards, taken to the home of Caiaphas, the high priest, to be interrogated by him as well as other of the high priests, or other of the priests in Jerusalem there, and questioned, and ultimately there was somewhat of a trial there.

We looked at that last week. Today what we're going to look at is Jesus is now being delivered to Pilate, to the Roman authorities. Pilate being the one in charge in their region.

We're going to see that Pilate is really struggling with this person being brought to him by these Jewish leaders. He really is struggling to find any kind of fault with Jesus.

Herod, there's a Herod. You know, I think months ago we talked about all the Herods in the Bible. There are many of them, and so it can be very confusing, well, which Herod is which.

[1 : 32] We'll talk about one of the Herods. We'll actually maybe talk about a few of them this morning. And then as we look at the involvement in the crucifixion of Jesus, there are many people involved.

And we're going to ask the question, well, who was ultimately responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus? Who do we lay the blame at?

And we'll finish up our message with that. But what I like to do, this is how we usually start, is we're just going to read through this passage of Scripture that we're going to be looking at today.

Mark chapter 15, we're going to read from verse 1 through verse 15. Immediately in the morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and the scribes and the whole council.

And they bound Jesus, led him away, and delivered him to Pilate. Then Pilate asked him, are you the king of the Jews? He answered and said to him, it is as you say.

[2 : 36] And the chief priests accused him of many things, but he answered nothing. Then Pilate asked him again, saying, do you answer nothing, seeing how many things they testify against you?

But Jesus still answered nothing, so that Pilate marveled. Now at the feast, he was accustomed to releasing one prisoner to them, whomever they requested.

And there was one named Barabbas, who was chained with his fellow rebels. They had committed murder in the rebellion. Then the multitude, crying aloud, began to ask him to do just as he had always done for them.

But Pilate answered them, saying, do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews? For he knew that the chief priests had handed him over because of envy. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd so that he should rather release Barabbas to them.

Pilate answered and said to them again, what then do you want me to do with him, whom you call the king of the Jews? So they cried out again, crucify him. Then Pilate said to them, why?

[3 : 40] What evil has he done? But they cried out all the more, crucify him. So Pilate, wanting to gratify the crowd, released Barabbas to them and he delivered Jesus after he had scourged him to be crucified.

So a lot of, lots going on here in a short period of time. Jesus was betrayed around midnight or so by Judas, taken away.

And there was this actual overnight trial among the Sanhedrin. Now it wasn't all the Sanhedrin. It was just some, and again, the Sanhedrin, the Jewish leaders. Sanhedrin was like a council made up of 70 to 72 different leaders made up of priests, the high priest, elders, scribes.

And all through the night they had this trial. It says here that as soon as it was morning, the chief priests, they held a consultation with the elders and the scribes. So morning comes, it's probably

around 6 a.m.

That's when they got their day started, a little bit earlier than what most of us probably do. But they, the council came in to start their business for the day and here was Jesus.

[4 : 56] And so the ones that had interrogated him through the night said, hey, we've interrogated this guy. We need an official vote from the council. What are we going to do with him?

Are we going to deliver him to Pilate? Pilate. So they held a consultation with the elders, scribes, and the whole council and they all decided we need to deliver him to Pilate to be killed.

So they bound Jesus and led him away and delivered him to Pilate. So let's talk about Pilate. Who is Pilate anyway? Pontius Pilate. He's actually a very well attested historical figure.

Pilate. Not everyone in the Bible. The Bible is a book of reality, by the way. And so it's not, the Bible is not made up stories as much as many people would like to think so or try to claim.

But Pilate is one of the figures in the Bible, the biblical account that is referred to in many other places outside of scripture. Josephus was a Jewish historian that lived about a generation after Jesus and Philo was another Jewish historian and both of them wrote about Pilate.

[6 : 10] Pilate was the governor of Judea or some would call him a prefect is a word used.

In our day, we understand the word governor, I think, more. And so that is probably the best term that we could use. And he governed under one of the Caesars at the time, under Tiberius Caesar. His job as governor was to maintain order, collect taxes, and administer justice. Didn't have a lot of the same, we have division of powers, right?

We have courts and then we have governors or presidents and we have lawmakers. In this time period, Pontius Pilate, he was kind of all of those things.

Now, laws came down from Rome, but he was the one who maintained the order. He acted as the executive, but he was also the judge. He was the one who would adjudicate trials, as we see here.

[7 : 18] Pontius Pilate had somewhat of a tense relationship with the Jewish people. As you probably have surmised, the Jews didn't really like being under the occupation of Rome.

They wanted their own nation. They wanted to be able to rule their own nation on their own. And they would have just as soon gotten rid of Rome and not be under their occupation.

So Pilate had this unenviable task of trying to keep them happy while keeping them under control, right? Squashing rebellions. Actually, we read about Barabbas.

He was part of some kind of rebellion and that was not the only one. These things kind of came up fairly frequently. The other thing that he had to do was balance the Jewish customs and laws with Roman laws, right?

And so this was common among the Roman Empire. They would conquer a people group, but instead of completely displacing them or replacing all of their customs and laws with Roman customs and laws, they would allow them to maintain some level of sovereignty, I guess, over how they did things.

[8 : 33] Now, not complete sovereignty, but they would give them a certain amount of leeway. And that was certainly the case here in Jerusalem and in the region of Israel and Judea.

So he would sometimes give in to their demands. Now, if you're familiar with at the very beginning of the story of Jesus, when Jesus was born, there was somebody else who was in charge of Jerusalem and Judea at the time.

Who was that? Well, his name was Herod. Now, that was a certain Herod and his name was Herod the Great. Well, Herod the Great actually died not soon after Jesus was born, just a few years after Jesus was born.

And he, instead of having a single son or person take his place, he actually, the kingdom was actually, or the area of Israel was split up into, I think it was either three or four different regions ruled over by his sons.

But the area of Judea, which is where Jerusalem is, one of his sons, at least look up his name, his name, he was called Herod Archeolos.

[9 : 46] I hope I'm pronouncing that right. And he didn't rule very long. The Jews didn't like him.

The Romans were kind of like not exactly impressed. And so, they actually ended up replacing him with a Roman governor.

And so, that started this era where the region of Judea was not ruled, at least by a vassal. These kings, these, what do they call them?

The Tetrarchs, I think was the name, used. These Tetrarchs were not, didn't have full authority, right? They were ruling as vassal kings underneath Rome.

But for the area of Judea, there was no vassal king. There was no Herod. There was just a Roman governor. And so, through that line, Pilate wasn't the first, but he was the governor at the time that's in view right now.

And had been, I think, for maybe half a dozen years up to this point. It was Caesar Augustus, by the way, back earlier.

[10:54] I think it was, yeah, it was in AD 6. So, about, probably about, what's that, nine years, I think, after Jesus was born, that he replaced the Herod at that time with Roman prefects.

There's another Herod that kind of comes into view here, which we'll talk about just briefly. He's not mentioned here in Mark, but when you read, especially this account of Jesus, his arrest, his trial, his crucifixion, his death, his burial, his resurrection.

These are all accounts that are found in all four Gospels. And each of them have different levels of detail on what they provide. Herod, there's another Herod that is mentioned.

Not in Mark, but I can't remember which other account. We'll probably see it here in just a moment. But this is another Herod. His name is Herod Antipas.

And he was actually Herod over the region of Galilee, which is where Jesus is from. At least where most of his ministry was. He was one of Herod the Great's sons and was allowed to continue to rule as a Tetrarch over that region of Galilee.

[12:12] That Herod, by the way, is the one who was responsible for the death of John the Baptist that we studied months ago. So here they bring to Jesus.

They bring Jesus to Pilate. And Pilate is somewhat confused. He's saying, why are you taking this man to me? Why don't you deal with him?

We're going to go back and forth, by the way, between some of the other accounts to look at all the details. So if you go to the book of John. So we're in Mark. After that is Luke.

And then John. So John chapter 18. John chapter 18 and verse 28. I'll wait until I hear the rustling of pages die down.

John chapter 18, verse 28. It says this. Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium. That is the place where Pilate was housed and where he ruled from.

[13:18] And it was early morning. But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover. So there was these Jewish law.

You could not be around Gentiles or else you couldn't participate in some of these Passover feasts. And so they actually delivered him to Pilate. Jesus went in by himself. And the Jewish leaders stayed outside.

And they actually continued to have this communication with Pilate while Jesus was inside and they stood outside. And Pilate, you will see, would come out and talk to them and then he would go back inside and talk to Jesus some more.

That's kind of how this thing is going on. So it says, Pilate then went out to them. Remember, they're staying outside. Jesus is inside. And he said, what accusation do you bring against this man?

And they answered and said to him, if he were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered him up to you. In other words, what's their answer? Hey, just trust us.

[14:19] He's a bad dude. Just trust us. Take care of him. He needs to be killed. Then Pilate said to them, you take him and judge him according to your law.

You remember, there was a certain amount of leeway for the Jews to adjudicate their own laws, their own customs. Now, here's the one big exception and we'll see it here.

Therefore, the Jews said to him, it is not lawful for us to put anyone to death. And so, they want Jesus dead. They don't just want him beaten.

They don't just want him imprisoned. And they want him dead. And they are not allowed to do that. The death penalty was not something that they were allowed to execute. Now, we actually see that they don't always abide by this.

There was a famous case where the Jews put somebody to death through stoning. Right? Did they get the Romans' permission?

[15:24] Who was that? Stephen, right? And this is just months later, right? Stephen is put to death. By the Jewish people. But, you know, this is a particularly tricky situation.

There's a lot of politics involved with Jesus himself. And so, they want to make sure they go through, jump through the right hoops. Right? It's important. When you're putting an innocent man to death, you need to jump through the right hoops.

It finishes off here in verse 32 in John 18.

We'll just read a little bit before. Therefore, the Jews said to him, You know, it was God's plan for Jesus to be delivered up by the Jews and to be sacrificed on a cross by the Gentiles.

This was part of God's plan that both Jew and Gentile would be involved in the death of Jesus. And we'll talk more about that when we get to the end.

[16:34] Back to Mark. If you've got to keep your finger there, by the way. Mark 15, verse 2 says, And Pilate asked him, Are you the king of the Jews?

Now, I want you to notice that this phrase, this title of Jesus, king of the Jews, is not something that the Jews ever called him. But it was something that Pilate continues to call him.

In fact, we'll see this, I think, next week. When Jesus is ultimately crucified, they would typically put up a, What's the accusation against this man? And the accusation put up against Jesus, in three separate languages, hung over him on the cross was, He was the king of the Jews.

That's why we're killing him, because he's the king of the Jews. And Jesus answered him, Are you the king of the Jews? So Jesus answered him, and he says, You have said so.

Now, that's not a lot of detail here, but I do want to go back to John chapter 18, because it provides a little bit more detail on this interaction. So, back to John chapter 18, and verse 33.

[17:44] It says this, Then Pilate entered the praetorium again. He called Jesus and said to him, Are you the king of the Jews? And Jesus answered him, and he said this, Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning me?

He's saying, Is this something you just heard, or is this a question you really have for me? Pilate answered, and he said, Am I a Jew?

He's like, I'm not involved. I'm not concerned with all this Jewish stuff. I'm a Roman. Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you to me.

What have you done? Jesus answered, and he said, My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews.

But now, my kingdom is not from here. Pilate therefore said to him, Are you a king then? And Jesus answered, You say rightly that I am a king.

[18:48] For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice. And Pilate said to him, What is truth?

Now that's a common phrase you hear today, isn't it? What is truth anyway? And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews and said to them, I find no fault in him at all.

So we get a little bit more detail here with this interaction, in John's record of this interaction between Pilate and Jesus.

I do want to talk about this whole kingdom thing, because he's being accused. So when the Jews, when the Jewish leaders bring Jesus to Pilate, they really want Pilate to kill him.

And so what's the worst thing that they can accuse him of? The biggest thing that they can accuse him of to get Pilate to put him to death.

[19:45] Well, hey, this guy is a threat to the Roman Empire. He says that he's a king. He says he has more authority than Rome does.

And part of Pilate's job is to quell rebellions. And so there's this interaction. He's asking, So you really claim to be a king of some kind? And going back to what Jesus says in John, and he says, My kingdom is not of this world.

If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews. But now my kingdom is not from here. Now, this passage has led many to teach this whole idea that the kingdom of God, talked about in the Bible, is a purely spiritual matter.

That when the Bible speaks of the kingdom of God, it's just speaking of Jesus and his reign in our hearts. And while that is certainly true, that especially in the age in which we live, Jesus is not reigning on a throne in the earth, yet the Bible does say that he's on a throne somewhere else, right?

Where's that? In heaven, the Bible says that Jesus right now today is seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven. But he's not reigning on an earthly kingdom here on earth.

[21 : 13] But right now, is Jesus establishing his kingdom on earth right now? No. That's not what he came for. That's not what he came for the first time. Right?

So as we look at what Jesus is saying here, he's saying, My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews. But now, my kingdom is not from here. He's saying, Right now, my kingdom is not in the world. My kingdom is actually in heaven. Now, there's coming a day, and he actually talked about this in Mark 13, right?

When he talked about the end times and the tribulation, and what's going to happen at the tribulation. The kingdom of God, which is in heaven, is going to come to earth.

And the king will be coming from the clouds to the earth to establish an earthly kingdom. And so, yes, in a way, Jesus is a threat to the Roman Empire, to any empire in the world that does not bow the knee to Jesus.

[22 : 19] But not yet. Not right now. And Jesus is explaining, Listen, do I have soldiers here fighting against anybody? No, I'm coming to you in quietness, in humility.

I'm not fighting against anybody. Not right now. And so, there really wasn't anything to pin on Jesus as far as insurrection or rebellion. My kingdom's not here right now.

My kingdom is up there. And so, there is no threat from Jesus. And so, ultimately, what does Pilate do? He goes back outside to the Jews, and he says, You guys, there's nothing here.

I don't have anything to work with. You want me to kill this guy? There's nothing for me to work with. There's nothing to pin on him. Back to Mark, chapter 15, verse 3.

And the chief priests accused him of many things. So, they continued to accuse him, to try to pin more things on him. And again, we don't have any detail. Mark is the most truncated of all the Gospels.

[23 : 20] It's the most brief, which is fine. But if we look to Luke, chapter 23, which is another account, Luke, chapter 23, we'll find a bit more detail on the specific things that the Jews accused Jesus of.

So, Luke, chapter 23, and verse 1. It says this, Then the whole multitude of them arose and led him to Pilate. And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation.

So, that's accusation 1. 2. Forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar. That's number, yeah, that's number 2. And 3. Saying that he himself is Christ, a king.

Then Pilate asked him, saying, Are you a king of the Jews? And he answered him and said, It is as you say. So, Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowd, I find no fault in this man. But they were the more fierce, saying, He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place.

And so, here are the accusations. We found him perverting the nation. Well, that's interesting.

That's one of those things that's, it's really, there's not a lot of detail there, right?

[24 : 35] It's just some kind of a generic accusation. And it's really too generic for Pilate to take seriously. Well, what does that mean? Give me some detail. Did they have really any detail?

I mean, what had Jesus been known to do? He went out, he taught the scriptures, he taught people to live uprightly, he healed the sick, had compassion on the poor.

In what way was, is that what they're calling, is that what they're calling, perverting the nation, or doing those things? The second one, forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar.

Did Jesus ever do that? Did he actually say the opposite when asked about whether we as Jews should pay taxes to Caesar? What did Jesus say? Give unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's.

Famously, right? Almost everybody, and even non-Christians, are familiar with that, that phrase. Pay unto Caesar what is Caesar's, and unto the Lord what is the Lord's. So, an outright lie there.

[25 : 36] So, some generic accusation, an outright lie, and then this saying that he himself is Christ a king. And that's really the only one that Pilate was able to do anything with.

And Jesus himself, actually, he does, he does admit, if you will, or make the claim to be king of the Jews, but only really late into his ministry, and really only when asked.

And then finally, like we said earlier, the Jews are saying, hey, hey, Pilate, don't worry about it, just trust us.

We know what we're doing. This guy, he needs to be put up on that cross. Mark chapter 15, verse 4, we'll go back to Mark. And Pilate again asked him, so he goes back to Jesus.

He's like, oh man, back and forth, back and forth. Have you no answer to make, he's asking? See how many charges they bring against you? But Jesus made no further answers, so that Pilate was amazed.

[26 : 46] He's going back to Jesus, he's saying, you've heard all these accusations, what do you have to say for yourself? And after that brief interaction about being the king of the Jews, Jesus is silent.

Now he could have said, oh, they said that I told the Jews not to pay taxes to Caesar. That's a flat out lie, I never said that. But Jesus doesn't defend himself.

And this is something that close to a thousand years earlier, the prophet Isaiah, in Isaiah chapter 3, had prophesied, excuse me, Isaiah chapter 53, had prophesied, saying, as a sheep before its shears is silent, so he opened not his mouth.

But this thing, it says here that Pilate was amazed, because Pilate had been over many trials of people who were accused, especially of capital crimes, and they're looking at a potential death sentence, a cruel, a very cruel one on a cross, and what has his experience been before?

People doing everything they can to advocate for themselves to avoid going up on that cross. This was quite an oddity for Pilate at any trial.

[28 : 04] But he really can't find anything to stick on Jesus, at least not anything deserving of death. Going back to Luke, there's a little bit of a, a little bit of a, an additional detail, because Pilate was not totally comfortable taking this on himself.

It was a very sticky political situation. So he actually heard that Jesus was from Galilee. We read that briefly in Luke. We'll go back to Luke chapter 23, and we'll read this again.

Luke chapter 23, in verse 4. So Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowd, I find no fault with this man. But they were the more fierce, saying, He stirs up the people teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place.

Now when Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked if the man were a Galilean. And as soon as he knew that he belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he got this bright idea, and he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time.

He doesn't send him on three days' journey up to Galilee. Herod's here right now, almost certainly, for the Passover. And so he's got this bright idea, I can get this whole thing off my plate and put it on somebody else's plate.

[29 : 27] They can deal with it. This is too sticky. They want me to put to death an obviously innocent man. Maybe Herod could take on that responsibility. Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad.

For he had desired for a long time to see him, because he had heard many things about him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by him. Then he questioned him with many words, but he answered him nothing.

And the chief priests and the scribes, they stood vehemently, stood and vehemently accused him. So the Jewish leaders followed Jesus to his delivery to Herod and continued to accuse him before Herod.

Then Herod, with his men of war, treated him with contempt, and they mocked him, and they arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and they sent him back to Pilate.

So as much as Pilate wanted to get this off of his plate, Herod was not, he was not going to deal with this. He was going to send it back to Pilate. That very day, Pilate and Herod became friends with each other, for previously, they had been at enmity with each other.

[30 : 38] And isn't that interesting? For these two men, these two rulers who had been at odds with each other, they didn't really like each other. We don't know why. There's no really detail in Scripture, or I think even in other historical accounts, why Pilate and Herod were on unfriendly terms.

But for whatever reason, this whole account, this whole thing with the trial of Jesus is what united them.

It's ironic, isn't it, that their involvement, both of them, in the death of the creator of the universe would put them on friendly terms. So verse 6, now at the feast, he used to release, he used to release for them one prisoner for whom they asked.

And so there was this tradition each year during the Passover week that he would release to the people almost certainly a Jewish prisoner, right?

This is in Judea and in Jerusalem. Maybe it might be somebody that they thought was unfairly accused or somebody that they had some kind of sympathy towards them.

[31 : 53] We have something kind of similar to this. In our country, we have presidential pardons. A president is allowed to pardon anyone for any reason in this country.

Now, is that a good thing or is that a bad thing? Well, it kind of depends, right? It depends on whether what they did was right or wrong, whether they were justly tried or unjustly.

And so whether it's a president or pilot here, if he releases somebody because they didn't do anything wrong, then that certainly would be a righteous thing to do.

But whether it's a president or pilot himself who releases a guilty person, that would be a corrupt thing to do. It's never just to release the guilty.

In fact, there's a proverb that says that both acquitting the guilty and condemning the innocent, both of those things are an abomination before God. There's a quote from, I hope I get this right, I don't know if it's from Benjamin Franklin, somebody from the founding era who said that it would be better to let something like a hundred or a thousand guilty men go free than to condemn an innocent man.

[33 : 12] And whoever this was didn't read their Bible because the Bible does not say that at all. The Bible says that both acquitting the guilty and condemning the innocent are both equally unjust and unrighteous.

And so we need to be careful when it comes to adjudicating matters of justice, whether they're in our own home or if we have powers of law and courts, to make sure that we judge rightly and not overlook people's crimes.

And their guilt. Anyway, that was for free. Verse 7, And among the rebels in prison who had committed murder in the insurrection, there was a man called Barabbas.

So who is this guy Barabbas? We know from just this passage that he was an insurrectionist, he was a rebel, he probably very likely didn't like Rome's rule over Jerusalem and Israel.

Judea. But through this rebellion had murdered somebody. This name Barabbas, this is a Hebrew or an Aramaic name.

[34 : 26] And it has an interesting meaning. Barabbas. We see actually both of these, because this is a conjunction, right, of two words. Bar and Abba.

You recognize those? We see that Bar, for example, Simon Bar-Jonah. What does that mean, Simon Bar-Jonah? It means Simon, the son of Jonah.

And we see that a lot in scriptures. People were named after their parents, their father. And so Bar means son of. And Abba, what does that mean?

A father. And so Barabbas, his name means son of the father. And isn't that ironic?

And God is really good with irony. We have one son of the father who is innocent. And another son of the father, at least by name, who is guilty.

[35 : 31] And as we see here, one son of the father takes the place, the innocent son of the father takes the place of the guilty son of the father.

the guilty one, the guilty son, is set free by the righteous one dying in his place. And the crowd came up and began to ask Pilate to do as he usually did for them.

So he said, hey, you usually do this. Are you going to do it for us again this year? And so Pilate has a great idea. The people are asking him to release somebody.

All right, this is how I can escape this sticky political situation. And he answered, them saying, do you want me to release for you the king of the Jews? This Jesus? And then it says this, for he perceived that it was out of envy that the chief priests had delivered him up.

Pilate was not a dummy. He could see what was going on. The accusations were so generic and didn't really stick. He knew that there was another reason and he saw that it was out of envy.

[36 : 41] They saw that Jesus was stealing the affection of the people from the Jewish leaders, from them. And they wanted the affection, the adoration, the commitment of the people.

Not this man, Jesus. Regardless of what he taught, regardless of his compassion, regardless of his love, and his upholding, right, of the law of Moses even.

By the way, with all of these things stacking up and Pilate being very much aware that this was an innocent man, he was not confused at all. How much more guilt does he bear in condemning an obviously innocent man to death?

But the chief priests, verse 11, stirred up the crowd to have him release for them Barabbas instead. And Pilate again said to them, Then what shall I do with the man you call the king of the Jews?

And they cried out again, Crucify him! And Pilate said to them, Why? What evil has he done? But they shouted all the more, Crucify him!

[37 : 56] We see here that there's a crowd that is forming and it has formed it seems over a while and it's unclear where this crowd came from. These were people that had seen Jesus ministering in the outer courts of the Jewish temple throughout the last few days, seeing him confront the leaders on certain things, teaching the people.

But whoever these crowds were, the makeup of them, they were Jews, obviously, but the Jewish leaders stirred them up.

And how easy was that to stir up the crowds? And is it difficult to stir up crowds to do almost whatever you want?

It just takes a little bit of manipulation. There's a book written, I think, in the 1800s called something like Extraordinary Delusions and the Madness of Crowds.

And this author talks about all kinds of things through history where crowds were stirred up to do things that, on your own, you would think would be insane.

[39 : 15] One of the things he brings up is this thing that happened in Holland around the tulip mania. Anybody familiar with that? Where people put a huge amount of value in tulip flowers.

And people would sell their home in order to gain a single tulip flower. And it was insane. But everybody was doing it. And it started, who knows, maybe he talks about in detail on how it started, but the whole nation, it seemed, got caught up in this mania.

And then, eventually, it died down and people realized, what did I just do? I sold my home and now I have a dead flower. But so many times things like that happened.

I think, I think of what happened here in this country on January 6th when we had crowds of people who were rightfully protesting all the things that were, all the shady things that were going on in this country, but what did it take?

Just some people to say, come on, we're going to go storm the Capitol. And we're going to go break down the doors of the Capitol of the most powerful nation on earth, break down the windows and doors, and invade that building.

[40 : 31] And we think that that's a good idea. And, you know, people have made, there have been, it's unclear, right? Well, who were the individuals that actually started that?

Were they good guys or bad guys or, I mean, storming the Capitol is not a good thing to do, but were they people on the left or people on the right? It really doesn't matter, right?

Because ultimately the crowd got stirred up and they went in. And the crowd here cries out, crucify him.

Did this crowd, did the crowd have any innocence of his guilt? Did they have some evidence that the Jewish leaders didn't have? Or were they just getting caught up in the mania?

Did they know about Jesus and his reputation for compassion and feeding the hungry, healing, teaching faithfulness to God's word, upholding morality?

[41 : 33] Surely many of them must have known that. So why call for his crucifixion? Well, because everybody else is. It's a thing to do.

I mean, when everybody's doing something, that means we should, right? Didn't all of our moms teach us about that? Well, if everybody else jumps off a cliff, are you going to?

But this happens so often in our modern culture. Made me think of, remember, remember, I don't know, was this five years ago?

There was a high school kid from a Catholic high school in D.C. I think it was at the Lincoln Memorial. And there was this clip that went around. His name was Nick Sandman.

There was this clip of him and some guy, an American Indian guy. And this clip of him looks like he's intimidating the American Indian guy.

[42 : 35] It's a short clip, I don't know, 10, 15 seconds. And that clip, I think it was from CNN, goes viral all over social media.

And condemnation starts pouring out. And you look at the video and it looks like this kid, this young, you know, kid, this young white kid is intimidating a Native American who's just out there being peaceful.

Beating his drum. And you got some racist white kid who's just trying to intimidate him. And how horrific that is. And how long did it take?

What, 24 hours? After millions of views had racked up and all these news agencies and different people, politicians, had come out condemning this young man for what he did. And then, somebody decides, well, hey, there's a longer video, maybe we should look at that. And it turns out, he wasn't the one doing the intimidation, it was actually the other way around. But hey, when everybody else is, when everybody else is clicking like and retweeting and coming, you know, wanting to virtue signal or whatever we want to call it, then I need to join in on the crowd. [43 : 51] And by the way, it's not just, you know, we're talking about kind of liberal conservative things, it's not just liberals that do that. Do conservatives do that sometimes too? Do even Christians sometimes join the crowd instead of taking just a few seconds to investigate what's actually going on here?

There's this thing where everybody feels like whenever something comes up in the news, you have to have an opinion on it within five seconds. Is that a good idea? Without any data, I just have to have an opinion on this after five seconds of it becoming newsworthy.

No, we can just sit back and find out later what's going on. So, here's another question.

A few days earlier, less than a week ago, Jesus entered into Jerusalem on a donkey and the crowds were crying what? Hosanna in the highest.

And now, the crowds are saying, crucify him, crucify him. And here's my question, is this the same people? people? And I don't know that we can answer that completely, but I would have to say it probably cannot be.

[45 : 14] There may be some overlap, right? There's certainly many people who are more than willing to go with the crowd from one spectrum all the way to the other in just a few days, right?

Have you ever seen that before? I've seen it. There's plenty of people out there that will do that. But when Jesus came into Jerusalem, what was the crowd made of? It was mostly people from like Galilee who followed Jesus down from Galilee, people who were his followers, his disciples, and they were the ones that were at least leading the crowds.

And maybe there were people in Jerusalem who got excited and what's going on and they started joining in. But the people here who were shouting crucify him, crucify him, at least I would hope or expect that were not those people of his disciples, his larger disciples, not talking about the twelve in particular, but his larger following of disciples who had followed him from Galilee.

Pilate ultimately asks, why do you want me to crucify him? What has he done? And really, what's the answer to that question? It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter what he's done.

We want you to put him to death. Reason doesn't matter. Logic doesn't matter. Justice doesn't matter. We just want him dead. So verse 15, Pilate wishing to satisfy the crowd, released for them Barabbas, and then he scourged Jesus and he delivered Jesus to be crucified.

[46 : 47] Man, that happens a lot doesn't it? Wanting to satisfy the crowd. Have you ever been in a situation where everybody else was doing one thing and you knew it just wasn't right?

Is that easy? No, it is really, really hard. But it's the right thing to do. And do we think that God is going to hold Pilate guiltless because, well, he was just following the crowd.

He was just doing what the people wanted and that's actually a thing that we see a lot today. Well, you just have to do the will of the people. Let the people decide. Is that how God expects things to work?

You put things in the hands of the people. We'll just let the people vote on it. Things like fundamental human rights. Things like, you know, how are we going to handle marriage? Are we going to, you know, do we want natural marriage or same-sex marriage?

Oh, we'll just let the people decide. God forbid. But especially if you're a leader or especially a judge, you have a responsibility not to go with what the will of the people is but to do what is right.

[48 : 07] And you know, this is really a huge challenge with democracy. You know, democracy is something that is heralded across the world as this thing that is righteous and good and we have to have democracy.

But that's actually a fairly new concept. Did you know that? Just over the last couple hundred years where democracy is kind of universally accepted as the most good for society. John Adams, one of the founding fathers, in a letter that he wrote, I can't remember to who, but he said this about our country.

Our country is what you call a democratic republic or a constitutional but it's a democratic republic, right? We ask the people to vote for their representatives and then those representatives vote for us

in Congress or wherever it might be at the state level or at the federal level.

But John Adams said this, our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.

And so we find when the people are not upright, they're not moral, which is the way things have been throughout most of the history of the world, that the people themselves cannot be trusted to do what is right.

[49 : 41] That when you ask the people to vote, for example, we had ten initiatives regarding abortion violence through this last election. And if I can get the numbers right, I think three of them went the way towards, how do I say it, went, I guess the right way as far as defending the lives of unborn children.

And seven of them, either through changing the constitution, upheld the, quote, right to commit violence against little baby boys and girls.

And really, for example, in Florida, the only reason Florida won is because they had actually a higher threshold to change their law or constitution, whatever it was.

You had to have a 60% vote because the vote was what? Something like 57%. 57% of the people in Florida said, yes, we want to enshrine the right to commit acts of violence against little baby boys and girls.

We want to enshrine that in our constitution and our laws. 57. The majority of voters in Florida said, that's what we want. And so it turns out, in a degraded culture, an immoral culture, an irreligious culture, that when you give people a chance to vote, whether it's a direct vote or for representatives, they want to vote for other people's money.

[51 : 11] They want to vote for free sex. They want no-fault divorce. They want to legalize drugs. They want pornography as much as they want. They want abortion on demand.

They want to have to deal with the consequences of a life of sexual morality. So we even, you know, we used to have at least, we used to have a, we have like a two-party system here in this country.

We have other parties. We used to have one party that would uphold the right to life. They had in their party platform that we uphold the right to life of the unborn child.

And as of 2024, how many parties do we have that uphold the right to life in their official platform? We have zero. Because the Republican Party that for 40 years had in their party platform that we uphold the right to life of the unborn child, decided this year we're going to remove that.

It's too politically risky. This is what the people want. The numbers are there, the polling is there, so we need to remove that from our platform.

[52 : 38] It says here that they scourged Jesus, and this was a common thing that they would do before crucifixion. they would take a whip and put either bones or metal pieces at the end of it and lash them fairly near to death because they didn't want the crucifixion to last too long.

So they would make sure that they would remove lots of flesh and there would be plenty of bleeding while they were up on the cross to hasten that death on the cross.

And then Pilate said, send him off, send him off to crucifixion. The last question that I want to ask and we, that I said that we would talk about is who's the one, who's responsible for killing Jesus? Who's responsible? And this thing comes up in our culture and I see it, I've seen it over the last few months, last few years, there is this refrain from certain people, it was you Jews that killed Jesus. And is that true? Yeah. It is. In fact, there are several places in the scripture, I'll just, Stephen, when he was being stoned, you stiff-necked and, or before he was stoned, you stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and years, this is Acts 7.51, you always resist the Holy Spirit as your fathers did, so do you.

[54 : 01] Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the just one, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, who have received the law by the direction of angels, and have not kept it.

During his trial, we didn't read this one, but in John chapter 19, Jesus says to Pilate, you could have no power at all against me unless it had been given to you from above.

Therefore, the one who delivered me to you has the greater sin. Jesus said, the Jewish leaders who sent me over to you, they're the ones that have the greater sin. Not that you're innocent, but their sin is even greater.

So obviously, it's right there, right? The Jews are the ones responsible for Jesus' death. Now, this is something that happens over and over throughout church history. Because there were Jews, Jewish leaders at that time, who were responsible for Jesus' death, does that mean that Jews for all ages since that time are responsible for Jesus' death?

No, of course not. And to say such a thing is only racism and bigotry. You can never assign guilt to an entire ethnic group or even a religious group unless you see them doing the exact same kind of thing.

[55 : 19] And I have seen videos, and some people will point to this, where you have some Jewish people saying, I'm glad that they killed Jesus. Now, is that guilt? Without a doubt, right? We cannot assign guilt to an entire ethnic group of people.

But I want to look at a different passage in Acts chapter 4. This is when the early disciples, they had preached Jesus, they were arrested, they were let go, they went back, and they prayed, and this is their prayer. And being let go, Acts chapter 4, verse 23, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them.

So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said, Lord, you are God who made heaven and earth and the sea and all that is in them, who by the mouth of your servant David have said, why did the nations rage and the people plot vain things?

And they're going to talk about something specific that the people and the kings plotted. The kings of the earth took their stand and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his Christ, for truly against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together to do whatever your hand and your purpose determined before to be done.

Who was guilty? Everybody. Jew, Gentile, king, peasant. You know who also was involved in that?

[56 : 46] It was the father. It's what he had determined would happen. And he had determined, and you know, God, some people teach this, I think it's horrific, that God puts evil into men's hearts and makes them do things, evil things.

Did God have to put evil in anybody's heart to make them want to kill Jesus? No. All he had to do was take an existing evil heart and just point it one way or another. That's all he had to do. But his plan was that both Jew and Gentile would be involved in the crucifixion of Jesus.

Because as we learn in Romans, that both Jew and Gentile, they are both equally under sin and guilty of sin. Anybody seen that movie, The Passion?

Mel Gibson did 20 years ago? Maybe it's not that long. In that movie, Mel Gibson was not in, he didn't play a character in that movie.

But did you know that there was one role, that there's one scene in which he wanted to play a part? There's a scene in which Jesus is laying on the cross and there is somebody pounding nails into his hand.

[57 : 58] And Mel Gibson said, I want to be those hands. And so when he filmed that scene, Mel Gibson said, I want to be the one pounding the nails into Jesus' hands.

That's pretty incredible because he recognized something. that the nails that went into Jesus' hands and feet represent what? Is it the sin of the Jews?

It's the sin of the whole world. Being laid on Jesus. Being nailed to the cross. Your sins and my sins. And so we all need to recognize that it was your sin and my sin, whether we were there 2,000 years ago or not.

Whether we would have shouted crucify him or not. That it was our sins that put him up on that cross. And we ought to be so grateful for that.

That it wasn't just somebody else's sins that Jesus died for. It was ours. That it was a gift that he was giving to us. That all we have to do is trust him.

[59 : 12] That through that cruel death, we can have eternal life. And has everybody in this room, have you received that gift? It was your sins that were put on that cross.

But you know, you don't have to receive that gift. Some people will say, well, I don't want my sins on that cross. I want to bear them myself. And you know what? God will let you do that. He will let you do that if you want. But if you're willing, you can accept that your sins were nailed to the cross and have all of them forgiven 100%.

If you just trust in him. Are you grateful for what he did for us? Amen. Let's pray. Father, thank you for what you accomplished for us.

May we always take that position of humility and realizing that your death was because of our sins. We want our sins to be the ones that were carried on that cross.

to recognize your love, your compassion, your forgiveness for all of us, even though we didn't deserve it. Who knows whether if we were there, would we have shouted crucify him or we would have, would we have been those among the just?

[60 : 32] It's hard to tell. Right now we can know that our sins are completely washed away just because we trust in you and we're so grateful for that. Amen.

Amen. Thank you.