

Jesus & Peter on Trial

Mark 14:50-72

April 5, 2020 – Palm Sunday

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Introduction – Palm Sunday

Palm Sunday marks the beginning of Holy Week. It also commemorates Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem riding on a donkey (Mark 11:1-11), when **palm** branches and cloaks were placed on the road before Him.

“Those who went in front and those who were following were shouting, ‘Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord; BLESSED IS THE COMING KINGDOM OF OUR FATHER David; Hosanna in the highest!’” The word **hosanna** (“save, I pray” Psalms 118:25).

Today we are going to skip ahead in the Passion Week from Palm Sunday to Thursday when Jesus is arrested. I want to look at Jesus' testimony before the Jewish Council after His arrest and Peter's testimony before people where he denies knowing Jesus.

Before we get started let's look at Some Themes Running Through Mark's Gospel to help prepare us for our text today.

1. Who is Jesus?

Mark's Testimony: “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God” (1:1).

God the Father's Testimony: “You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased” (1:11, Jesus' Baptism); “This is My beloved Son, listen to Him” (9:7, Transfiguration).

The Demons' Testimony: “I know who you are, the Holy One of God (1:24); “What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? (5:7, Legion at Gerasene).

Peter's Testimony: “You are the Christ” (8:29)

The People's Testimony on Jesus' Triumphal entry in Jerusalem: “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Blessed is the kingdom of our father David. Hosanna in the highest.” (11:9-10)

The Centurion's Testimony: "Truly this man was the Son of God." (15:39, at the cross)

In contrast we see the religious leaders' unwillingness to accept who Jesus was. Instead we see constant antagonism toward Jesus. ("they sought how they might destroy Him (3:6; 11:18); they accused Him of being possessed by "Beelzebul" (3:22); they challenged His authority (11:27-28) they tried to trap Him in something He said (12:13); they were seeking to kill him (14:1, 55).

2. The Theme of a Suffering Savior

Jesus predicted His Betrayal, Arrest, Abandonment by His Disciples, Rejection, Suffering, Death and Resurrection.

Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:32-34 (as well as 9:9,12; 10:45; 14:17-21, 27-28)

Context for Mark 14:50-72:

Here in Chapter 14 leading up to our text we see:

14:1-2 The Passover & Unleavened Bread were 2 days away; the chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to quietly arrest Jesus so as to not cause a riot among the people.

14:3-9 a woman anoints Jesus body for burial.

14:10-11 Judas strikes a deal with the chief priests to betray Jesus.

14:12-21 Preparations are made for the Passover. During the Passover meal Jesus tells the disciples that one of them is going to betray Him.

14:22-26 Jesus establishes the Lord's Supper commemorating His sacrificial death for many.

14:27-31 Jesus tells the disciples that they are all going to fall away. When Peter protests that even if all the others fall away, he will not fall away, Jesus foretells of

Peter's denial of Him before the rooster crows twice. They were all saying that they would be with Him even unto death.

14:32-42 the Jesus takes the disciples to Gethsemane to pray. The disciples are sleeping in the midst of Jesus' anguish as He anticipates the suffering He is about to experience. Peter is reproved by Jesus and exhorted to stay awake and pray so that he will not fall into temptation. Peter fails to stay awake and pray.

14:43-49 Judas betrays Jesus with a kiss.

14:50 They, (the disciples), all left Him and fled.

15:1-15 Jesus is led to Pilate so that He might be put to death.

15:16-47 Jesus is mocked, beaten, crucified, and buried.

16:1-8 Jesus' Resurrection.

In our text today:

In our text, Mark's aim is not only to highlight Jesus' own testimony before the Jewish Leadership as to who He is, but also to contrast Jesus' faithful testimony as to who He is with Peter's false testimony, before bystanders in the courtyard, which declared that he was not a follower of Christ.

Let's look at their testimonies.

Our Text:

Jesus' Arrest

50 And they all left Him and fled.

51 A young man was following Him, wearing nothing but a linen sheet over his naked body; and they seized him.

52 But he pulled free of the linen sheet and escaped naked.

“They all drank the cup (14:23), they all confess their allegiance (v. 31)...and they all flee (v. 50)!” Edwards, James R., PNTC, p.430.

We are not told who the “young man” was. The most popular belief is that it was Mark, the author of The Gospel according to Mark.

Maybe “his lack of identity invites readers to examine their own readiness to abandon Jesus.” (Edwards, PNTC, p. 441)

The Setting:

53 They led Jesus away to the high priest; and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes gathered together.

54 Peter had followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest; and he was sitting with the officers and warming himself at the fire.

Both Jesus and Peter are mentioned at the beginning of this section which describes them bearing witness under pressure/persecution.

Their stories are told separately but this introduction in verses 53-54 not only sets the stage for their stories but also indicates that their circumstances were being played out at the same time.

Within 9 verses, some form of the word, “testimony/witness” occurs 7 times [vv. 55, 56 (2x), 57, 59 60, 63].

Jesus' Faithful Testimony while on Trial (14:55-65)

55 Now the chief priests and the whole Council kept trying to obtain **testimony** against Jesus **to put Him to death**, and they were not finding any.

The motives of the Jewish leaders are laid bare for us to see.

False Testimonies are given:

56 For many were giving **false testimony** against Him, but their **testimony** was not consistent.

According to the Law there needed to be at least 2 witnesses in order to impose the death penalty.

“On the evidence of two witnesses or three witnesses, he who is to die shall be put to death; he shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness. (Deut.17:6)

Num. 35:30; 19:15

57 Some stood up and began to give **false testimony** against Him, saying, **58** "We heard Him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days will build another made without hands.' "

The closest thing Jesus said as recorded by Mark is,

1As He was going out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, "Teacher, behold what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!" **2**And Jesus said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left upon another which will not be torn down." (Mark 13:1-2)

But John 2:18-22 we read: (Cleansing the temple)

18The Jews then said to Him, "What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?" **19**Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." **20**The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" **21**But He was speaking of the temple of His body. **22**So when He

was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.

59 Not even in this respect was their testimony consistent.

“Yet even about this their testimony did not agree.” (ESV)
The high priest has had enough. He now personally interrogates Jesus.

60 The high priest stood up and came forward and questioned Jesus, saying, "Do You not answer?

What is it that these men are testifying against You?"

61 But He kept silent and did not answer.

He was oppressed and He was afflicted,
 Yet He did not open His mouth;
 Like a lamb that is led to slaughter,
 And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers,
 So He did not open His mouth. (Isaiah 53:7)

Again the high priest was questioning Him, and saying to Him,
"Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?"

He wants to know and hear from Jesus' own lips if He is claiming to be the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One [Son of God].

In Mark, Jesus has only once referred to Himself as "the Christ" (9:41) and He has instructed the disciples not to tell anyone that He is the Christ (8:30). The term He used most often to refer to Himself was, "Son of Man" (8:31)

"Christ" (Messiah) "Anointed One"

"Son of the Blessed One" - "Blessed One" reflects the Jewish avoidance of direct use of the name of God" (France, R.T., NIGTC, Eerdmans, p. 610)

62 And **Jesus said,**

"I am; and you shall see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and COMING WITH THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN."

Jesus responds to the high priest not only in the affirmative but identifies Himself as the fulfilment of the One spoken of in both Psalm 110:1 and Daniel 7:13-14. This is clearly the climax in the interrogation of Jesus. He leaves no doubt whatsoever that He is in fact equal with God as His Son and He is the ultimate Judge of all, even those who are now condemning Him for telling the truth.

"The time for concealment is over and the truth must be declared firmly and openly to those who presume to set themselves as judges over Him." (R.T. France, NIGTC, Eerdmans, p. 611)

¹The LORD says to my Lord:
"Sit at My right hand
Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet."

²The LORD will stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion, *saying*,
"Rule in the midst of Your enemies." (Psalm 110:1-2) (Mark 12:36-37)

¹³"I kept looking in the night visions,
And behold, with the clouds of heaven
One like a Son of Man was coming,
And He came up to the Ancient of Days
And was presented before Him.

¹⁴"And to Him was given dominion,
Glory and a kingdom,
That all the peoples, nations and *men of every language*
Might serve Him.
His dominion is an everlasting dominion
Which will not pass away;
And His kingdom is one
Which will not be destroyed. (Daniel 7:13-14)

Verses that not only support Jesus ascension into heaven and His enthronement at the Father's right hand (Acts 1:9-11)

⁹And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. ¹⁰And as they were gazing intently into the sky

while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. ¹¹They also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."

But also point to His Second Coming in power and great glory to judge. (Matthew 24:29-31)

²⁹"But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰"And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory. ³¹"And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

There is no doubt in the high priest's mind that Jesus has committed blasphemy. He does not consider, indeed, he will not consider, even for a moment that Jesus' testimony is true.

63 Tearing his clothes, the high priest said, "What further need do we have of witnesses?"

"Tearing his clothes" - "a sign of profound consternation." (Edwards, TPNTC, Mark, Eerdmans, p. 448)

64 "You have heard the blasphemy; how does it seem to you?"

They now have what they wanted, a reason to condemn Jesus to death.

And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.

The anger and hatred of these men is over the top.

65Some began to spit at Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him with their fists, and to say to Him, "Prophecy!"

Spitting:

I gave My back to those who strike *Me*,
And My cheeks to those who pluck out the beard;
I did not cover My face from humiliation and spitting. (Isa. 50:6)

Prophesy:

Jesus had already “prophesied” that they would mistreat Him and hand him over to the Gentiles to be crucified. (10:32-34).

And the officers received Him with slaps in the face.

Peter’s False Testimony while on Trial (14:66-72)

While Peter’s interrogation is much less formal than Jesus’ trial was it was nevertheless an intense battle in Peter’s heart as to whether he would stand with Jesus or whether he would deny Him.

The word for “testimony/witness” doesn’t appear in verses that describe Peter’s trial, but there is still an courtroom feel to the story especially as Peter swears that he does not know Jesus.

Remember that Peter has pledged loyalty to Jesus even if it means he must die with Him (14:18-31; also Luke 22:31-34)

66 As Peter was below in the courtyard,
one of the servant-girls of the high priest came, **67** and seeing
Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, "You also were
with Jesus the Nazarene."

John 1:46 - Nathanael said to him, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?”

68 But he denied it, saying,

"I neither know nor understand what you are talking about."
And he went out onto the porch and a rooster crowed.

69 The servant-girl saw him, and began once more to say to the bystanders, "This is one of them!"

70 But again he denied it.

And after a little while the bystanders were again saying to Peter, "Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean too."

71 But he began to curse and swear,
"I do not know this man you are talking about!"

Peter does not even mention Jesus by name but refers to Him only as "this man".

"curse" - "to declare anathema," to put under divine curse," to declare oneself liable to the severest divine penalties"

Peter solemnly declares, with a divine curse as the consequences if he is lying, that he does not know "this man."

"to swear," "to take an oath" - **And he swears with an oath to try to remove all doubt.**

72 Immediately a rooster crowed a second time.

And Peter remembered how Jesus had made the remark to him,
"Before a rooster crows twice, **you will deny Me three times.**"

And he began to weep.

The story doesn't end there.

John 21:15-19

15 So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes,

Lord; You know that I love You.” He said to him, “Tend My lambs.” **16**He said to him again a second time, “Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me?” He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.” He said to him, “Shepherd My sheep.” **17**He said to him the third time, “Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me?” Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, “Do you love Me?” And he said to Him, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.” Jesus said to him, “Tend My sheep.

See also Peter’s boldness after Jesus’ resurrection and after Pentecost.
Acts 4:5-12; 5:17-42

Application:

Jesus’ Testimony

He is the Lord and Ultimate Judge.

Are we ready to stand before Him?

Phil. 2:6-11; I Thes. 5:1-11

How do we do when it comes to testifying about our relationship to Jesus?

What can we do to prepare ourselves for faithful witness to Christ?

1Peter 3:14-15

13Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? **14**But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED, **15**but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; **16**and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame. **17**For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.