

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

59. The King Betrayed – Arrested – Deserted - Interrogated

Mark 14:43-72

Mark 14:43–44 (CSB) ⁴³While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, suddenly arrived. With him was a mob, with swords and clubs, from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders.

The Sanhedrin was comprised of three groups.

The chief priests — those leading the nation in worship

The Scribes — the Bible scholars of the nation

The Elders — those who by virtue of maturity were entrusted with the spiritual and moral welfare of the nation

WOW! The arrest of the true and forever king of Israel was conceived, initiated and executed by the most religious people in Israel — and Luke adds the the **temple** police to that crew(Luke 22:52).

The Gospel of John fills out the composite picture of this moment. John tells us that Judas headed up a “cohort” (“detachment of soldiers” John 18:3 NIV) led by a “tribune” (“commander” John 18:12 NIV). That’s Roman military terminology. A cohort (Gk. *speira*) was a tenth of a Roman legion, or about six hundred soldiers (Josephus, *War* 3.67–68) and a tribune was a Roman commander of a thousand soldiers.¹ WOW!!

John tells us (John 18:4) that as they were approaching — Jesus said to them

John 18:4 (CSB).... “Who is it that you’re seeking?”

The mob answered — “*Jesus of Nazareth.*”

¹ Edwards, J. R. (2002). *The Gospel according to Mark* (p. 437). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

Jesus said to them, **“I AM.”** (ego eimi — the pronoun “he” is not in the text). Jesus said exactly what the voice from the burning bush said to Moses when Moses asked “If they ask me your name, what shall I say?” The voice from the burning bush answered — “Say that *I AM* has sent you.” When Jesus said, “*I AM*,” they all fell backwards. Imagine 600 Roman soldiers, and who knows how many others, thrown backwards — torches, swords, clubs and all!

John tells us that Jesus asked them **again**, “*Whom is it that you’re seeking?*”

44His betrayer had given them a signal. “The one I kiss,” he said, “he’s the one; arrest him and take him away under guard.”

I find this so wonderful — There was no particular thing about the appearance of Jesus that would single Him out as Messiah. Judas had to give them a signal as to which one was Jesus! Jesus wasn’t glowing in the dark. He wasn’t floating a few inches of the ground. There was no Grammy winning original soundtrack playing in the background. Apart from being pointed out Jesus would have been lost in the crowd.

Isaiah 53:2 (The Message) There was nothing attractive about him, nothing to cause us to take a second look.

If Jesus were here this evening you would not know if He was the guy sitting next to you. John the Baptist — the greatest prophet that ever lived said this

John 1:32–33 (CSB) ³²*And John testified, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and he rested on him. ³³I didn’t know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The one you see the Spirit descending and resting on—he is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’*

WHY did Jesus choose come into human flesh as the posterchild for unnoticeable?

HERE’S WHY! Jesus is *Emmanuel*, “*God with us.*” He came in a way that would enable Him to be approachable by anyone and everyone. He wanted fallen men and women to draw near to Him and hear the Good News of the Kingdom of God

that He was proclaiming. The King of the Kingdom wanted broken, fallen humans to draw near so He could touch them and make them whole.

Jesus still desires to do that — and ever since the book of Acts he’s been doing that through the agency of the citizens of His Kingdom. Every Christian gets to be part of His mission. Every Christian is a member of HIS BODY. We’re to be witnesses of Emmanuel!

Mark 14:45 (CSB) ⁴⁵So when he came, immediately he went up to Jesus and said, “Rabbi!” and kissed him.

Judas betrayed Jesus with signs of affection and respect — the *kiss* of peace and the salutation of *Master*, “Rabbi”.

Mark 14:46–47 (CSB) ⁴⁶They took hold of him and arrested him. ⁴⁷One of those who stood by drew his sword, struck the high priest’s servant, and cut off his ear.

This is interesting — John’s Gospel identifies which *one of them* it was Who drew his sword. It’s interesting because most believe that Mark is giving us Peter’s account of the life of Jesus. Mark essentially says: *One of them* — we won’t mention any names — cut off the ear of the high priest’s servant.

Dr. Luke in his gospel account takes the time to tell us that Jesus put the ear back on (I love the way this scene is portrayed in “The Passion of the Christ”).

The last miracle Jesus performs before His resurrection is to clean up a mess one of His disciples made. By the way — today Jesus is still fixing messes — putting things and people back together that His disciples have broken. I don’t know about you, but I’m so thankful for that. I haven’t cut anybody’s ear off — yet. But in my attempt to serve Jesus I’ve made some messes and hurt some people along the way.

Mark 14:48–49 (CSB) ⁴⁸Jesus said to them, “Have you come out with swords and clubs, as if I were a criminal, to capture me? ⁴⁹Every day I was among you, teaching in the temple, and you didn’t arrest me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled.”

Jesus is at peace. Everything is perfect between Him and the Father — *Not my will, but your will be done.*” The scriptures must be fulfilled.

In verse 50 we get to the climax of the betrayal and arrest

Mark 14:50 (CSB) ⁵⁰Then they **all** deserted him and ran away.

ALL of them deserted Jesus — ALL of them fled!

WOW! We were told in Mark 14:23 that *ALL* drank the cup. In Mark 14:31 we were told that *ALL* pledged to die with Him. And now we’re told that *ALL* desert Him!

James Edwards says this — *The betrayal of Judas is thus multiplied by the wholesale failure of the disciples; they all abandon Jesus and flee*²

Mark 14:51–52 (CSB) ⁵¹Now a certain young man, wearing nothing but a linen cloth, was following him. They caught hold of him, ⁵²but he left the linen cloth behind and ran away naked.

young man — the Greek translation of the Old Testament (LXX) as well as in the writings of Josephus, the term used by Mark is a reference to young men who are exceptionally strong and valiant — or faithful and wise. A number of commentators connect these two verses in Mark with **Amos 2:16**, where the prophet describes a day of judgment so terrible that *“he who is stout of heart among the mighty shall flee away naked in that day.”*³

There are some who say this is John Mark, who is writing the gospel. I don’t see this as an autobiographical statement. If I was going include something about myself in the account I doubt it would be that a bunch of guys pulled off my clothes and I ran away naked.

² Edwards, J. R. (2002). *The Gospel according to Mark* (p. 440). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

³ Edwards, J. R. (2002). *The Gospel according to Mark* (p. 527). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

Mark 14:53 (CSB) ⁵³They led Jesus away to the high priest, and all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes assembled.

There were actually three phases of Jesus' trial before the Jewish authorities and three phases of His trial before the Roman authorities.

After His betrayal and arrest in Gethsemane Jesus was first taken to Annas. Annas was the real power behind the high priest's office. That is recorded in John 18:12–13; 19–23).

Then Jesus came the trial recorded here by Mark. It was actually and illegal trial. It was against the tenants of Jurisprudence in Israel to hold court at night. These men broke virtually every tenant of Jewish Jurisprudence in order to kill Jesus. By the way — the same thing happens countless times as men and women break the laws of common sense, reason and logic so they can do away with Jesus. Then Jesus was taken to an official daylight trial of the Sanhedrin — then He was taken to Pilate, who sent Jesus to Herod, who sent Jesus back to Pilate, and from there He went to the cross.

Mark 14:54 (CSB) ⁵⁴Peter followed him at a distance, right into the high priest's courtyard. He was sitting with the servants, warming himself by the fire.

Two studies back we took an in-depth look at how Peter came to deny Jesus (Steps to a Fall). THIS is one of them.

It's impossible to follow Jesus from a distance. Proximity to Jesus — nearness to Jesus is the only way to follow Jesus. You are in trouble if you're following Him from afar. Our adversary the devil loves it when a believer tries to follow the Lord Jesus from afar. He doesn't come out and suggest – *Hey, why not follow Jesus from afar?* He attempts to get us there progressively, incrementally by way of compromise — giving up closeness to Jesus one little compromise at a time.

Mark 14:55 (CSB) ⁵⁵The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for testimony against Jesus to put him to death, but they could not find any.

They're not seeking for a witness to find out the truth. They've created their own narrative about Jesus — they cannot afford to have truth contradict that

narrative. They're just looking for the testimonies that support their narrative so that they can do away with Jesus.

Again — the same thing happens today. Those opposed to Jesus live in an echo chamber of like voices that affirm their low view of Jesus and their hostility towards Jesus.

Mark 14:57–59 (CSB) ⁵⁷Some stood up and gave false testimony against him, stating, ⁵⁸“We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple made with human hands, and in three days I will build another not made by hands.’ ” ⁵⁹Yet their testimony did not agree even on this.

Essentially, they accused Jesus of being a terrorist who wanted to destroy the temple. But Jesus never said that He would destroy the temple.

In John 2 John gives the account of Jesus driving the merchants and money changers out of the temple. The Jews challenged Jesus and asked Jesus to show them a sign to prove that He had the authority to do such a thing.

John 2:19–21 (CSB) ¹⁹Jesus answered, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it up in three days.” ²⁰Therefore the Jews said, “This temple took forty-six years to build, and will you raise it up in three days?” ²¹But he was speaking about the temple of his body.

This farce of a trial is not going as planned — and it starts to show

Mark 14:60–62 (CSB) ⁶⁰Then the high priest stood up before them all and questioned Jesus,

Charles Spurgeon —

The trial had been a dead failure up to that point, and he knew it, and was red with rage.

The New Testament scholar F.F. Bruce —

“... that the high priest arose from his seat and advanced into the semi-circle of the council towards Jesus (is) the action of an irritated, baffled man.”

THIS IS SO HUGE — One day Jesus will judge the entire world in righteousness (Acts 17:31). Yet here the righteous judge of the world is subjected to an unjust trial by unrighteous men. In reality, Jesus wasn't the one on trial at all — the religious leaders were on trial. And to this day Jesus is on trial in the minds of fallen men and women. But the same truth remains: Those who think they are judging Jesus are actually the ones on trial — and they are hopelessly guilty before Him.

Here is how magnificent the Gospel is —

Keller — *"The cross is the place where the Judge takes the judgment. This was the Father's plan, and it was also the Son's willing sacrifice."*

“Don't you have an answer to what these men are testifying against you?”⁶¹ But he kept silent and did not answer.

How easy it would have been for Jesus to mount a the most powerful, compelling defense in the history of the world. He could have recounted the countless events that testified to His deity; Lepers cleansed — the lame made to walk — the blind given sight — the dead raised — even the demons testifying to His deity.

But Jesus didn't open His mouth — just as Isaiah foretold concerning Him 700 years earlier

Isaiah 53:7 (CSB) ⁷*He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth. Like a lamb led to the slaughter and like a sheep silent before her shearers, he did not open his mouth.*

About 30 years later Peter — who was there by the fire witnessing these things — would write this,

1 Peter 2:19–23 (ESV) ¹⁹*For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. ²⁰For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you*

endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. ²¹For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. ²²He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. ²³When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

Isn't it difficult when you're accused of something that you didn't do — or accused of wrong when you tried to do something good? I NEED to *grow in grace and in the experiential knowledge of Jesus!* give me the strength to do this. I'm not good at that. Those of you here that are married - how good are you at that? It is such a great temptation to put on the gloves and get into the ring. Jesus left us an example to follow in His footsteps. Jesus committed NO sin. But He committed Himself to Him that judges righteously. He held His peace.

UNTIL..... the high priest asked asked this direct question

Mark 14:61–62 (CSB) ⁶¹....Again the high priest questioned him, “Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?”

“Are you the King who will reign on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish and sustain it with justice and righteousness from now on and forever?”

Jesus answers immediately and unequivocally

⁶²“I am,”

that is, “I am the Messiah, the Son of God.”

REMEMBER how Mark the subject matter of this account?

Mark 1:1 (CSB) ¹The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

said Jesus, “and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand

exalted to the place of highest honor and authority

the right hand of Power

lit., “the Power”), a Jewish substitute title for “God”

and coming with the clouds of heaven.”

Mark 14:63 (CSB) ⁶³Then the high priest tore his robes

*Leviticus 21:10 (CSB) ¹⁰“The priest who is highest among his brothers, who has had the anointing oil poured on his head and has been ordained to wear the clothes, must not dishevel his hair **or tear his clothes.**”*

Mark 14:63 (CSB) ⁶³Then the high priest tore his robes and said, “Why do we still need witnesses? Mark 14:64–65 (CSB)

⁶⁴You have heard the blasphemy. What is your decision?” They all condemned him as deserving death. ⁵Then some began to spit on him,

Charles Spurgeon — “Be astonished, O heavens, and be horribly afraid. His face is the light of the universe, his person is the glory of heaven, and they ‘began to spit on him.’ Alas, my God, that man should be so base!”

⁵Then some began to spit on him, to blindfold him, and to beat him, saying, “Prophesy!” The temple servants also took him and slapped him.

You have to understand what it’s saying. They covered His head so He couldn’t see. They began to punch Him in the face. They had robbed him of the built in protective mechanism of peripheral vision. He couldn’t duck. He couldn’t flinch. He couldn’t see the punch coming.

Isaiah tells us that He was beaten beyond human recognition. He did not look like a human being.

The New Testament clearly develops the fact that Jesus is God, the creator and sustainer of the universe.

***Colossians 1:17 NLT* He existed before everything else began, and he holds all creation together.**

Hebrews 1:3 (ESV) ³He is the radiance of the glory of God (they spit upon the one who is the radiance of God's glory) and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.

WOW — That means Jesus held together the knuckles that struck Him. He held together the spit as it flew through the air and landed on His face. He would hold together the scourge that in a matter of hours ripped the flesh off His back down to His bones and down to His organs. He would hold together the nails they drove driven through His wrists and feet. Jesus held together His own nerve endings as they received and transmitted pain.

The chapter ends with Mark's account of Peter's denial.

I'd like us to close with this: What should our response to Jesus be?

I want to leave us with these three challenges by Charles Spurgeon

1. "How ready should we be to hear slander and ridicule for Jesus' sake. Do not get into a huff, and think it a strange thing that people should mock you. Who are you, dear sir? Who are you? What can you be if compared with Christ? If they spat upon him, why should they not spit upon you? If they buffeted him, why should they not buffet you? Shall your Master have all the rough of it? Shall he have all the bitter, and you all the sweet? A pretty soldier you, to demand better fare than your Captain!"
2. "How earnestly, next, ought we to honor our dear Lord. If men were so eager to put him to shame, let us be ten times more earnest to bring him glory. Is there anything we can do today by which he may be honored? Let us set about it. Can we make any sacrifice? Can we perform any difficult task which would glorify him? Let us not deliberate, but at once do it with our might. Let us be inventive in modes of glorifying him, even as his adversaries were ingenious in the methods of his shame."
3. "Surely I know that he who suffered this, since he was verily the Son of the Blessed, must have ability to save us. Such griefs must be a full atonement for our

transgressions. Glory be to God, that spittle on his countenance means a clear, bright face for me. Those false accusations on his character mean no condemnation for me.”