Jesus on Trial

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us. Well, good morning. It is, as always, great to be with you and thankful that you're here to worship with us at our 9 o'clock worship service.

We invite you to turn with me to Mark chapter 14. As we continue in our study through Mark's Gospel, my plan today is to walk through as much of this as we can.
We're looking at the first set of trials of Jesus. There are three trials in the first part of this.
He goes through three Jewish trials and three Roman trials. And we're looking at the first set of three trials. And it's going to take us two weeks.
And I'm no mathematician, but it's kind of hard to divide three trials in half. And so we'll see how that works out. My plan is to cut off a few minutes short this morning and speak to you just about some events from the last week at the end of the service.
[1:21] And so we'll see how far we get today. Mark 14, verses 53 to 65 is where Mark picks up with the story.

But I do think it's important for us to put all of the Gospels together because we don't get all six trials from any one Gospel.
So we have to put them together to be able to get the full story. But let me just remind you of what's happening so that your heart and your mind is fully engaged with what's taking place.
Jesus has shared His final meal with His apostles. One of the men in His inner circle, Judas, who is betraying Christ, has removed himself to go do that work.
Jesus leads the eleven then to the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus prays. He calls on His apostles to watch and pray. They do more sleeping than praying.
[2:28] And then, as we looked at last week, Judas arrives with a mob of several hundred men. They have arrested Jesus.

The rest of the apostles have fled. That's where we left off last week in verse 50. And they all left Him and fled. It's now just Jesus and His accusers.
Jesus and the mob. What takes place next is a very hurriedly arranged plan and strategy to have some semblance of legality, all for the purpose not of discovering truth, but of putting Jesus to death.
Now, you do need to remember as we study the events of the trials of Jesus, this takes place within a culture, within a certain context, within the context of government and rules of law.
Now, it's true that many of the rules of law will be ignored, but there will still be some semblance of things, some tip of the hat, so to speak, to their rule of law.
[3:59] The legal system that we find ourselves in the first century here, where Jesus is a part of, is well established. You would have in towns, if you had 120 men who were heads of households, you would have places where legal matters would be disputed and decided upon.

We're familiar, and we'll become more familiar this week and next week, with the chief court known as the Great Sanhedrin. It was the final judicial authority.
It would be like in our day, similar at least, to our Supreme Court. 70 men plus a high priest. There would roughly be 24 chief priests, 24 elders, and 24 scribes.
That number would have to be massaged just a little bit, because they would have 70, and then the high priest. What we see, though, and what we've already studied, as we've been walking through this gospel for a while now, is that it is their heart's desire to put Jesus to death.
This is not an episode of a court seeking justice. This is about enemies seeking the death of Jesus.
[5:35] And a number of their own laws will be ignored. Trials weren't to take place at the high priest's home. You weren't to be tried without a defense.

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If you found someone guilty of something that demanded their death, you were supposed to wait 24 full hours to reconvene, to make sure that everyone had time to process that.
I'm thinking clearly before a final sentence of death. He shouldn't have been tried on the feast day. When they voted, they were supposed to vote youngest to the oldest, so that the younger members would not be unduly influenced by the more senior members of the court.
They will violate all of those laws. This is not about justice. This is about agenda. But just to help you grasp this, in case some of this may be new for you, I want you to try to understand what's taking place, because when you read Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, you get parts of the story in the Holy Spirit's kindness.
He's given us four Gospels preserved for us in the canon of Scripture, and by putting them together, we can have a full picture of the trials of Jesus.
[6:51] So, just as a big picture overview, let me kind of back up and zoom out and give you the big picture overview. You kind of put your arms around what's about to take place, because we'll be looking at this for several weeks when we put all six trials together.

There are two phases of trials. First, you have the Jewish religious phase, and then you have the Roman political phase.
Both sets have three separate trials. So, the issue at hand is that the religious leaders, the Jewish religious leaders, oppose Christ.
He's not the Messiah they wanted. He talks about sin and repentance, and they want no part of that. They've decided we need this man to die.
They're through debating him. They no longer want to deal with him. The text has told us they sought to destroy him. So, Jesus will be arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, and he's going to be led into trial.
[8:05] So, you've got three trials over here. These are Jewish trials dealing with religious issues. That is why the charge against Jesus will be blasphemy, that he claims to be the Son of God.

That they charge him essentially with being a false prophet. There are two problems.
One is, in this time in history, they're not able to put their citizens to death. They need Rome's permission to do that.
They live under the authority of Rome, and Rome does not give them the authority to put someone to death. Now, it is true that at times, if Rome isn't watching closely, they might could get by with that, but not at this time of year.
Not when hundreds of thousands of people have poured into town for the feast. There's no way they could get by with that. So, they've got to get Rome's permission to put someone to death.
[9:12] So, you've got these first set of three trials over here. They're Jewish trials. They deal with the religious issue, and the charge is blasphemy.

Claim to be the Son of God. At the end of those three trials, that we're going to look at today and next Sunday, Lord willing, then they're going to take him over here, and we're going to begin a second set of three trials.
These are Roman trials. These are political trials. Mainly because Rome really isn't interested in the religious claims.
They may not believe the religious claims, but it's of no matter to them. And so, over here, you're going to have three trials in front of Annas, Caiaphas, and a portion of the Sanhedrin.
And the third trial will be Caiaphas and the full Sanhedrin, the group that's called there. And then over here, we go to the Roman political trials that will be in front of Pilate, and then Herod, and then Pilate again.
[10:19] The charge against Jesus is going to have to be changed. Because while the Jewish courts find him guilty of blasphemy, claiming to be the Son of God, the Roman court would say, take and deal with him yourself.

He's a false prophet. Don't listen to him. If he's a false prophet, remove him from his position. You do whatever you want to do with him. But Rome is not going to put a man to death for a religious claim that Rome doesn't believe in anyway.
And so now the Jewish authorities have a problem. They've gone, sort of, through their legal processes, found him guilty of blasphemy.
They've got to get Rome's permission. And Rome over here says, why do we care about your religious superstitions? Take him, do with him whatever you want. We're not going to put a man to

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death for that.
So the charge has to be changed. How do you change the charge from blasphemy when that's what they found him guilty with? Well, what they do is over here in the Roman trials, they say, this man claims to be king of the Jews.
[11:38] The charge has changed from blasphemy, son of God, to treason, being the king.

Well, Rome has to pay attention of somebody's claiming to be the king because if there's one thing Rome will not tolerate, it's someone trying to overthrow their power.
So you've gone through these three trials, Annas, Caiaphas, Sanhedrin, Caiaphas, Sanhedrin, found him guilty of blasphemy, taking him over here across the way to the Roman political authorities who they have to sign off to put a man to death.
And in the course of that, the charge gets changed from blasphemy to treason, and now Pilate over here in these set of three trials has to listen. Are you with me so far?
I just want to try to give you a big picture because it can be difficult to put it all together and try to figure out all the maneuvering that's going on. And remember, while all of this ultimately is the work of Christ dying for our sins, it plays out in the midst of a context.
[12:53] So, there are six trials. Three are Jewish. Three are Roman. The first three are religious in nature.

The second three are political in nature. The first set of trials yields a verdict of blasphemy. The second set yields a verdict of treason.
John's Gospel tells us about the first trial. So, we're going to step outside of Mark because Mark picks up with trial two and three. Trial one, we go to John's Gospel in chapter 18.
Around midnight, Jesus has been arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, bound, and now led to trial. And they're going to take him before a man named Annas.
It's essentially a fast, predetermined, preliminary hearing we could think of it. Annas is still the most powerful religious man in the land.
[14:06] He was the former high priest. I believe five of his sons had succeeded him as high priest. The current high priest, Caiaphas, is his son-in-law.

Now, Annas is significant because in the chronology, we're late Thursday night, midnight going into Friday. And at that point, it was just three days ago that Jesus has gone to the temple to break up all that was taking place in the temple.
You'll recall in the temple, they were selling animals for sacrifice. They had their inspectors there. You could buy an animal for sacrifice and pay 15 times more up to what it normally would cost.
Now, here is the deal. They would tell you, you could bring your own animal for sacrifice. Two things. One, how impossible would it be to travel from all over the area to Jerusalem with animals for sacrifice?
And so, it's very difficult to do. Secondly, they had their inspector set up to see if your animals qualified for sacrifice. And you could just rest assured that even if you brought your own animal, some inspector there would find a problem with your animal, essentially forcing you to pay for their animal for sacrifice.
[15:31] You also have a group called the Money Changers. We dealt with this in great detail. I know it's been a few weeks ago at this point, but they were exchanging. There were only a couple of kinds of coins they would allow.

And so, you're coming from all over the place. You bring your own currency. They would gladly exchange your currency for the temple currency, but you can rest assured you're going to lose most of the value in that.
Jesus goes and sees that, grieved over that, angered over that, shuts the entire thing down, and absolutely brings it to a halt.
That whole thing was known as the Bazaar of Annas. Annas. Annas was at the top of that pyramid scheme.
He had his people working underneath him, and they would get their pockets lined too, but Annas is the one at the top. So, when Jesus shuts that down, and he says, you have made my father's house a den of thieves when it should be a house of prayer, what Jesus says is that all of you are robbers.
[16:44] You're thieves. And it's a den. It's a place where the thieves retreat and find safety and refuge because everybody in there is a thief.

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So, Annas has not only been shamed in what he has done, he has not only lost his profit over robbing the people, he's also seen firsthand the power and authority of Christ.
And he wants him dead. And so, it's during this time, they take Jesus to Annas.
Night trials were regarded as illegal, they will ignore that. And in John 18, verse 19, it says, the high priest then questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching, and Jesus answered him, I have spoken openly to the world, I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple where all the Jews came together, I have said nothing in secret.
Why do you ask me? Ask those who have heard me what I said to them, they know what I said.
Jesus says, I've not taught one thing over here and something different over there, I've taught openly, I've taught in the public, you can ask anybody what I've said, everybody knows what I have said.
[18:22] In Jesus' answer, he's also pointing out you're not even following your own rules. Jesus speaks and responds in a way to make clear that they in this trial are not even following their own legal system.

Jesus now in front of Annas calls Annas out for his sin, and you could metaphorically say Jesus has once again turned the tables on Annas.
He did it literally a few days ago in the temple, he does it figuratively now as he appears before him.
Verse 22, when he had said these things, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand, saying, is that how you answer the high priest?
Another illegal action. Jesus answered him, if what I said is wrong, bear witness about the wrong, but if what I said is right, why do you strike me?
Annas then sent him bound to Caiaphas, the high priest. Let's zoom out again. I want to make sure you can put your arms around all that's going on here, okay?
[19:47] Jesus is arresting the garden. Judas has betrayed him. They tie up his hands. They march him to the place where Annas is.

At some point in that, it appears that Jesus has been freed, at least his hands, so to speak, because after this first trial of Annas, verse 24, says they bound him and sent him to Caiaphas.
So he had been arrested, marched to Annas, apparently released, goes through this preliminary hearing and then will be struck, bound, and then taken to Caiaphas.
We're dealing today and next Sunday with these first three trials, the Jewish religious trials. Trial one, in front of Annas.
It's quick, it's fast, it's midnight, it's illegal, and it's all about an agenda.
[20:54] Then, we go to trial two. Three Jewish religious trials. Trial one is Annas. Trial two, Caiaphas.

Caiaphas is the current high priest. After this quick hearing with Annas, he's sent to the house of Caiaphas.
If Jesus is arrested around midnight, he's taken to Annas, they convene there, and they go through this preliminary hearing.
He's then taken from Annas chambers to where Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin would gather. it's 1.30 in the morning, 2 a.m., somewhere around there.
Annas and Caiaphas appear to have either shared a courtyard or at least their places are very near to each other, so it's not going to take much time to go from Annas to Caiaphas.
[21:59] Remember, in the upper room, Judas had stepped out to put into motion this plan, so this has all been set up. Everybody's ready.

They're not waking people up. They're ready. This has been the plan, and they are just simply executing this plan. Caiaphas was appointed to this role in the year 18 A.D.
He married the daughter of Annas. back now to Mark 14. In Mark 14, verse 53, it says, they led Jesus to the high priest, and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes came together, and Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest.
And he was sitting with the guards and warming himself at the fire. When we last saw the disciples in Mark 14, it was verse 50 that they all left him and fled.
What's happened is between the time of Jesus' arrest and being taken to Annas and that short hearing, Peter and John have been able to discern where Jesus is, and Peter follows behind at a distance.

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[23:39] It seems John was able to get inside because he knew the family. Peter stands back off at a distance.

Peter's there to see what happens. You'll recall as we studied a few weeks ago, Jesus has very clearly prophesied of Peter's soon-coming denial.
At this point, that feels impossible. It's 1.30 in the morning, 2 a.m. two hours ago, Peter had a sword out swinging for the head of Malchus.
And in just a few minutes, maybe a couple of hours to be more precise, all of these events of the prophecy is about to take place.
Peter has fled, but he's following at a distance. Verse 55, now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking testimony against Jesus to put him to death, but they found none.
[25:01] This is a completely dishonest trial marked by all kinds of illegal things. They've already decided what their verdict was going to be.

And as they go to Caiaphas and the members of the Sanhedrin, all they are doing is seeking to execute what their heart had already purposed to do.
I want to show that to you. Turn back with me, if you would, to John chapter 11. John 11.
Verse 45. Many of the Jews, therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did believed in him.
Just to orient you, this is right after Jesus has raised Lazarus. The events in Mark 14 is April. The events of John 11 is February, as we would reckon it.
[26:13] So it's about six weeks earlier. Many of the Jews, therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he had believed in him, but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.

So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, what are we to do? For this man performs many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.
They say, if he goes on like this, what's he been doing? Well, he just raised a man from the dead.
Now, you might think any honest evaluation evaluation would say, if somebody can go to a man that's been dead for four days, simply call his name and demand he come forth and the dead man's raised to life, we might want to listen to such a man.
But hard hearts do strange things. if we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.
But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, remember, we're six weeks before the events of the cross, said to them, you know nothing at all, nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish.
[27:53] He did not say this of his own accord, but being the high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.

So, from that day on, they made plans to put him to death. the trials are just the culmination of John 11.
They said, this man must die. It's not about truth. It's not about justice. It's not about integrity. it's about fulfilling their plan that this man must die because how do you defeat a man who raises the dead?
And you say, but Jesus healed many people. He loved the children. He helped people born blind to see, people who were deaf to hear.
He even raised people from the dead. He loved the outcast. He talked about the hope of heaven and salvation.
[29:16] Why in the world would people want to put him to death? Because hard hearts make you do strange things.

But what I do want you to understand this morning. I love how scripture puts this. Verse 52!
52 and 53 need to be understood together. Verse 53 are the plans of hell.
Verse 52 the purpose of heaven. Verse 53 they made plans to put him to death. But even in that verse 52 God was gathering into one the children who were scattered abroad.
The purpose of heaven will not be defeated. He not be My question for you this morning is do you know Christ?

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[30:43] Because it's one thing to sit back and say you know what if I had seen Jesus turn water to wine if I had seen Jesus walk on the water in Matthew 14 if I had seen Jesus heal the man born blind if I had seen Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead I would believe I need more proof here are men who saw everything and they refused to worship for one reason they had hard hearts and what I want to implore you with today is that this day you would repent of your sin and trust in Christ

I fear for every person who comes to this church unconverted because week after week after week you hear the gospel and if you do not repent all you're doing is hardening your own heart and I understand that you think to yourself as long as I keep coming to church maybe one day I'll do something with this but as it is said the same sun that melts the wax can also harden and if you hear the gospel and walk away I fear for you so this day if you would acknowledge that you are a sinner on this day call out to the
Lord if you walk away today unconverted you're simply doing what they did 2,000 years ago sing the truth ignoring it and putting your agenda above your soul and I plead with you not to do that Lord we thank you for your word today as we have begun this journey into this intricate and important season of the passion week may you grant us understanding for those who may not know you may you grant them faith that they would trust in you for those who do know you may we walk in holiness before you living out the truth that we affirm and believe in Christ's name amen
I want to take a few minutes and talk to you I know on with he he will see you as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as

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