

JESUS ON TRIAL

The gospels spend a lot of ink on the story of Jesus' trials which lead to his being crucified.

They evidently considered these stories to be vitally important. Even Jesus' alleged resurrection did not get as much love. Mark was the first. Mark's gospel spends virtually no time on Jesus' wonderful teaching but plenty on his alleged history as if the teaching was a later invention! The gospels all are more keen to agree on the circumstances surrounding Jesus death than on anything else.

Why were the stories important?

They seem to want to make Jesus out to be a victim of injustice to enhance his appeal.

They need to explain how an executed criminal was in fact innocent and the son of God.

They want to slander the Jews and make poor Pilate who had Jesus put to death seem almost innocent.

If Jesus had been made up entirely or partly you would expect a lot of stuff about his trial. The trial information is replete with lies and absurdities and contradictions a sure sign of invention.

MARK - THE REASONABLY CREDIBLE GOSPEL?

Mark is a tame gospel or so it seems.

It says that a couple of days before the Passover when the chief priests and scribes decided to put together a trick to arrest Jesus and have him vanquished.

Why then? Even the gospel says they said it was a bad idea as there was a festival on and his supporters might riot.

Why by trickery? Why not just arrest him? The gospel speaks of him trekking the roads so there was plenty of chances to get him! He was only in Bethany when they decided to take action. Jesus lamely comments when he finally gets arrested that it is odd that they did not capture him before then that it must be to fulfil the scriptures.

TRIAL BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN

Jesus was taken before the Sanhedrin who were bent on finding him guilty of blasphemy to get him put to death.

Some scholars believe that possessed and sick people were regarded as inferior beings and barred from the Temple and thought to be unclean. The Law of Moses taught exactly this. They think that because Jesus cured people he restored them to the same status as other people had and that upset the leaders. But the Law itself said that people were to be inferior no more if they got better. And there is no evidence at all that Jesus got into trouble just for his cures or that he told anybody he cured that they were back on the same level of social status as healthy people. If the Jews held the miracles against him there was plenty they could have done about it. He would have been before the Sanhedrin sooner. The Sanhedrin hoped to find him guilty of blasphemy which would have been easy enough if he had been curing illegitimately and attributing his cures to God.

The evidence is against the notion that the cures got Jesus into trouble. Most of them were not miraculous by any standard anyway.

The Gospels say they got their wish when Jesus admitted to them that he was the Messiah, the Son of God and God's right hand man who would come on the clouds of Heaven. The council could not have found this blasphemous or at least bad enough to merit death. This was one of the points in which Jewish orthodoxy was flexible. Christians say that Jesus was referring to Daniel which says that God will come on the clouds of Heaven so he was claiming to be God. That is mere speculation and Jesus never mentioned Daniel. God cannot be on the right hand of God even though Christians say that Jesus though God is on the right hand as man. But Jesus as the man-God can make the decisions of God so he is not on the right hand but on the throne. Perhaps it was offensive because Jesus was claiming to be these things while espousing what the Jews abominated as heresy? It would be blasphemy for a heretic to claim to be the Son of God. But heresy was not mentioned so that would not be likely. Mark is plainly blaming the Sanhedrin's reaction on what Jesus claimed to be. That is the simplest understanding so the gossellers incorrectly think the Jews considered it to be blasphemy for anybody to

claim to be the Son of God and God's next in charge.

It is a mistake to assert that the word translated blasphemy might just mean insolence and not necessarily insolence against God (page 290, The Unauthorized Version). But the reaction of the High Priest who ripped his own robes in anger and the way it fuelled the hatred in the rest shows blasphemy in the sense of insulting God is the correct understanding.

The meeting of the Sanhedrin to try Jesus all night is untrue for they were not allowed to (page 102, Jesus: the Evidence, page 291, The Unauthorized Version). Some say that the rules about what the Sanhedrin could not do were recorded several decades after it disbanded show we cannot be sure that it was not allowed (page 60, Jesus and the Four Gospels). But still it is most likely that the rules were used. We have no reason to assume otherwise. Why keep anybody out of their beds over something that could wait and should wait until after the feast? And if all they were looking for ways to make Jesus claim to be God's Messiah and Son that was easy to prove and there was no need to be up all night. It was not an emergency. Mistakes through tiredness and impatience to get home could result from late trials so the law had to be in force for it makes sense.

Josh Mc Dowell claims that the trial of Jesus was every bit as unusual as the critics admit, and was held late for it was a matter of extreme seriousness, that is, the Jews had come to believe that Jesus had to be tried and put out of the way as soon as possible before a national crisis arose (John 11:50). This man makes me sick with his lies. If he believes that it was that urgent then why does he believe the story that thousands clamoured for Jesus' death the next day? Why did the apostles get away to tell that Jesus was arrested if it was a national crisis?

The New Testament says that the Sanhedrin employed and listened to false witnesses who were unable to agree among themselves. When they went to the trouble of getting perjurers they could have and would have coached them first. All the witnesses had to do was say Jesus claimed to be the messianic and supreme Son of God ruling out the danger of conflict. Perjury is so serious under Jewish Law that they would not have been careless.

The Jews allegedly believed that Jesus had to die or Rome would turn on them (John 11). If true then the places that accuse them of envy and sin are slandering them. It was self-defence. There would have been no shortage of people who would have been happy to assassinate Jesus. The Sanhedrin had no need to go to all that trouble and do all those reprehensible things that the gospels accuse them off. It wouldn't have. It would have lost its standing with the people. Jesus himself is said to have pronounced that the Sanhedrin were fair (Matthew 5:22). Some think the Sanhedrin was the reason the people turned against Jesus. That is speculation. The people already knew that Jesus claimed to be what the Sanhedrin said he should die for claiming to be and saw nothing awful in it.

When Jesus was found deserving of death it is impossible to see why they sent him to Pilate. They may have needed Pilate's permission to do away with Jesus themselves but there was no need for another trial or for Pilate to meet him. When they found Pilate was anxious to save Jesus' life and when he told them to kill him themselves for he didn't want him dead they could have taken Jesus and destroyed him then in case Jesus would get off. Also, they would not have taken Jesus to Pilate in case he would go free in the first place. Pilate would not have tried Jesus when the Sanhedrin had already done it and found him guilty of capital crimes and when he heard Jesus say he was the Messiah which deserved death under Roman law. He would not have gone to the trouble of needlessly interviewing Jesus himself when there were plenty of Roman magistrates to do it.

THE HEROD TRIAL

Jesus was allegedly tried before King Herod who found no fault with him. We are told to believe by Luke that Herod had not previously laid eyes on him. This is stupid for Herod must have met him before when he was keen to see his miracles and when Jesus was out and about meeting the public so much. Herod would have asked Jesus if he did not want political power then would he take it for spiritual reasons. Jesus could not say no without confessing to being a hypocrite and not a real Son of God. So Jesus either did not answer or he said he would. Thus Herod could not have found him innocent. He would have been determined to get rid of him because he would be a rival. Jesus would have been guilty of high treason. And Herod would have known that Jesus regarded John the Baptist as his forerunner and supreme prophet – if the gospels are to be believed. Herod threw John in jail for condemning his marriage to his sister-in-law, Herodias, so he would have done the same to Jesus who would have condemned him by implication. In fact he would have reacted quicker against Jesus.

THE ABSURD TRIAL IN JOHN

The gospel of John is totally ridiculous with its Pilate testifying that Jesus was the king of the Jews and asking them if they want him to crucify their king. And John's tale of Pilate wanting to free Jesus when and because Jesus told him he had no power over him for it was God that allowed Pilate to detain Jesus is total madness. We read Pilate openly sympathised with him. If Pilate believed him how could he sympathise with him? How you sympathise for a prisoner who has the key to let

himself out of prison? How could Pilate let his sympathy be so easily known?

Jesus refused even to testify for himself at his trials and told the High Priest not to ask him what he taught but ask his hearers in other words - the accused has no right to speak for himself and should get others to defend him! Morally speaking, the accused should say his piece and then the witnesses should be brought in to work the truth out of what he says. Jesus denied that for he told the guard standing there that he had said nothing wrong in telling the High Priest to ask his hearers. The Law of Moses does not say that its blasphemy to claim to be the Son of God and Jesus was not the only one who had made that claim in those days. But we read in John that the Jews told Pilate Jesus had to be put to death for saying that he was the Son of God. And why does John have Pilate permitting the Jews to crucify Jesus themselves while claiming that he wanted to save Jesus? The Christian guess is that Pilate was being sarcastic for Jews didn't crucify. But the context says he was afraid of them so sarcasm is unlikely. John was saying Pilate was letting the Jews kill Jesus themselves.

FICTITIOUS TRIAL BEFORE PILATE

The Gospels claim that Jesus was brought before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, by the Jews in the hope that he would be crucified.

The gospels say Pilate believed that Jesus thought he was the king of the Jews and sought to release him until the Jews reminded him that Caesar tolerated no kings. This is impossible. Expressing a desire to set a king free in public would have cost him the trust of the emperor forever. And Caesar fired anybody he didn't trust.

In John, the Jews beg Pilate to crucify Jesus. But Pilate replies that he finds nothing in Jesus that makes him deserve it. The Jews answer that he has broken their law by claiming to be the Son of God. The Jews would not tell Pilate to execute Jesus over their religious bigotry. The Roman Empire had its own laws. They didn't need to bring religion into it at all. Doing that would only damage their case for using Rome to eliminate Jesus.

CONCLUSION

The stories of the trials of Jesus which you would expect to make sense if there had been a Jesus show that a lot of clever lies were told about him. They are the most ridiculous tales that ever posed as history.