



Who is Jesus: Jesus on Trial: Pt 1

Usually, our Bible studies offer one area of topic. We ask a question like: who is Jesus? Then we look all over the Gospels for that answer. That's how you make a Bible study. Search the scriptures for Biblical answers. Yet, to answer the question (who is Jesus) we might need to ask the people in the Bible narrative. People wanted to know who he was. Jesus was strange, confusing, and hard to pin down. He was always moving, talking, and doing weird things like miracles. It's not common to have one incident appear in all the Gospels. Yet, the trial of Jesus with Governor Pilate is in all four books.

Sure, this trial is important to the story. Isn't the birth of Jesus important? Why is that only told in two books? I think this trial is in all of them because of one statement "King of the Jews." God said to Eve that one would come from her lineage that would crush the head of the serpent. David was promised a king in succession to rule them all. Prophets told them that a king would come. To find our answers I began to see that this is far bigger than one study. It covers all 4 gospels and many of the people inside these accounts. Strangely enough I don't find it's Jesus on trial. Instead, I think all the characters involved in this story are on trial. It's not only about who is Jesus, but who is this king they were waiting for?

Who is Jesus in this trial narrative? Is he their long-awaited king? I believe the Jews were skeptical. Their king would crush the Romans. Their king was a military leader, king, and priest. Jesus said he would reign, but not yet. He said he could reign, but not yet. He must die first.

What? How does a king die to save them all? How could Jesus be king of the Jews. The four books tell this story; however, it's told in four slightly different ways. I think it's the story of four trials. Let's break down the first two versions of this trial of Jesus.

Matthew 26-27

Who is Jesus? Jesus is at Simon the Leper's house. A woman pours expensive perfume on the head of Jesus. It says the disciples were annoyed that she wasted something so expensive. Yet, Jesus rebukes them. The Bible says it's to symbolize Jesus' death. Jews cover the body in perfumes. Yet, it's also a hint of anointing the King. This whole scene caused something in Judas to snap. We went away to discuss payment for handing Jesus over to the religious rulers.

Imagine Judas is looking at Jesus across a table. I bet he is thinking "do something Jesus to be the king." What is all this burial talk and anointing? I suspect Judas was the impatient one. He wanted Jesus to rise up and be the Messiah that He claimed to be. It's stunning that during Jesus' arrest, someone cut off a soldier's ear. Jesus told them to put the swords away. Then Jesus says He could have called on legions of angels but that's not why He came. I bet Judas was wide eyed asking "who are you Jesus?" Maybe Judas was on trial in this story?

Caiaphas the high priest and others asked him if he was the Christ (savior and king). Jesus remained silent until he repeated a prophesy. This seemed to infuriate Caiaphas. He asks Jesus (in God's name) to tell the truth. Jesus then says He is the King. Oddly enough they took that to be an insult rather than confirmation Jesus was their king. I suspect Caiaphas was on trial not Jesus. What was really in the high priest's heart? A yearning for Gods messiah or a threat to his lifestyle and power?

Is Peter on trial at the prison fire? They asked him if he is associated with the man claiming to be king. He denied those accusations three times. Then governor Pilot asked Jesus if he was this king. Jesus remained silent for the most part. Pilot tries to set this man free but Jesus would not help him. The priests would not help him. The crowds would not help him. Pilot had a choice, is that true? It seems like he was forced to condemn Jesus. Is Jesus this king everyone was talking about? The bigger question is: was Pilot on trial to set Jesus free?

Mark 14-15

Maybe our answer to who Jesus is can be found in the Book of Mark. Again, we have Peter at the table. Judas is not mentioned this time. It seems Peter is on trial. He challenges Jesus to reign in the kingdom now. Jesus rebukes him. Who is this Jesus? It appears Mark is standing with Jesus as he is arrested. He could have remained with Jesus, yet, he flees naked. Jesus comes again to the high Priest. They ask him if he is the Christ, the son of the blessed one? Jesus is silent. Hard to win a trial when you're silent. Each person seems to be on trial when confronted with Who Jesus is.

Mark is a fast and crazy book. All this happens on two pages: Jesus is questioned, whipped, mocked, crucified, and killed. There is the lonely centurion standing within all this saying "wow this is the Son of God." Who is Jesus to them? They hurled insults calling him the Christ. They were mocking him not because he could be the blessed one. No, they taunted him to be like the one they had waited for. Jesus is many things to many people. When Jesus is not what you want, all hell breaks loose like it does in Mark.

What if Jesus is your Franken-Jesus. That term is to describe a Jesus you make to act the way you want. Yet, is your Jesus the real Jesus? I knew someone who believed about 10% of the

Bible story about Jesus. They took the parts they believed in and rejected the others. It's interesting that they fought fiercely that my version of Jesus was evil. The one in the Bible. Finally, I asked them how do they prove that their accepted parts of Jesus were the only real parts? Their only answer was: it's what I believe. Yet, they had no verses or reason to reject most of who Jesus really was. They wanted a franken-Jesus more than the real one. Next week we will continue to ask the question: who is Jesus while on trial?