

Passion, Death, and Resurrection Narratives

Lesson 17

Saint Paul Online Bible College

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1. Introduction

- PDR (Passion, Death, Resurrection Narratives)
- Common to all gospels.
- Written first. Gospels are written backwards.
- “You killed Jesus ...” (Acts 2:32)
- Cf. Infancy Narratives (short). Shadows of cross at Jesus’ birth.
- Passion culminates in resurrection. So, no failure.

1.1 Historical Setting

- Roman emperor is Tiberius Caesar.
- Local ruler for Judea, Samaria, Idumaea. Roman procurator: Pontius Pilate.
- For Galilee Herod Antipas.
- Assyrian and Babylonian exile. People were deported.
- Romans. Did not deport people. Pax Romana. Roads and culture.
- Jesus encountered hostility soon after his public appearance (Mk 3:6).

- Pharisees. Influential lay movement. Conservative protest movement. Oral tradition.
- Sadducees. Upper-class. Priestly aristocracy. Jesus' criticism of the Temple affected them.
- Herodians.
- Zealots.
- Essenes. Withdrawal into desert. Cf. Jesus.
- Cf. Supporters. Joseph of Arimathea.
- Who killed Jesus?

1.2 Historicity of the Text

- Legends, literary compositions, symbolic meanings?
- Actual events? Historical character? Early Christian persecution. Confession of faith.
- Following criteria:
 - Multiple attestation.
 - Coherence.
 - Embarrassment
 - Continuity and discontinuity.

1.3 The Three Passion Predictions

- Suffering Servant of YHWH (cf. Isaiah)
- First prediction.
 - Peter did not understand.
- Second prediction.
 - Who is the greatest?
- Third prediction.
 - James and John. At the right and the left.

2. The Narrative in Detail

- Jesus comes to Jerusalem to die.
- Jesus' determination to fulfill Israel's history.
- Fulfilment of God's purpose.

2.1 The Opening of the Passion

- Plot to kill Jesus.
- Anointing at Bethany.
- Judas to betray Jesus.
- Last supper.
- Jesus' prediction about His disciples.
- Prayer at Gethsemane.

2.1.1 The plot to kill Jesus.

- John. Three Passovers: cleansing of the Temple, multiplication of loaves, passion.
- Synoptics. One Passover.
- Passover began on the 14th Nisan. Slaughter of lambs around 3 pm. Passover meal on the 15th Nisan. The feast ends on the 21st of Nisan. Feast of unleavened bread.
- Palm Sunday changed the scenario. Cleansing of the Temple and the Messianic sign. Temple, a sensitive issue (religious, social, and economic).
- Arrest by stealth. Fear of riot. They want Jesus to die. Plot is made.

2.1.2 Anointing at Bethany

- Act of love and generosity.
- Preparation for burial.
- ‘She has done what she could.’
- John’s gospel. Done to his whole body.
- Cf. Luke’s story.

2.1.3 Judas agrees to betray

- Iscariot
 - Ish+Kerioth. From Judea.
 - 'sqr' = liar
 - 'skr' = one who hands over
- All the four gospels. By Satan? A Thief? By hanging? By falling headlong? 30 shekels. Price of a slave.
- Judas wanted Jesus to start the rebellion; initiated him to act.

2.1.4 The Last supper

- Synoptics. Passover meal.
- John. Farewell meal. For John, Jesus died on Friday, 14 Nisan.
- Jesus died at the hour when the Passover lambs were sacrificed in the Temple.
- Jesus instituted his Passover.
- Two scenes: prediction about the betrayal; institution of the Eucharist.

- Three OT Texts

- Exod 24:8 – the sealing of the Covenant.
- Jer 31:31 – the promise of the new covenant.
- Isa 53:12 – the promise of the suffering servant.

- ‘Poured out for many’ or ‘all’

- John. Washing of feet. High-priestly prayer.

- Hallel

2.1.5 Jesus predicts his disciples' fall

- Three prophecies:
 - Prophecy of Zechariah, 'the shepherd would be struck.'
 - 'I will go before' (Shepherd).
 - Peter does not hear Jesus fully.

2.1.6 Jesus prays in Gethsemane

- ‘oil press’
- ‘garden’ (cf. Genesis)
- Prayer on the Mount of Olives. Five versions. Cf. Heb 5:7-10.
- Peter, James, John. 3 instances.
- Jesus’ prayer. Disciples’ sleep.
- Confrontation of two wills: ‘natural will,’ ‘filial will.’
- Heb 5:7-10

2.1.7 Betrayal and Arrest

- Night b/w Thursday and Friday.
- Temple police. Other enemies. Led by Judas.
- Judas' kiss. To identify at night. Cf. Luke. No kissing.
- Jesus rejects all force.
- Lk. Healing of the servant's ear.

2.2 Jesus before the Sanhedrin

- Following the betrayal and the arrest.
- In the middle of the night.
- Caiaphas. Initiated it.

2.2.1 The Sanhedrin trial

- The disciples disperse.
- Caiaphas. Cf. John. Annas.
- The Sanhedrin. High priest. Elders. Other scribes.
- Was it historical?
- Role of the witnesses.
- Two charges: Jesus cleansing the Temple; Jesus' Messianic claim.

- 'I am'
- 'Son of Man.' Mk.
- 'Son of God.' Mt.
- Caiaphas tears is robes.
- No mockery according to Talmud.

2.2.2 Peter's denial

- Bold confessions vs. fearful denial.
- Galilean accent.
- Cock-crow.
- Change of guard. Gallicinium.

2.3 The trial before Pilate

- 2.3.1 Initial interrogation by Pilate
- 2.3.2 Jesus before Herod
- 2.3.3 Barabbas incident and death sentence
 - 'Ecce, homo!'
 - Who is tried in John?

2.4 Crucifixion, Death, and Burial

- 2.4.1 Crucifixion
 - Cross-bearing.
 - Simon carried cross beam?
 - Jesus nailed at 9 am
 - Golgotha
 - Anaesthetizing drink
 - Jesus' first words
 - Casting of lots

- Jesus' cry of abandonment.
- I thirst.
- The women at the foot of the cross.
- 2.4.2 Death
 - 'It is finished.' John. Solemn formula.
 - Cosmic and liturgical event.
 - Veil torn.
 - True Paschal lamb.
 - Blood and water.

• 2.4.3 Burial

- Victim was refused a grave. Desecration. Loss of after life.
- Flesh for the birds.
- Defilement of the land.
- Burial before sunset.
- Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus.
- Linen cloths.
- Myrrh. Royal burial.

2.5 The Resurrection

- What actually happened? No camera recording.
- Miraculous event?
- Change in the life of apostles?
- Confessional tradition. “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon.”
- Narrative tradition.
- Empty tomb vs. burial.
- List of accounts.

- Encountering the Risen Lord

- Jesus did not return to normal biological life.
- Jesus is not a ghost.
- Not a mystical experience.

- Ascension

- No ascension story in Matthew and John.
- Those who saw did not write; those who wrote did not see.

Summing up

- Mark: human abandonment of Jesus.
- Luke: disciples in a more sympathetic light.
- John: sovereign and solemn Jesus.
- Matthew: God with us. No ascension.

- Anti-temple motif.
- Anti-Jewish theme.
- Passion and martyrism.
- Problem of innocent suffering.
- Passion as self-donation.
- Jerusalem: end of Jesus' life; point of ascension; point of apostles' mission.
- Jesus' power over darkness and death.
- Kingship. 'We have no king but Caesar.'

- Redemptive dimension of Jesus' death.
- Faith and cost of discipleship.
- Cross gives meaning to Christian death.
- Being lifted up. Cross, ascension.

Assessment

- 1. Immediate background of passion narrative: Eucharistic celebration.
- 2. The Centurion: 'Truly the Son of God'
- 3. Last words of Jesus a/c to John: 'It is accomplished.'
- 4. Martyrium: witness.
- 5. Healing of the ear cut: Luke.
- 6. No kiss of Judas: Luke.
- 7. INRI: Iesus Nazareus Rex Iudaeorum.

Assessment (contd.)

- 8. Washing of feet: no guilt of innocent blood.
- 9. Jesus crucified at: 9 am.
- 10. Tearing of outer curtain: the enmity between the Jews and the Gentiles ended.

- Cf. Paragraph Questions

Questions

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Answers

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