

“Behold the Man”
Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, 1605



The Passion of the Christ in Word and in Art

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St. Mary Magdalene Catholic Church
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Fr. Terry's Excellent Question

If in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus' sweat fell to the ground like blood, how do we reconcile that to the assertion that the agony (Greek: agōnia) was comparable to that of an athlete preparing for competition

Fr. Terry's Excellent Question

1. Scholars are divide as to whether Luke meant that Jesus literally sweated blood or not
 - a. It could be bloody sweat
 - b. It could be sweat that is so profuse it flowed like blood
2. Luke doesn't indicate that Jesus was weakened at all and gives no indication of pain
3. WR Paton and Fr. Ray Brown see this as Luke describing Jesus as an athlete so tensed up to being the trial that sweat breaks out all over his body
4. The strengthening provided by the angel is comparable to a trainer getting the athlete ready for the supreme contest

The Four Gospels

<u>Gospel</u>	<u>Written for Whom</u>
Mark	Mostly Gentiles (Romans) fairly new in their faith and facing persecution
Matthew	Better educated Jews who believe in Jesus, but argue over the Law
Luke	Gentile Christians in an urban setting, becoming complacent
John	Christians but very mixed: mostly Jews, some Gentiles, Samaritans, etc.

Gospel of Mark – Sanhedrin Trial

- Jesus and Peter are both questioned
- The trial of Jesus begins with false witnesses whose testimonies do not agree
- The High Priests is annoyed – both by the witnesses and Jesus silence
- He asks – “Are you the Messiah, the son of the Blessed One?”
- Jesus replies that he is not only the anointed one but the Son of Man who will come to judge the world
- Then he warns the high priest...

Gospel of Mark – Sanhedrin Trial

- You will see the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven
- The High Priest claims this is blasphemy and all the Sanhedrin condemns Jesus
- Jesus is maltreated by the Sanhedrin
- The irony is that the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled in their actions
 - “I hid not my face from buffets and spitting”



Gospel of Mark – Sanhedrin Trial

- There is contrast between Jesus' questioning and Peter's
- Down in the courtyard Peter denies him three times, each time with more force
 1. He pretends to not understand
 2. He denied knowing Jesus
 3. He cursed and many scholars believe he was cursing Jesus
- Peter recalls Jesus' prophecy and begins to weep
- Mark has told us that Peter will be redeemed – Jesus told him that he would "Go before him to Galilee"
- As the Sanhedrin is mocking Jesus for his prophecy, the prophecies are coming true

Gospel of Mark – Roman Trial

- The transition to the Roman Trial is presented as a well known story
- Mark doesn't say why Jesus wasn't executed and why he was sent to the Romans
- As Mark presents the story, Pilate knows what is going on
- Pilate shifts from the religious context to political – “Are you the King of the Jews?”
- King of the Jews is a title that neither Jesus, his friends or foes had used before – hinting at Roman interests or fears

Gospel of Mark – Roman Trial

- “You have said so” is deemed no answer and Jesus answers no further – he is silent
- Pilate is not move by the Sanhedrin’s attempts to have him condemn Jesus
- The Sanhedrin begins to work the crowd
- Pilate knows the evil of the Sanhedrin so he offers Jesus to the crowd
- They cry for Barabbas
- Jesus who was cheered by the crowd on entering Jerusalem is now rejected by the same crowd

Gospel of Mark – Roman Trial

- Amid cries for crucifixion Pilate makes virtually no effort on Jesus' behalf but easily yields to the crowd
- Pilate's final words are "what evil has he done?" - there is neither a charge or a defense
- Pilate's interest is to be popular
- While Mark's account is anti-Jewish it isn't as extreme as the other Gospels which suggest a supportive Roman and wildly hostile Jews
- It is clear that Jesus has no support from anywhere – friend, religious or political
- He is abandoned

Gospel of Mark – Roman Trial

- Judas handing Jesus over to the chief priests, and them handing him over to Pilate and Pilate to the crowd emphasizes that disciple, Jewish leader and Roman leader all have a share of guilt
- The Roman's interrupt the normal crucifixion process by stopping and mocking Jesus
- For the Jews and the Romans it is not enough that he die, he had to be humiliated
- Both trials have ended in mockery – Sanhedrin mocking the prophet; Romans mocking a King

The Gospel of Matthew – Sanhedrin Trial

- The focus in Matthew is Jesus' innocence
- Their attention is around the destruction of the Temple
- The anti-temple lies that were attributed to Jesus become ironic - readers in the 80's know that the Temple has really been destroyed
- The high priest is identified as Caiaphas – placing the trial (and death) at a moment in history
- The trial before the Sanhedrin is more confrontational
- This is because Matthew is writing to Christians that have suffered in confrontations with the Synagogue

The Gospel of Matthew – Sanhedrin Trial

- Jesus is harshly questioned – Peter is as well
- Jesus is silent and Peter, like in Mark tries to avoid the issue, lies and then curses Jesus
- The Sanhedrin finds Jesus liable to death but doesn't explain why he is taken to Pilate (same as Mark)
- Out of nowhere comes the death of Judas...who hangs himself
- In Acts, Judas dies of some type of internal combustion
- The assumption can be made that soon after Jesus' death, Judas died unexpectedly

The Gospel of Matthew – Sanhedrin Trial

- The image that we are to see is like a triptych – a three paneled image



The Gospel of Matthew – Sanhedrin Trial

- The image that we are to see is like a triptych - a three paneled image
- Jesus in the middle and two disciples that failed him, Peter and Judas on either side, Peter went out and wept bitterly and Judas hanged himself
- Failure can lead to redemption or despair
- The “custom” of releasing a prisoner is recounted but we should know that neither Jewish or Roman customs ever mention such a thing

The Gospel of Matthew – Roman Trial

- Pilate's wife gets involved only in Matthew
- She knows Jesus is innocent and Pilate works harder than in Mark to free him
- She, a Gentile woman seeks Jesus' release while the Jewish leaders work up the crowd to release Barabbas and crucify Jesus
- The guilty goes free and the innocent is pushed toward death
- Pilate is overwhelmed, he washes his hands – further signifying that Jesus is innocent

The Gospel of Matthew – Roman Trial

- Pilate passes the same sentence as the Sanhedrin and again Jesus is mocked at the end of both trials – the trials themselves were a mockery
- Pilate and his wife are sympathetic to Jesus
- But, Jesus is a challenge to both the Jewish leaders and the Gentiles
- He is rejected by both sides

The Gospel of Luke – Sanhedrin Interrogation

- Jesus is arrested and taken to the high priests house
- No trial is held until the next day
- The night activity is centered on the courtyard
- After his three denials, Peter weeps bitterly not only in remembrance of Jesus' predictions but by the look that Jesus gives him
- Seemingly, Jesus is present while Peter is denying him
- The courtyard is the scene of abuse of Jesus as a prophet, which actually confirms his knowledge beforehand that he would die in Jerusalem as a prophet

The Gospel of Luke – Sanhedrin Interrogation

- When day arrives, Jesus is taken to the Sanhedrin
- In Luke, the collective leadership, not just the high priest questions Jesus
- Jesus answers the questions ambiguously – he will die a martyrs death but not because he forced their hands
- There are no witnesses and no condemnation – leading to the impression that it was to gather information for a Roman Trial
- Throughout it all, we see Jesus as well composed, calm and even serene

The Gospel of Luke – Roman Trials

- Luke's contribution to the Roman Trial is the dual trials with Pilate and Herod
- Herod is the tetrarch or "king" of Galilee and happens to be in Jerusalem for a feast
- When Pilate learns Jesus is a Galilean, he sends him to Herod
- This is one way for Pilate to pass the buck – he is your guy, not mine, you figure this out

The Gospel of Luke – Roman Trials

- Annoyed by Jesus' silence Herod mocks him but Herod confirms Pilate's judgment that Jesus is innocent
- Pilate and Herod resolve the enmity that existed between them
- Jesus has a merciful and healing impact on all those around him, even those who mistreat him



The Gospel of John – Interrogation by Annas

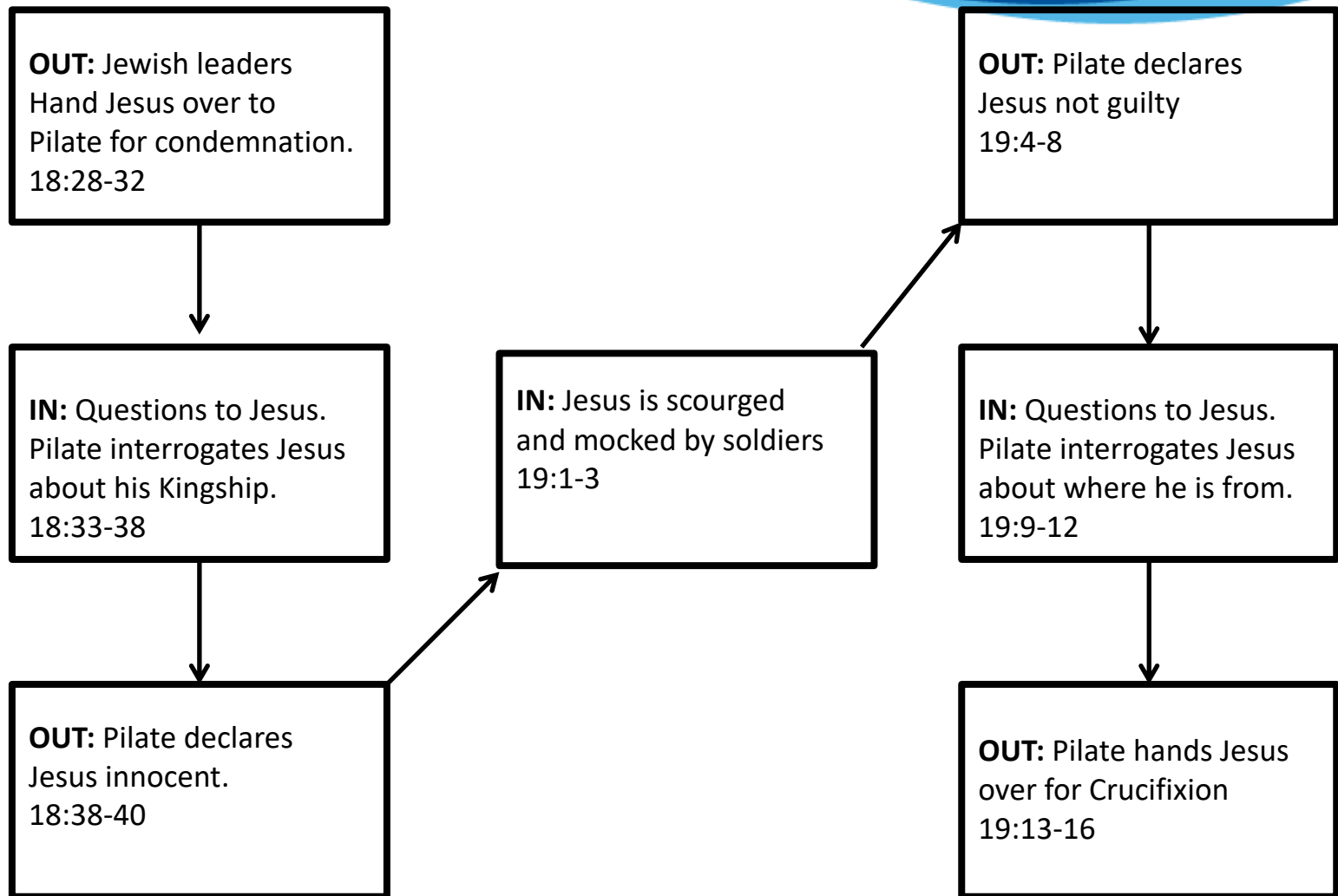
- The trial isn't a formal procedure at all
- It is not in front of the High Priest, Caiaphas but a police interrogation by Annas - Caiaphas' father in law
- There are no false witnesses, the investigation is to see if Jesus admits to anything revolutionary (18:19)
- Jesus makes Annas look foolish and is struck by the guard
- His reply is that he is truth and speaks the truth
- Annas, not Jesus is left with the unanswered question about unjust actions (18:23)

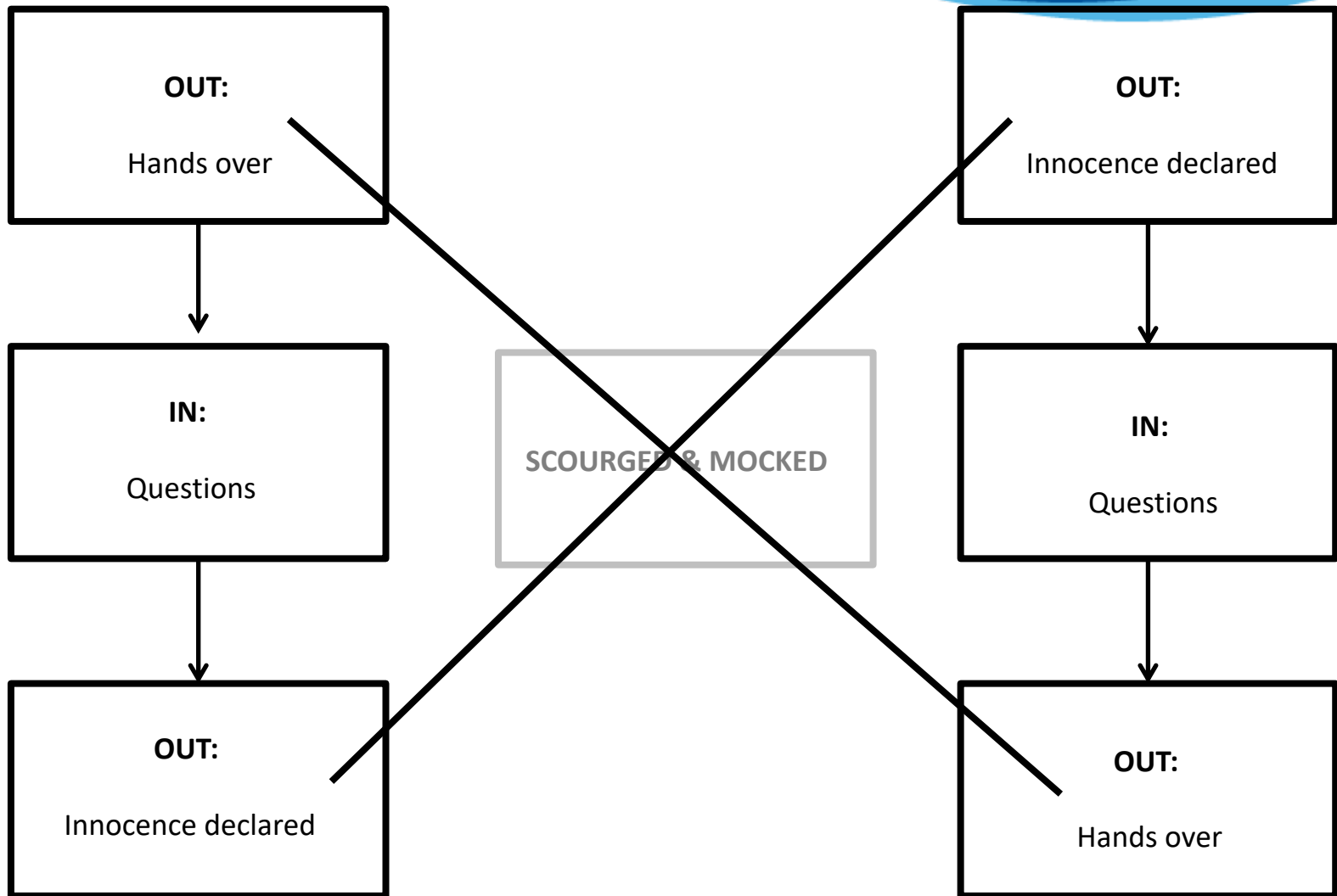
The Gospel of John – Interrogation by Annas

- While Jesus is demonstrating his innocence - Peter is showing weakness
- Peter denies even being in the garden (18:26-27)
- Only in this Gospel do we see the disciple whom Jesus loved – generally thought to be John
- In the synoptic Gospels, Jesus is silent before Pilate, in John he isn't
- The whole scene puts Pilate on trial – it is about the truth
- Jesus controls his destiny – the real question is whether Pilate will betray himself and the truth by bowing to the outcry of the people he supposedly governs

The Gospel of John – Roman Trials

- The scene shown by John is an elaborate front-and-back stage setting
 - The priests and the crowd are outside
 - Jesus is inside
 - Pilate shuttles back and forth between them
- As he goes back and forth, Pilate takes on the mood of the people that are engaging him
 - Outside there is ceaseless pressure, conniving and outcry
 - Inside there is calm and deep dialogue





The Gospel of John – Roman Trials

- Unlike the Synoptic Gospels where mocking and scourging occur after the trial and Jesus has been handed over, John puts it in the middle of the trial
- Mark, Matthew and Luke put that as part of the sentence and execution process but John makes it just before the climactic moment when Pilate, Jesus and his accusers all stand together
- Jesus, wearing the robe and crown of a king is rejected in favor of the earthly king Caesar – symbolic of the Jews abandoning the hope of a Messiah (19:15)

The Arrest of Christ, Christ before Pilate, and the Flagellation



1420-1430, Nicolas Solana
Oil on Softwood







A medieval (tragic)comic strip

Christ before Pilate



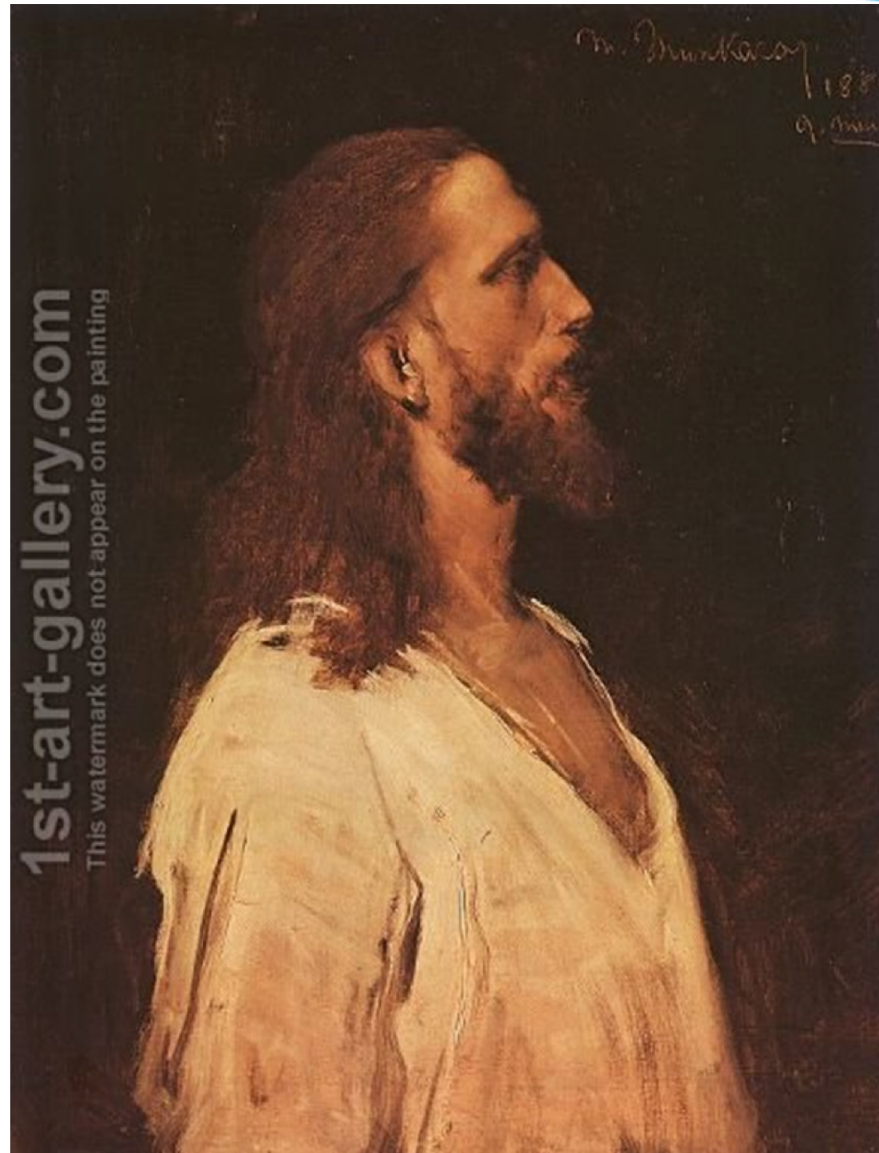
Mihaly Munkacsy (1844-1900)
1881, Oil on Canvas - 417x636"
(also one of three works)







An oil study





Ink wash sketch

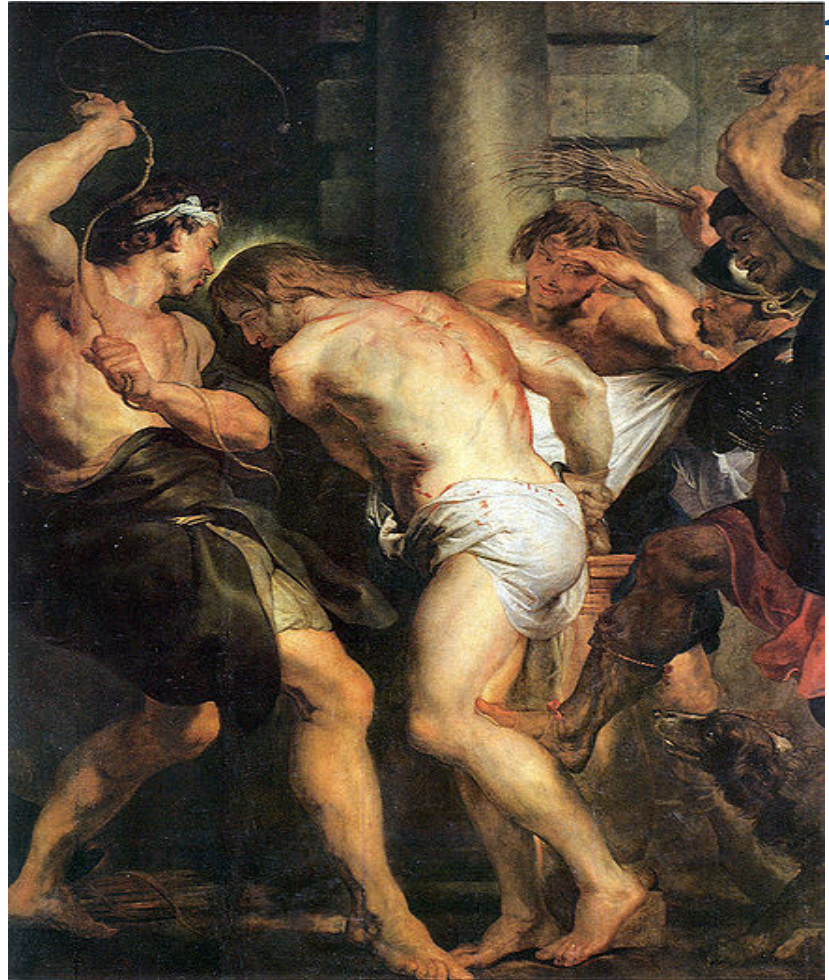




Christ before Pilate and Golgotha.



Flagellation of Christ Peter Paul Reubens



18



Christ Crowned with Thorns
Anthony Van Dyck - 1618



Christ before Pilate

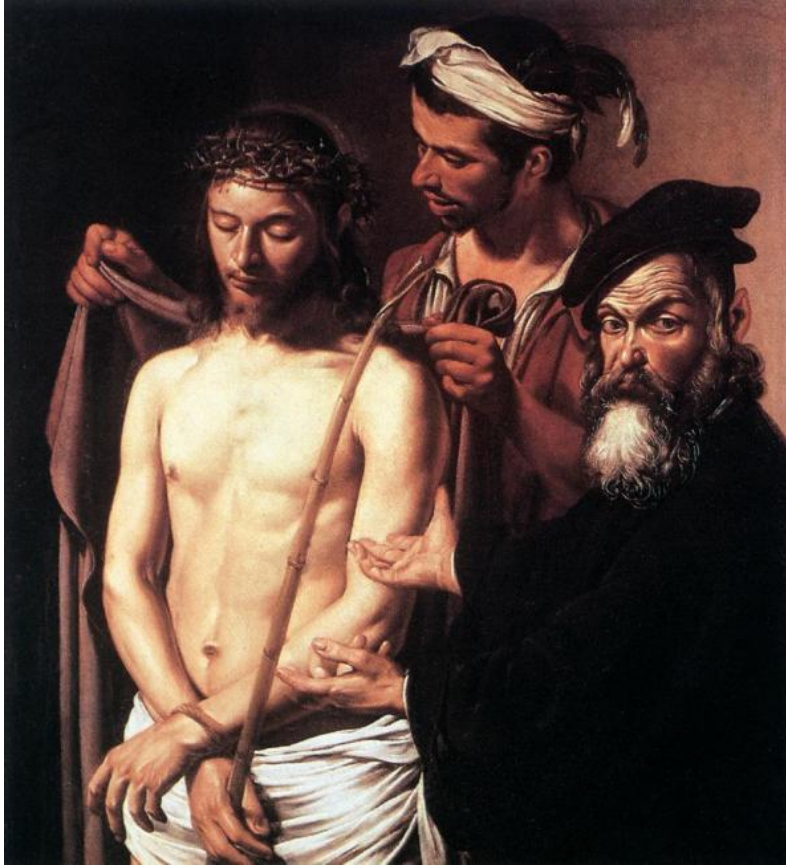
Jacek Malczewski I (1854-1929)
Oil on cardboard, 1910

Scenes from the Passion of Christ



Hans Memling

- Tells the entire story, Passion, Death and Resurrection. (It winds left to right.)



“Behold the Man”
Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, 1605



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