

The Condemnation of the King¹

Spilman Memorial Baptist Church, Kinston NC

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April 6, 2025

Text: Matthew 26:57-68

Purpose: This passage of scripture describes the trial Jesus had before the High Priest and the religious leaders. It was this trial that placed Jesus before Pontius Pilate for His conviction and later crucifixion. This was their first step in getting rid of Jesus of Nazareth.

Jill was meeting with her Insurance Agent to discuss the various aspects and possible outcome of her insurance policies.

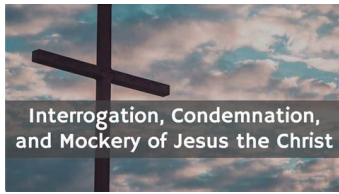


During the discussion, she asked, "Suppose I take out life insurance on my husband today and tomorrow he dies? What will I get?"

The agent raised his eyebrows suspiciously and replied, "Probably 20 to life."²



This Sunday marks the fifth Sunday in Lent. Next Sunday is Palm Sunday, and April 20th is Easter Sunday. As we enter this time of the year, I believe it would be helpful if we were to stop and contemplate the events leading up to Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. It is a good time to reflect on what He endured for us, in order that He might redeem us from our sins. Today, I want to focus our attention on Jesus and what He did for you and me.



Throughout the book of Matthew, the theme of Jesus as King is echoed over and over. This morning, I want us to look at the theme, **The Condemnation of the King.** I

would like for us to see how the Judge of the universe allowed Himself to be judged by His own creation, and what His trial before the Jewish leaders has to say to us today. There is a word here for our hearts as we consider the Condemnation of the King.

The last night Jesus lived here on the earth, before the crucifixion, was a night filled with many events. Jesus celebrated the Passover with His disciples. Jesus reinterpreted the Old Covenant into a New Covenant. He taught them many truths concerning Himself, the Holy Spirit and what their relationship to Him should be like. Jesus' extended teaching can be found in John chapters 13-17 in what many call the Upper Room Discourse.



- They learned how they are to be *servants* in chapter 13 as Jesus washed their feet.
- They learned they are to remain *steadfast* in chapter 14 with the promise given by Jesus of our prepared heavenly home.
- They learned about *service* in chapter 15 as they abide in Jesus Christ, the True Vine.
- They learned about the *Spirit* of God in chapter 16 with the promise of the coming Holy Spirit.
- They learned about the *Savior* in chapter 17 as Jesus prays for His disciples. They learned about the cross and the crown.

They learned one of the twelve disciples would betray Jesus. It was a night like none the world had ever known.



After Jesus and His disciples left the Upper Room where they had observed the Passover, Jesus led them out to Gethsemane where He prayed for all His followers, including you and me. I

have stood by the olive grove of trees, some of which date back over 2000 years. They are located at the bottom of the hill called the Mount of Olives. Imagine Jesus praying there with His disciples.

After He finished praying, a mob led by the traitor Judas Iscariot, came to arrest Jesus under the cover of darkness. Even in His arrest, Jesus displayed the power that was His as the Son of God by knocking everyone down when He declared "**I am He.**" (John 18:2-8) He also demonstrated He came to bring peace by telling His disciples to put away their swords and healing the High Priest's servants' ear that had been cut off by Peter.



What I want us to focus on this morning was what happened to Jesus AFTER He was arrested in the garden. Let us look at His trial before the Jewish authorities and how Jesus was condemned that night.

I. The Arraignment of the King

After Jesus was arrested, he was led away to home of Annas, the father-in-law of the High Priest. Then He



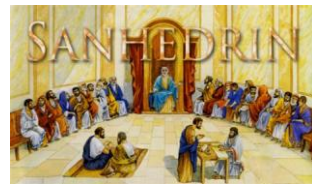
was taken to the home of the High Priest, Caiaphas. According to tradition, these homes were joined by a connecting courtyard. While Caiaphas may have been the High Priest, it was Annas that had the connections and power. He was the one that oversaw the business of the temple and was the one that supervised the tables for money changers. If you will remember, Jesus entered into the Temple area and turned over the money changer tables in a fit of anger because of what the Temple had become, a market place of merchandise instead of a house of prayer.



The trial was set in a concealed location to keep Jesus and his accusers out of the eyesight of the public.

The participants in Jesus' arraignment, according to Matthew says they were "*scribes and elders.*" They were already gathered together in a pre-arranged meeting, waiting for Jesus. The group gathered together may have been all or part of the Sanhedrin – a religious ruling body comprised of 71 men, led by the High Priest. This would be the equivalent of a Jewish Supreme Court. Jesus was arrested in the middle of the night, on the evening before one of the most important religious holidays in Israel, Passover. For all of these men to be there on this evening, the business of eliminating Jesus must have been very urgent!

These men were charged with leading others to God and upholding the laws written in their holy scriptures. Yet this evening, they came to condemn a man, and break many of their laws just to get rid of Jesus.



There were many problems concerning the manner and way Jesus was brought to this trial. There were many illegalities this evening.

- The Sanhedrin was designed to save life not take it away. Yet, these men gathered for the sole purpose of putting Jesus to death.
- This trial was conducted at night. The Law specified that any trials were to be held during the day. In the event the accused is found guilty, sentencing was to wait until the next day.
- The accused was always allowed to call witnesses in his defense. Jesus was not given the privilege of calling a single witness.
- The Sanhedrin were to judge the case, not prosecute it. In the trial of Jesus, they assumed both roles.
- If any witnesses were found to have given false testimony before the court, they were to be given the same punishment being sought for the accused.
- If the death penalty was being sought, the Sanhedrin was required to observe a three-day waiting period of prayer and fasting before judgment was rendered. Jesus was tried, convicted and dead before 24 hours had passed!
- Trials were only to be held within the Temple
- It was illegal to bribe a witness to give false testimony.



- It was against the law to force a prisoner to testify against himself.
- It was against the law to use a prisoner's confession.
- The only item they convicted Jesus on was blasphemy. Yet what Jesus attested to was not considered blasphemy.

There may be even more errors we could point out, but these are enough to demonstrate the fact that Jesus did not receive fair trial, but He was convicted by a crooked jury that had its mind made up before the trial ever convened!

II. The Accusations of the King

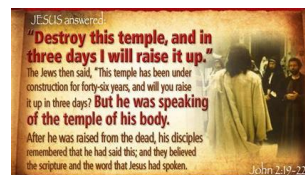
As we have already seen, this trial was not going to be a fair one. Jesus was already convicted before He ever entered the room. This was not a court of law; it was a lynch mob. They were out for blood and they got it!



As the trial progressed, you can see the religious leaders sought people to testify against Jesus. They found many people willing to give false testimony, but evidently their testimonies did not agree with one another. For a person to be found guilty, you had to have at least two in agreement. (Deut. 17:6)

Finally, two men came forward who had statements that were in agreement. They twisted the words of Jesus and accused Him of speaking against the Temple. The

Sanhedrin considered this blasphemy and sought to put Jesus to death for this statement.



Of course, Jesus was not speaking about the Temple in Jerusalem being raised in three days. He was speaking about His own body that would be nailed to a cross and raised three days later. His words were taken out of context. But His words did have a ring of truth because about 30 years later, the Temple was destroyed in 70 A. D. None of that mattered to the Sanhedrin, they were looking for an excuse to rid themselves of Jesus and they grabbed the first straw that came along.

If Jesus were to call witnesses to this illegal trial, who could He have called?

- What about the man he healed at Bethesda?
- What about the woman taken in adultery?
- What about the man that was born blind, yet was healed by Jesus?
- What about Lazarus whom Jesus raised from the dead?
- What about the thousands he fed with five loaves and two fish?

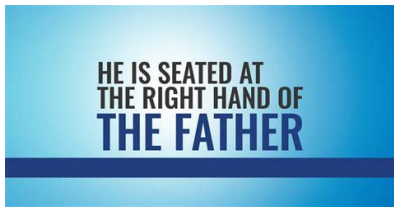
There were thousands that could have testified on behalf of Jesus. I am sure many of you here today could testify about His power in your life and what He means to you. There is still a need for people to testify about Him today!

When pressed by the High Priest and others to answer these charges, Jesus remained silent. Isaiah 55:7 spoke of one silent before His accusers.

But the High Priest said, *"I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God."* He was commanding Jesus to answer and putting Him under oath and compelling Him to answer. And what an answer Jesus gave!



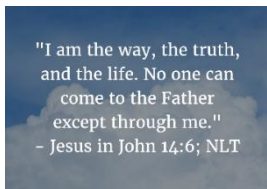
Jesus said, *"It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."*



Jesus proclaimed His identity as the Son of God. He said He would be seated at the right hand of God and would return again coming on the clouds of Heaven.

Jesus had been unjustly arrested. Betrayed by one of His closest disciples. Dragged across town, handled roughly, unjustly tried, but He still knew who He was. He was the Son of God that would one day judge these small petty men. He proudly proclaimed His place with God, at His right hand. Coming again one day on the clouds of Heaven.

Can you picture this scene? Jesus has been battered and bruised. He is weary from being up all night. He looks helpless. Yet He is talking about a kingdom and throne? Those claims must have sounded ridiculous to those that heard Him. But they were 100 % true.



The claims of Jesus still sound foolish to many modern ears today. But it does not change the fact that He is who He says

He is! Jesus Christ is the only way to God, whether the world wants to accept it or not!

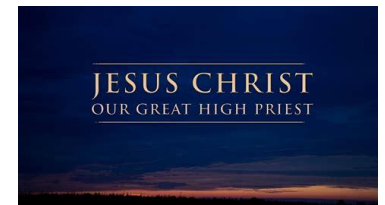
When the High Priest heard these words of Jesus, he found the "proof" He was looking for. Instead of embracing Jesus as the Son of God, He rejected Him and considered those words worthy of death, considering them blasphemy.

Caiaphas put on quite a show that night. He manipulated the situation to get the results he wanted. He ordered the "scribes and elders" to be present. He selected the witnesses. He put Jesus under oath and obtained a confession of being the Son of God. And now, in a demonstration of disgust for Jesus, he ripped his Priestly garments in two.



I find it interesting that as much as these religious leaders loved the law, they broke it repeatedly. When Caiaphas tore his garments, he was actually violating Leviticus 21:10 which forbids the High Priest from tearing his clothes. If he did that, it would actually disqualify him as High Priest.

The subtlety of what Caiaphas did was to disqualify himself as High Priest before the One we consider our great High Priest. Jesus is the True High Priest! Once the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed, the office of High Priest was eliminated and there has not been one in Jerusalem since that day. The old sacrificial system was eliminated and has not been restarted. Caiaphas didn't realize the significance of his actions. He could have been



the last High Priest to stand in Israel. Today we do not need a priest to go to as our intermediary. We have access to God through Jesus Christ. He alone makes intercession for us before the Father in Heaven.

Caiaphas denied the Lordship of Jesus Christ the first time they met. But there is coming a day when he will face the judgment of the Lamb of God. One day Caiaphas will stand before God and have to give an account for what he did. One day, we too will stand before God and have to give an account of all the things we have done. We will stand before Jesus Christ as our Judge or as our Savior.

All that have called upon the name of the Lord will be saved. All that reject Jesus as Savior will be condemned. I want you to know you will face God. You will bow your knee and acknowledge Him as Redeemer of your soul, or as Judge for your uncovered sins. Are you ready for that day?

III. The Abuse of the King

The accusation has been made, the testimony has been given and the verdict has been rendered.

Jesus has been declared guilty of blasphemy and the mob unleashed their anger against Him in a brutal manner.

They spat upon Him. They punched Him. They Hit Him. They slapped Him. They mocked Him. Here were a group of religious men attacking the Son of God. They were out for blood and they got it. There is none righteous, no not one. Imagine the look of Jesus' face. Bruised and beaten. He took this punishment to become our sacrifice. He did this because He loves you and me.

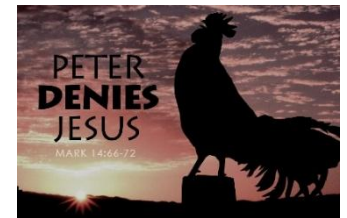


| | Trial | Scripture | Judge | Outcome |
|----------------------------|--------|---------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| Religious Trials Jewish | First | John 18:12-19 | Annas | OK'd to proceed |
| | Second | Mark 14:57-64 | Cainias | Death sentence changed to blasphemy |
| | Third | Mark 15:1-2 | Sanhedrin | Death sentence made legal |
| Secular Trials Roman | Fourth | John 18:28-38 | Pilate | Not guilty |
| | Fifth | Luke 23:6-11 | Herod | Not guilty |
| | Sixth | John 18:38-40 | Pilate | Not guilty, turned over to Herod |

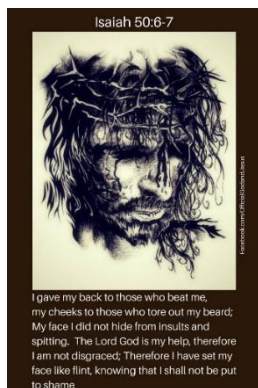
As they beat Him, they demanded that He identify the people that hit him. They said, *"Prophecy to us, Christ! Who is the one that struck You?"* They have rejected His claims to be the Son of God and their Messiah. They abuse Him and mock Him openly!

The question they asked that night is still valid this morning? **Who is guilty of striking Jesus?** You say, "I would never spit on Him or hit Him!" I say that if you reject His offer of free salvation, then you are essentially spitting in His face and telling Him you want no part of Him!

However, the blow that hurt the worst that evening was not inflicted by any member of the Sanhedrin. You see, out in the courtyard, beside a small fire was a man named Peter. Three times he was asked about his relationship to the Lord; three times he denied even knowing Him. That was the cruelest blow delivered the evening!



That question echoes: ***"Who is the one that struck You?"*** Could it be someone listening this morning has claimed a relationship with Jesus, yet has denied Him because of peer pressure, what others may think of you if you say you believe in Jesus, or simply because you are afraid of persecution? When we deny Jesus, we may as well have been the ones that spit in His face or slapped Him.



All of the events that happened that night were awful and bad. But they were according to God's prophetic plan. The prophets had foretold of the sufferings of Christ. Isaiah 50:6-7 says, *"I gave My back to those who struck Me, and My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting. For the Lord God will help*

Me; therefore, I will not be disgraced; therefore, I have set My face like a flint, and I know that I will not be ashamed." These words were written hundreds of years before Jesus was even born.

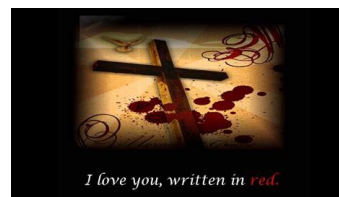
That evening, it seems as if a few people were missing. One night, under the cover of darkness, a man by the name of Nicodemus came to visit Jesus. (John 3) Later in another meeting with the Sanhedrin, Nicodemus defended Jesus (John 7:50-51) Had Nicodemus been there that night, I believe he would have defended Jesus. Another person of that group that was absent was Joseph of Arimathea. He was the one that later asked for the body of Jesus after the crucifixion and laid Jesus in his own tomb. It was Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea that prepared the body of Jesus for burial after His death.

If these two could religious leaders could see the truth of who Jesus was, so can you. Other leaders could have accepted who Jesus was. But their eyes were blind and their ears were closed. Each of us is responsible for our own relationship with God. We individually have to decide and receive Him as our Savior or walk away condemned. We have no excuse.

This illegal trial was but one step along the way that night. A night of torture and terror. Jesus was later brought to Pontius Pilate the governor. It was a night that led to His brutal death on the cross the next morning. Interestingly enough, during the three illegal religious trials, Jesus was found "guilty." The three political trials, found Jesus innocent.



God chose the foolishness of the cross of Calvary so that we can have redemption. So many people around the world wear a cross around their neck or have a tattoo on their body as a symbol of their identification with Jesus. But do their actions reflect that faith in God's saving power? The world is watching those that call themselves Christians and judging our Jesus by their actions.



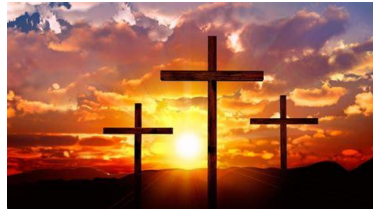
It is through the cross of Calvary we are reconciled back to God. It was through the blood of Jesus Christ we are redeemed. I Peter 1:18-19 says, *"Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct receiving by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."* God's greatest love story was written in red.

Can you say, "Thank God for the cross?" Jesus willingly went there for you and for me! He went there so you might be saved and not have to spend eternity in hell.



You can know you are saved from judgment by receiving Jesus as your Savior. Nicodemus wanted to know that night as recorded in John chapter 3, what he must do to be saved. Jesus said, “*You must be born again.*” You must be born anew. Receiving Christ opens the Spirit of God to work a new thing in you and make you a new creature in Christ.

Maybe you have already received Jesus as your Savior. If you have, are you living a life that reflects that? Are you wearing a cross around your neck, yet



denying your relationship with Him by the things you do and say? Are you guilty of abusing Jesus and denying Him? We are called during this season of Lent to repent and seek to do the first works once again.

Are you ready to commit your heart once again, “Wherever He leads ... will you go?”

LET US PRAY

Notes:

¹ Outline from Sermon Central, Matthew 26:57-68

² Mickey’s Funnies, A Life Funny, March 31, 2025