



## Lesson Nine – July 21, 2020 The Trials and Crucifixion of Jesus

### The Trials of Jesus

The most ignominious trials in all history are the trials that Jesus endured just before his crucifixion. In less than 24 hours he faced as many as six interrogations, some conducted by Jews and some by Romans.

In front of Caiaphas, scribes and elders:

#### **Matthew 26:57 – 68:**

Then those who had seized Jesus led him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders had gathered. **58** And Peter was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest, and going inside he sat with the guards to see the end. **59** Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking false testimony against Jesus that they might put him to death, **60** but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward **61** and said, “This man said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days.’” **62** And the high priest stood up and said, “Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?” **63** But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, “I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.” **64** Jesus said to him, “You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

65 Then the high priest tore his robes and said, “He has uttered blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy. 66 What is your judgment?” They answered, “He deserves death.” 67 Then they spit in his face and struck him. And some slapped him, 68 saying, “Prophecy to us, you Christ! Who is it that struck you?”

If you were asked what is wrong with this trial, what would you note?

### Luke 22:66 – 23:25

At daybreak the council of the elders of the people, both the chief priests and the teachers of the law, met together, and Jesus was led before them. 67 “If you are the Messiah,” they said, “tell us.” Jesus answered, “If I tell you, you will not believe me, 68 and if I asked you, you would not answer. 69 But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God.” 70 They all asked, “Are you then the Son of God?” He replied, “You say that I am.” 71 Then they said, “Why do we need any more testimony? We have heard it from his own lips.”

23 Then the whole assembly rose and led him off to Pilate. 2 And they began to accuse him, saying, “We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Messiah, a king.” 3 So Pilate asked Jesus, “Are you the king of the Jews?” “You have said so,” Jesus replied. 4 Then Pilate announced to the chief priests and the crowd, “I find no basis for a charge against this man.” 5 But they insisted, “He stirs up the people all over Judea by his teaching. He started in Galilee and has come all the way here.” 6 On hearing this, Pilate asked if the man was a Galilean. 7 When he learned that Jesus was under Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time. 8 When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, because for a long time he had been wanting to see him. From what he had heard about him, he hoped to see him perform a sign of some sort. 9 He plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer. 10 The chief priests and the teachers of the law were standing there, vehemently accusing him. 11 Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked him. Dressing him in an elegant robe, they sent him back to Pilate. 12 That day Herod and Pilate became friends—before this they had been enemies.

<sup>13</sup> Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers and the people, <sup>14</sup> and said to them, “You brought me this man as one who was inciting the people to rebellion. I have examined him in your presence and have found no basis for your charges against him. <sup>15</sup> Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us; as you can see, he has done nothing to deserve death. <sup>16</sup> Therefore, I will punish him and then release him.” <sup>[17]</sup><sup>[a]</sup> <sup>18</sup> But the whole crowd shouted, “Away with this man! Release Barabbas to us!” <sup>19</sup> (Barabbas had been thrown into prison for an insurrection in the city, and for murder.) <sup>20</sup> Wanting to release Jesus, Pilate appealed to them again. <sup>21</sup> But they kept shouting, “Crucify him! Crucify him!” <sup>22</sup> For the third time he spoke to them: “Why? What crime has this man committed? I have found in him no grounds for the death penalty. Therefore I will have him punished and then release him.” <sup>23</sup> But with loud shouts they insistently demanded that he be crucified, and their shouts prevailed. <sup>24</sup> So Pilate decided to grant their demand. <sup>25</sup> He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, the one they asked for, and surrendered Jesus to their will.

What stands out to you about these trials?

Jesus did not defend himself. Why not?

Who was ultimately responsible for the death of Jesus? The Jews or the Romans?

When did Jesus break his silence at the trials?

**Matt. 26:63 – 65:**

But Jesus remained silent. The high priest said to him, “I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.” <sup>64</sup> “You have said so,” Jesus replied. “But I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.” <sup>65</sup> Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy.

This made the religious leaders really furious, because to them it was blasphemy. And indeed it would have been blasphemy if it were not true.

Why did Jesus admit to who he was on this terrible day, in such disgrace?

Karl Barth comments, “He does not confess his Messiahship until the moment when the danger of founding a religion is finally past.”

### The Crucifixion

For the Romans, crucifixion was the cruelest form of punishment reserved for the worst criminals. For the Jews, it was repulsive.

#### Deuteronomy 21:22-23:

“And if a man has committed a crime punishable by death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is cursed by God. You shall not defile your land that the Lord your God is giving you for an inheritance.”

#### Galatians 3:13:

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”—

Yet Jesus never defended himself. What was the one thing Jesus asked for himself on the cross?

Who was Jesus thinking of while he was on the cross?

- His mother
- The thief on the cross
- He forgave those who were nailing him to the cross

What were the last words of Jesus?

Only two gospels agree on the last words:

Luke: “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.”

John: “It is finished.”

Matthew and Mark: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

This is the only time Jesus uses the formal word “God” rather than “Abba” or “Father.”

“Commentators have observed that the record in Matthew and Mark is one of the strongest proofs that we have an authentic account of what took place on Calvary. For what reason would the founders of a new religion put such despairing words in the mouth of their dying hero—unless that’s precisely what he said.” (P. 201, *The Jesus I Never Knew* by Philip Yancey)

What must it have been like for God the Father when he forsook Jesus?

Think of the Nicene Creed. It says Jesus was “very God of very God” and a few phrases later it says, “suffered under Pontius Pilate.” How could the very God of very God suffer under anyone? He is God? And yet that is what happened.

#### Colossians 2:15:

And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, **triumphing over** them by the cross.

How did the cross disarm powers and authorities? Think of times in history when people in power have been “disarmed.” Examples:

- Martin Luther King, Jr – put in jail but his cause triumphed.
- Solzhenitsyn – the Soviets deported him; he became a strong voice for freedom.
- Nelson Mandela – imprisoned for 30 years and then triumphant.

All these “powers” thought they were solving a problem by punishing these people, but instead all ended up unmasking their own violence and injustice.

What did the Roman soldier at the cross say when he watched Jesus die?

The two thieves on either side of Jesus represent the way the world looks at this crucified Savior.

1. He is powerless and impotent.
2. He is proof of God’s love and can take you to Heaven.