



Systematic Theology

A study of the major doctrines of Scripture

TOPIC 2 – THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

LESSON 55 – THE TRINITY: JESUS THE SON – HIS ATONING DEATH (PART 1)
BIBLICAL DOCTRINE (JOHN MACARTHUR), PGS. 286-315

Arrest and Trials

- ▶ Both the Prophets and Jesus Himself predicted His arrest, and the fulfillment of these predictions go to prove His claim to be the Messiah.
- ▶ Isaiah 53:8 He was taken from prison and from judgment, And who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken.
- ▶ Matt. 17:22 Now while they were staying in Galilee, Jesus said to them, “The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men...
- ▶ Matt. 20:18 Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death...
- ▶ Christ was obedient to this plan, as it did not originate with men, but within the Trinity in eternity past (Matt. 26:39; Acts 2:23).

Arrest and Trials

- ▶ The Jewish leaders had been planning for some time the arrest and execution of Jesus (Matt. 26:4).
- ▶ They were however fearful of the people among whom Jesus was a popular teacher, yet they were so certain that He was a false teacher and blasphemer that they willingly accepted the responsibility for His death.
- ▶ Matt. 27:25 “His blood be on us and on our children.”
- ▶ Jews and Gentiles conspired together in this unjust execution, and as a result all peoples bear the guilt of the death of the Son of God. As James Boice points out, “An Idumean King named Herod handed Jesus over to the Romans. A Roman governor named Pontius Pilate ordered Jesus to be crucified. Roman soldiers carried out Pilate’s orders, nailing Jesus to a wooden cross and hanging Him up to die. The Jews brought Jesus to trial, but in the end the Gentiles killed Him.” (From *Jesus on Trial*, Crossway, 2002).

Arrest and Trials

- ▶ Yet Isaiah tells us for all the planning of demonically inspired fallen men, it was “the will of the Lord to crush Him” (Isa. 53:10).
- ▶ 1 Peter 1:18 knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. 20 He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you 21 who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.
- ▶ Jesus knew “all that would happen to Him” (John 18:4).
- ▶ Jesus could have prevented the crucifixion if that was God’s will (Matt. 26:53-54).
- ▶ God had ordained to the smallest detail how Jesus would die (Acts 2:23; 4:27-28).
- ▶ This was always part of Plan A, as with God there is no Plan B.

Arrest and Trials

- ▶ Jesus was tried in two general phases: first, before the religious authorities (the Jewish High Priest and Sanhedrin), and second, before the secular political authorities (Rome, represented by Governor Pontius Pilate). Each of these phases had three parts: preliminary interrogation, formal arraignment, and formal sentencing. None of the gospel writers provide a comprehensive account of all the details and stages of these trials. A complete picture required material from all four gospels [and some of the Old Testament prophets] combined.
- ▶ The Sanhedrin was established during the period between the Old and New Testaments. It was the highest court in the land and patterned after the council of elders convened by Moses (Numbers 11:16).
- ▶ Within the Sanhedrin there were 71 members, including 24 chief priests (the heads of the 24 priestly divisions, see 1 Chron. 24:4) and 46 elders chosen from among the Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees. The High Priest served as the Overseer and a voting member. Decisions were by majority vote.

Arrest and Trials

- ▶ In Jesus' day, men could buy a seat on the Sanhedrin. It was morally and politically corrupt.
- ▶ Rome exercised ultimate control over the high priesthood and could appoint or depose a high priest. Both the high priest and ruling priests by this time were Sadducees, denying the supernatural elements of the Old Testament [theological liberals].
- ▶ Even with the corruption, the rules of justice established by Moses were still in effect. The requirement to establish guilt included the need for 2 witnesses, a public trial and a defense, including penalties for bearing false witness being equivalent to the penalty for the guilty defendant (Deut. 19:16-19). Bringing a false testimony in a capital trial could mean that the witness would also be executed.
- ▶ Rabbinical tradition had also added a requirement of a day of fasting between the sentencing and execution of a death penalty case. That prevented hasty trials and kept capital cases off the docket during the feasts. After the day of fasting the court voted again, meaning a guilty verdict could be overturned.

Arrest and Trials

- ▶ Council members were not allowed to bring charges or serve as witnesses, and if they did, the entire Sanhedrin were disqualified from trying the case. A case required outside charges and accusations brought to the council.
- ▶ Criminal trials could not be convened at night, and if a trial lasted until sundown, court was recessed until the next morning.
- ▶ In the trial of Christ nearly every one of these requirements was flouted. He was tried at first without witnesses being called, having been accused by Annas, the former High Priest, who was still an influential member of the Sanhedrin. The witnesses were proven false as their accounts and accusations did not agree with one another. Jesus was accused guilty without being allowed a defense. And the trial took place at night before the sun had risen.

Arrest and Trials

- ▶ As He was handed over to Pilate for the civil trial and the Jewish leaders were asked what the charges were, they did not mention blasphemy, which was what they had declared Him to be guilty of.
- ▶ They lied and told Pilate that Jesus was telling people not to pay their taxes to Rome and claimed He was the King of the Jews (John 18:28-38).
- ▶ Pilate focused on the charge of His claiming to be King and asked Jesus if He was King of the Jews. Jesus replied that His Kingdom was not of this world (John 18:33, 36). His Kingdom offered no political threat to Israel or Rome.
- ▶ Pilate determined that Jesus was not guilty but as the Jewish leaders pressed him, he sent Jesus to be questioned by Herod Antipas (Luke 23:6-12). Herod of course had been appointed by Rome to govern 4 regions within Israel, Galilee being one of them. Since Jesus was said to be from Galilee, Herod was the one to oversee the continuation of His case.

Arrest and Trials

- ▶ The Roman guards, by order of Pilate, had already badly beaten Jesus. He appeared beaten, tired (a sleepless night after the agony of the Garden), and He refused to perform a miracle on demand by Herod.
- ▶ Jesus never uttered a word in His defense, again fulfilling prophecy regarding the Messiah.
- ▶ Herod and his men mocked and beat Jesus and returned Him to Pilate.
- ▶ During the final trial, Pilate announced that he and Herod had found Jesus not guilty of the charges made against Him. He tried to find a way to set Jesus free by the tradition of freeing a criminal during the Passover. The Jews however, cried for the release of Barabbas.
- ▶ Pilate washed his hands of the matter (ceremoniously), had Jesus flogged, and sent Him to be crucified in order to appease the Jewish crowd (Matt. 27:18-26).

Execution

- ▶ Jesus was mocked, beaten, slapped, spit upon, and made to wear a crown of thorns. The Roman soldiers mocked His claim to be King by giving Him a faded purple robe and a reed for a scepter, which they then ripped off His bleeding back and hit on the head to drive the thorns into His scalp.
- ▶ Isaiah 50:6 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. 7 “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.
- ▶ Led through the street in a public procession to the place of execution, Jesus was continually mocked and shamed.
- ▶ Jesus could not carry His cross alone and Simon was pulled from the crowd to carry it for Him (Matt. 27:32).

Execution

- ▶ Christ gave us one last public discourse while on the way to Golgatha:
- ▶ Luke 23:26 Now as they led Him away, they laid hold of a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, who was coming from the country, and on him they laid the cross that he might bear it after Jesus. 27 And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him. 28 But Jesus, turning to them, said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. 29 For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!’ 30 Then they will begin ‘to say to the mountains, “Fall on us!” and to the hills, “Cover us!” ’ 31 For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?”
- ▶ Referencing Hosea 10:8, Jesus knew and warned several times of the disaster to come in 70 AD. If the Jews and Romans could cooperate in executing an innocent man in these “good days,” what would happen in bad times when the Jews rebelled?

Execution

- ▶ He was offered wine mixed with gall (myrrh) to drink which would have numbed the pain, either to cope with the pain of the nails being driven in His hands and feet, or to prolong His agony and suffering. He refused it and spit it out. His senses would not be numbed (Psalm 69:19-21).
- ▶ Gold – Kingship
- ▶ Frankincense – Embalming material as a fragrance to cover the smell of decomposition
- ▶ Myrrh – a pain killer and also used for embalming purposes
- ▶ The Wise Mens' gifts all pointed to the Crucifixion and burial of Christ!
- ▶ Once nailed through the wrists and ankles to the cross, the man being executed could hang for days as long as he could support himself on the nails enough to continue to breath.

Execution

- ▶ If the soldiers needed to hasten a death they would break the legs preventing continued ability to give the diaphragm the ability to inhale.
- ▶ If the loss of blood, exposure, or trauma of the crucifixion did not kill a man, he would eventually suffocate.
- ▶ Proof of death was produced by piercing the chest cavity around the heart. The presence of water (from the pericardium) and blood coming from the wound demonstrated that the heart had stopped beating.
- ▶ Next week: The Prophecies Concerning the Crucifixion and Christ's Sayings from the Cross
- ▶ For the Chronology of these events see:
<https://timeintheword.org/2008/03/21/crucify-him/>