

The Commitment of Christ

Matthew 26:37-27:10

Kingdom Come! (Gospel of Matthew Series)

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Sunday, March 26, 2017, 10:30am at Living Hope Church of Roselle, Illinois
livinghopechurch.net

“Christ’s followers cannot expect better treatment in the world
than their Master had.” ~ **Matthew Henry**

Proposition: In spite of us, Christ fully committed to going to the Cross.

Open your Bible to **Matthew 26**. We are in a series in the book of Matthew entitled “Kingdom Come.” This morning we are looking at a message entitled: “The Commitment of Christ.”

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. **Welcome to our Visitors!**
2. **Midweek Services:** Join us for Bible Study and Prayer
3. **New Members’ Class** begins Sunday April 23 during Sunday School at 9:30am.
4. **Biblical Counseling Training Conference at Bethel in Schaumburg,** 9:30am – 3:30pm is \$25. Very affordable. A great one day conference!

Turn in your Bible to **Matthew 26:36**. We come to the place which is called Gethsemane. Gethsemane is a cultivated olive grove. It means “olive press” and there was a large located just outside Jerusalem, across from a little brook named Kidron.

The Blood Red Stream of the Brook Kidron

At this particular time of the year the brook Kidron was a very full stream. There was a channel that was used to flow all the excess and all of the things that had been offered at the temple down to the brook Kidron. So all of the blood of the sacrificial animals was poured into that channel and flowed down into the brook Kidron.

This night, when Jesus and His disciples cross over **that stream was blood-red**. Our Lord Jesus knew as he looked at that blood-red stream, that in just a few hours his blood would be pouring from His body as his would give himself as a sacrifice for our sins.

Jesus Crushed in Gethsemane, Olive Press

So Jesus comes into a garden which is known as Gethsemane. Gethsemane means olive press. It must have been a cultivated olive grove with a wall, olive trees and in the center an olive press. It was here that the olives would be crushed so the oil might be given.

So, the Lord Jesus Christ, the great Son of God, the Savior of the world would soon be **crushed like an olive in a press**. The oil of salvation would begin to flow. There is probably no more sacred scene than is this place of Gethsemane. We get the first glimpse here of just how

much Jesus suffered in order to be our Savior. It is here in Gethsemane that Jesus is confronted with the wrath of God for our sin, and he fully commits to suffer for you and me. O how he loves you!

Jesus Committed to the Cross

The writer of Hebrews says that Jesus was committed to go to the cross. “For the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb 12:2).

In Matthew 26, we see that Jesus committed himself to the cross for you in three ways:

- by his **prayer** in Gethsemane,
- by his **power** in Gethsemane, and
- by his divine **person** in his trial by the Jewish leaders.

Jesus is God, Yet Set Aside the Active Use of His Attributes

Philippians 2:6 says though “he was in the form of God” with omnipotence and omniscience and therefore has equality with the Father (Phil 2:6), he “emptied himself” by setting aside the active use of his attributes (Phil 2:7) in order to become “obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Phil 2:8).

How did he do this? We see it clearly in the Garden of Gethsemane. We see it in this prayer he prayed.

I. **PRAYER: Jesus committed to the cross by his prayer**, Mt 26:36-46.

Jesus prays with his disciples present. All of them are there with Jesus when he prays the first time and Luke says an angel comforts him and strengthens him. He is strengthened to obey the Father in his mission through prayer.

A. JESUS WANTS HIS DISCIPLES TO SHARE IN HIS GRIEF IN PRAYER (Mt 26:36)

Jesus goes to Gethsemane, which means “olive press,” and it is here that Jesus will be pressed beyond measure. He will begin to experience the wrath of God for our sins.

Jesus Brought His Disciples to Pray

Mt 26:36, “Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, “Sit here, while I go over there and pray.”

So here we have Jesus in his hour of greatest grief bringing the eleven disciples with him. Of course we learn **they fall asleep**. They are of no help to him. But we assume they caught part of Jesus’ prayer. And this is the first of three times in which he enters into sorrow above all sorrows. He wants them to see that. He wants them to share in that. They don’t understand it now, but they will later. He wants to **enter into his sorrows and grief**.

These are men who really understand very little of what Jesus is doing. They seem very unfit for this lofty calling to observe the sorrow of the Son of God. Yet Jesus is preparing for the cross. He is committing to the cross, and he wants his disciples to share in his grief.

B. JESUS TASTES THE WRATH OF GOD AND COMMITS TO DIE (Mt 26:37-39)

Jesus' Sorrow Begins

Mt 26:37-39, “And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he **began** to be sorrowful and **troubled**. 38 Then he said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me.” 39 And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.”

Jesus leaves eight (8) of his disciples on the edge of the Garden of Gethsemane, and three come with him for a second prayer. Jesus prays the same thing. But he alerts them that the sorrow of the cross is beginning.

“He began to be sorrowful and **troubled** – [literally “horrified]” (vs. 37). Jesus is peering into the cup of God’s wrath. Through prayer he is gaining the strength to be obedient to the Father’s will.

Great Drops of Blood

The sorrow of Christ was so great, that Luke tells us he began to great drops of blood, and an angel appeared there to strengthen him. Look over at **Luke 22:41-44**, “And he withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, and knelt down and prayed, 42 saying, “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.” 43 And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. 44 And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and **his sweat became like great drops of blood** falling down to the ground.”

SEVERE SHOCK: “Blood can come out of your pores when you’re sweating if you’re experiencing a severe shock. So you see, something came down on Jesus Christ that utterly astonished him, sent him into incredible horror and agony.”¹

Why is Jesus horrified?

What was so astonishing about what Jesus saw that put him into **SHOCK**? That’s a very important question. He says, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death” (vs 38). He’s so heavy with the anguish of his sorrow, that it is killing him. He’s sorrowful unto death – he feels like he’s dying already because the weight of sorrow is so great. Like Jeremiah says in **Lam 1:12**, “Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow, which was brought upon me, which the LORD inflicted on the day of his fierce anger.”

Look at your Savior! He willingly committed to die for you! Let us ask the question: why was Jesus horrified?

It’s Not New Information

It cannot mean he got new information. In other words, Jesus didn’t just realize he was really going to die. He was considering this every moment of his life. He was born to die. He said throughout his ministry that he was going to die. He knew he had come into this world to die.

- “So they were seeking to arrest him, but no one laid a hand on him, because **his hour had not yet come**” (Jn 7:30).

¹ Timothy J. Keller. *The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive* (New York City: Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2013), notes on Mt. 26:36ff, “The Dark Garden.”

- By way of contrast consider... “Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that **his hour had come** to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end” (Jn 13:1).

Why is Jesus’ Different than Others Martyrs?

Other martyrs faced death with more poise than Jesus. Why? Because they did not have to drink the cup Jesus drank. The cup Jesus drinks is the wrath of God for the whole world. We see this cup throughout the Bible.

What’s in the Cup?

What is in this cup? In this cup is the wrath of God from all eternity against all sin. It consists “in the imputation to him of a criminal’s guilt” and Christ gets the “criminal’s position and destiny.”² **Isaiah 51:17** says, “You will drink the cup of his fury and stagger.” *Jesus tastes the cup of God’s wrath in the Garden, and he staggers.* He staggers, but he commits to do it.

Taking On Himself the Wrath of God for Everyone

Why is he staggering? “Jesus...because of the suffering of death... by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone” (Heb 2:9). He is taking upon himself the wrath of God for everyone.

As Christ looks into that cup, he is **shaken** to the core of his being. He has descended into earth’s lower parts from his heights of glory, yet still more suffering awaits him.³ As B. B. Warfield puts it, ‘In these supreme moments, our Lord experienced the ultimate depths of human anguish, and because of the intensity of his mental sufferings, he demonstrates he is the Man of Sorrows.’⁴

Spoken of By the Prophets

It was a cup of horror foretold by the prophets.

Asaph said in **Psalm 75:8**, “For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup with foaming wine, well mixed, and he pours out from it, and all the wicked of the earth shall drain it down to the dregs.”

According to **Ezekiel 23:33**, the cup is the eternal wrath sinners deserve – “A cup of horror and desolation...filled with sorrow.”

Job says of the wicked in **Job 21:20**, “Let their own eyes see their destruction, and let them drink of the wrath of the Almighty.”

A Man of Sorrows

For Jesus’ whole life, he was preparing for this hour, the beginning of sorrows. Isaiah said of him, that he was “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief” (Isa 53:3b). Why is Jesus described this way? Because the entire guiding purpose of the life of the Son of God is to die and to be condemned for sinners. He is to drink down the cup of God’s wrath.

² Hugh Martin, *The Shadow of Calvary* (Edinburgh: Lyon & Gemmell, 1875), 28.

³ Campbell, I. D. (2008). *Opening up Matthew* (p. 161). Leominster: Day One Publications.

⁴ B. B. Warfield, *The Person and Work of Christ* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1980), 132.

Jonathan Edwards

Jonathan Edwards described what Jesus must have experienced in Gethsemane:

“[In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus] had then a near view of that furnace of [God’s] wrath, into which he was to be thrown; he was brought to the mouth of the furnace that He might look into it, and stand and view its raging flames, and see the glowings of its heat, that he might know where he was going and what he was about to suffer”.⁵

He goes on to say, “There are two things that render Christ’s love wonderful: 1. That he should be willing to endure sufferings that were so great; and 2. That he should be willing to endure them to make atonement for wickedness that was so great.”⁶

The Beginning of God’s Wrath: Jesus Began to Be Separated from God

So what began in verse 37? “He began to be sorrowful and troubled.” As he began to pray, our Lord **“began to experience** the wrath of God. He began to actually experience God turning away from him. How does God punish sin? ... He will punish them. “They will be punished with eternal destruction, forever separated from the Lord and from his glorious power” (2 Thess 1:9, NLT).⁷

Jesus has been eternally in perfect fellowship with the Father, but now as he enters into prayer with his Father, he begins to feel the separation, and he is astonished.

Mt 26:39, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.” If there is any other way, nevertheless, give me the cup.

Jesus Commits to Dying for us

Jesus commits to dying for us. I’ve tasted the wrath of my Father. I’ve tasted separation. Is there any other way? No? Well, then **“not as I will, but as you will” (Mt 26:39).**

What is he talking about? In accepting this cup of wrath, Jesus was submitting to be the atoning sacrifice for God’s wrath against sinners.

The New Testament Explanation

The New Testament explains what Jesus was about to do. It explains what he was committing to.

- St. Paul said it this way, “God has made Christ to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor 5:21).
- “Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God” (1 Pet 3:18).
- **Romans 3:23-25**, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith...” Jesus is the propitiation – he satisfies the justice of God so that he can be something for us. Look at verse 26, “...so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”

⁵ Jonathan Edwards. *Works* (London: John Childs & Son, 1839), 867.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Keller, “The Dark Garden,” Mt 26. From *Sermon Archive*.

- “Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed” (1 Cor 5:7).
- In Gethsemane, Jesus is submitting to be our Passover Lamb – to be “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (Jn 1:29).

Jesus commits to being our **Passover Lamb**. He commits to laying down his life as the **Lamb of God** who takes away the sin of the world. He commits to **become a sin offering** for us so that we could be made the righteousness of God in him.

In order for Jesus to free the guilty, **he must drink the cup of God’s wrath** for us.

C. JESUS COMMITS TO THE CROSS AMONG SLEEPING DISCIPLES (Mt 26:40-45)

Jesus doesn’t bring the best and the brightest with him into Gethsemane. He bring ordinary people like you and me – sleepy disciples. They have no clue that this is one of the most important moments in the history of the world.

Mt 26:40-45, “And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, “So, could you not watch with me one hour? 41 Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. **The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.**” [Jesus prays one of the most important prayers in the history of the world, but they are asleep on the job.]

42 Again, for the **second** time, he went away and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.” 43 And again he came and found them **sleeping**, for their **eyes were heavy.**

44 So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the **third** time, saying the same words again. 45 Then he came to the disciples and said to them, “**Sleep and take your rest** later on. See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.”

Peter, James, and John – Representatives of the Human Race

Jesus wants fellowship in his hour of need. He doesn’t want to face this alone. Peter, James, and John are the representatives of the human race who are at his feet. Three times Jesus looks at them and says, *“I’ve never asked you to do anything for me, and now I’m asking you. This is the moment of my greatest need. This is the greatest test. I only want one thing. I don’t want to face this alone.”* How human. “I don’t want to face this alone. Would you just stay awake with me? **I’m not asking for advice, just stay awake.**” Three times, they fall asleep.

Could Have Been a Time of Encouragement, but No

God could have easily arranged it so that that night they would have not only stayed awake, but they would have sat around and they would have said,

“Lord, I can’t believe you’re doing this for us. How wonderful that you would die for us. Oh, we’d be lost if you didn’t do it. It’s just so wonderful. It’s so incredible. Let me hug you and pray with you,” but they didn’t.

They fell asleep on him three times. Every time he’s praying, it’s like the Father is saying, **“That’s the human race for you. Swallow hell for them.** Take into yourself this spiritual atomic bomb and let it explode for them.”⁸ And **all they can do is sleep!** [from Tim Keller]

⁸ Ibid.

St. Paul says it this way in **Romans 5:6**, “while we were still weak [powerless], at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.”

And again in **Romans 5:8**, “God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Jonathan Edwards: Jesus a Glorious Person

Jonathan Edwards comments on how amazing that Jesus, the most glorious person ever to walk the earth should plunge himself into the lake of God’s wrath for such careless sinners.

Edwards says: “Did Jesus turn to his Father and say, ‘Why should I, who am so great and glorious a person ...? Why should I go plunge myself into such dreadful, amazing torments for people who cannot ever pay me back for it and who will not even stay awake with me in my hour of greatest need? Why should I do this for them?’”⁹ But he didn’t say that. He gladly committed himself to the cross for you because he loves you!

His Prayer Empowered Him for Obedience

Jesus’ prayer in Gethsemane empowered him for obedience. “Not my will, but yours be done” was Jesus’ prayer.

And we who would follow Jesus must understand that **the power to obey God comes through prayer.**

Adore Jesus for His Prayer of Commitment

Look at him dying in the dark for you – praying for you! He’s committed to dying for you even though you are sleeping. He loves you. He wants your fellowship. But he is dying alone for you. He’s willing to do it all alone because he loves you. Adore him. Fall down and adore him for it, and when you get up, you’ll be more like him.

II. ARREST: Jesus committed to the cross by his power, Mt 26:47-56.

A. JUDAS’ KISS OF DEATH (Mt 26:40-45)

Mt 26:46-50, “Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand. 45 While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. 48 Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, ‘The one I will kiss is the man; seize him.’ 49 And he came up to Jesus at once and said, ‘Greetings, Rabbi!’ And he kissed him. 50 Jesus said to him, ‘Friend, do what you came to do.’ Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him.”

Jesus is totally sovereign. He is not backed into a corner by anyone, certainly not Judas. While Jesus finishes his prayer, he informs Peter, James and John that Judas is approaching. And “while Jesus was still speaking” Judas came.

⁹ Edwards. *Works*, 867.

The Kiss of Death

Mt 26:48-50, “Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; seize him.” 49 And he came up to Jesus at once and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” And he kissed him. 50 Jesus said to him, “Friend, do what you came to do.” Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him.”

Judas is literally possessed with Satan—the devil himself has full control over his personality. The Satan-possessed Judas is approaching the holiest Man that has ever lived. Here we have two men: one is God and one is the Devil. We have the vilest man and the holiest man ever to live standing together there in the Garden of Gethsemane. The vile approaches the Holy. Closer and closer the vile man comes to the Holy. And the devil himself places the kiss of hatred and betrayal on the spotless cheek of the Almighty Thrice Holy God robed in human flesh.

Judas comes with great deceit, but our Lord knows what Judas is doing. Judas kisses our Lord. The word Matthew uses for “kiss”¹⁰ means “to kiss earnestly, intensively, and repeatedly.” Judas kissed and kept on kissing Christ. It was the kiss of death for Christ. Judas could have simply pointed to the Lord, but under Satan’s control he betrayed the Lord with the ugliest hypocrisy.

Possessed by Lucifer

Judas is now possessed of the devil. He is not only demon possessed, he is possessed by Lucifer himself. We go back to the Garden of Eden and remember the first promise of the Gospel. **Gen. 3:15**, “he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” Satan would bruise the heel of Christ through Judas. Judas would now hand over Christ to the Jewish leaders and they would give him to be crucified.

“I AM HE”

John 18:4-6, “Then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, came forward and said to them, “Whom do you seek?” 5 They answered him, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus said to them, “I am he.” Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. 6 When Jesus said to them, “I am he,” they drew back and fell to the ground.

Jesus literally said, “I AM.” Jesus asked “who do you seek.” They said “Jesus.” Jesus then gave His title as the one true and living God. He says, “I AM.” How do we know he was identifying himself as YHWH? There was a display of supernatural authority and power.

They all fell to the ground. Jesus Christ had complete power over His enemies, and He could have walked away at any time. He willingly surrendered to them.

The same God who by his Word he brought all things into being is there in the Garden. He could slay them with the Word of his mouth.

One day he will come in power and glory to slay the wicked with a double edged sword coming out of his mouth.

When Jesus said, “I AM,” He could have killed them all and walked away. But he didn’t. He wanted to die for the world. He committed himself to the cross.

¹⁰ *Kataphileo*: 2705 (Strong’s) \ *kataphileo* {kat-af-ee-leh'-o} of Latin origin; TDNT - 9:114,1262;v. Also supported by Thayer’s and Strong’s.

B. PETER'S SWORD (Mt 26:51-53)

Mt 26:51, “And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear.”

They grab Jesus of Nazareth. The Creator of Heaven and Earth submits himself to the scheming religious leaders. The aggressive group comes forward, and Peter pulls out his sword. There in front of the high priest is a servant boy. Peter pulls out his sword and starts swinging. **John 18:10** records that “Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest’s servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant’s name was Malchus.” The Lord reaches out and touches the boy’s now deformed face, and instantly the ear is made completely whole.

72000 Angels

Mt 26:52-53, “Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. 53 Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? 54 But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?”

Jesus says to Peter, *You know, I have the power to walk away from this without your sword.* Peter wanted to spare Jesus from the suffering He was about to endure. But Jesus is intent on drinking the full cup of God’s justice for us. Peter doesn’t get it. Jesus doesn’t need Peter’s help. **Jesus has the power to walk away from all this.** He could call 72,000 angels (12 legions at 6000 per legion). He could easily walk away unscathed. He doesn’t need Peter’s sword.

Luke tells us what happened next. “But Jesus said, “No more of this!” And he touched his ear and healed him” (Luke 22:52).

Jesus could walk away at this point. He has all power. He commands angel armies. But He chooses to die on a cross for our sins. What a Savior.

Our third scene now approaches: the Jewish leaders, armed with weapons.

C. THE SANHEDRIN’S WEAPONS (Mt 26:55-56)

Again, a third scene where the Jewish leaders comically come with weapons. They come with swords and clubs. **Mt 26:55-56**, “At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, “Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. 56 But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples left him and fled.”

Arrested Jesus at Night to Avoid the Crowds

With an overtone of sarcasm **Jesus** pointed up the subterfuge and cowardice of **the multitudes** who now confronted Him in the garden. **“Am I so dangerous?”** He said to them, “that you had to come out in such great numbers and **with swords and clubs to arrest Me? Am I so elusive** that you had to capture me by stealth in the dead of night.¹¹

The Sanhedrin and Jewish leaders come at night so Jesus can’t use the crowds to riot and set him free. Jesus was in the “Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me” (vs 55). *I was an easy target!* But they came at night to **avoid a riot.**

Tens of thousands of people have been healed. They loved Jesus (for various reasons). The blind now see. The deaf now hear. The paralyzed are now walking. The dead have been raised to

¹¹ MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1985). *Matthew* (Mt 26:55). Chicago: Moody Press.

life. Demons have been cast out of people. **The doctors are unemployed!** But again, **Jesus does not need the crowds to riot.** He wants to submit to this. **He wants to go to the cross!**

The Sanhedrin Come with Weapons

The weapons the Jewish leaders bring are laughable. Here is Jesus controlling the sun and the moon and Jupiter, and they come with clubs and swords. He could so easily destroy them, but he doesn't. **He wants to submit to the cross!**

The Scriptures Fulfilled

It wasn't the clubs and swords that coerced Jesus to the cross. Jesus intentionally submitted to the cross for one very important reason, Mt 26:56, "But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled."

Jesus Committed to the Cross Alone: Disciples Fled

Jesus committed to suffering on the cross alone! Not even his disciples were there to comfort him. "Then all the disciples left him and fled" (Mt 26:56b).

Peter and all the disciples run away and hide! Jesus is utterly alone. Peter and the other disciples, who had spent years by His side, desert Him at the first real test of their fortitude.

While everyone is fighting and fleeing, Jesus is standing firm, obeying the Father's will. They are running because of the swords and clubs of the Jewish leaders, but Jesus is facing the sword of his Father's divine justice for you and for me.

Jesus is omnipotent. **He could have walked away from the cross.** But he chose to suffer for you and me. He chose to submit to the divine torment of Gethsemane and the cross. He was pressed like a 2000 pound millstone crushing an olive.

Transition: Jesus committed to the cross by his prayer and by his power, and now we see by his divine person. He could have destroyed the Jewish leaders who tried him in an illegal court proceeding.

III. TRIAL: Jesus committed to the cross by his divine person. Mt 26:57-68

Jesus is put on trial and he is brutally treated and mocked by the Jewish leaders. They put him under oath, and he confesses that he is the Christ of Daniel 9.

- In an illegal trial (at night, in private), Christ is silent
- He confesses he is the Christ of Daniel, coming in power and glory

Mt 26:63b-68, "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?"

The Trial Begins

Mt 26:57-58, “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.”

The Holiest Man that ever Lived is placed before the Jewish Council of the Sanhedrin which consisted of 71 of the Jewish leaders including the high priest. The highest ranking Jewish leaders alive are present. Even the ancient Jewish scholar Gamaliel is likely there.

The Trial is Illegal

It is held in the middle of the night. This is against Jewish Law. Yet he doesn't contest it. The Judge of All the Earth is has now entered into the Kangaroo Court of men. The scribes and elders of the Sanhedrin were gathered.

Peter is peering in from the outside. He went into the courtyard and “sat with the guards to see the end” (Mt 26:58). How Peter loves Jesus. He's afraid. He's been taught what's supposed to happen. But he is afraid.

False Witnesses Sought

Matthew 26:59-60, “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.” They found many people willing to lie about Jesus, but none was a credible witness. Again, this is a Jewish **trial** that is **illegal**, based on **false evidence**. **The Lord has every right to walk away**, but he chooses to stand trial. He is committed to the cross.

Two More False Witnesses

Two more false witnesses are found. Both make charges about the Temple. Mt 26:61-63, “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.”

Mark 14:56 says that “many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together.” The testimony did not agree. They were accusing him of wanting to get rid of the Jewish Temple altogether. Of course, He was talking about the Temple of His body.

Jesus could have walked away, but he was fulfilling prophecy. **Isaiah 53:7**, “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.”

Catedral Sagrada Familia

Throughout the centuries, architects would lay out designs for great buildings and cathedrals throughout Europe, knowing that it would be many generations before the edifice was completed. When we lived in Spain we liked to visit the Cathedral of the Sacred Family in Barcelona. It began in 1882. They hope to complete it by 2026, a hundred years after the original architect's death.

So the Jewish temple was an architectural marvel of the ancient world. And Jesus is going to tear it down and build it in three days? Jesus could easily build the Temple in 3 days or 3 seconds! That's not the point.

Jesus Could Rebuild the Temple in 3 Seconds!

Jesus was referring to his body, not the Temple, but he actually could have easily built the Temple in 3 seconds! He is God of very God. He is the Son of God. He chose to remain silent in his trial, because He “his steadfast love” for you “endures forever.” **There is no length Jesus won’t go to save you.** He loves you. He’s even willing to be falsely tried and mocked in a Jewish trial in order to take your sin and shame.

Jesus Under Oath

Now in verse 63 comes the climax of the passage. Caiaphias the high priest puts Jesus under oath. and asks Him if He is actually the Jewish Messiah. Look at **Mt 26:63b**, “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.”

Jesus Responds by Revealing He is indeed the Messiah

Look at **Mt 26:64**, “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.”

The irony is that Jesus is the Messiah of **Daniel 7:13-14**. He is the glorious one. “and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a Son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. 14 And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.”

Jesus is the glorious King with an everlasting kingdom that will never be destroyed. “All peoples, nations, and languages should serve him” (Dan 7:14).

The Judge of All Judged

Mt 26:65-66, “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.”

So they all agreed on the verdict. He should be put to death for saying that He is the Messiah. The only problem was, they were looking at God in human flesh! He said, “Before Abraham was I AM”. He said, “I am Alpha and Omega.” Why would the Judge of all the earth endure this? Because of his covenant faithfulness. He loves you!

Jesus Voluntarily Laid Down His Life

The Sanhedrin did not take Jesus’ life from him. He laid it down voluntarily. He says in **John 10:18**, “No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”

Now the Sanhedrin begins to Mock and Beat Jesus

Mt 26:67-68, “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?”

Luke 22:64 goes into even more detail, “they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face...”

Mark 14:65 says that the Sanhedrin was so corrupt that they even let the household servants join in and “strike him with the palms of their hands.”

Jesus puts up with this cruel mocking by the Jewish leaders and even **servants** in Caiaphas' household. Why? Because he loves you. He is committed to you. His unrelenting love will follow you. He will not relent because he is committed to saving you!

Fulfilling His Plan

Isaiah 50:6 records that it was during this time that they also mockingly ripped out clumps of Jesus beard to taunt him. He says, "I gave my back to those who strike, and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard; I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting."

You see Jesus, in his Jewish trial is fulfilling the plan he had designed from all eternity for you. **He intended to suffer your shame and disgrace**, so that you would not have to. He loves you.

So Jesus in his **prayer** in the Garden of Gethsemane could have walked away – but he chose to be “pressed” with the wrath of God for your sin.

He could have walked away in his **arrest**, demonstrating his omnipotent **power** by destroying the Jewish leaders with the breath of his mouth, calling on 72,000 angels, or simply hiding himself and awaiting the crowds the next day to riot for him. He didn't want to do that. He wanted to submit to be the propitiation for your sin!

He could have walked away from the cross during his trial. He is the Son of Man, the King that has an everlasting kingdom. He could have made them all bow down right there, but he remained silent in the face of false witnesses, because **he loves you**.

IV. What about your commitment? Mt 26:69-75, 27:1-10

A. PETER'S DENIAL: YET HE IS A SERVANT OF CHRIST (Mt 26:69-75)

As we come to the final portion of our text, we see the two disciples contrasted. One is a servant and one is a seller. They demonstrate two ways to repent.

Mt 26:69-75, "Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard.

And a servant girl came up to him and said, "You also were with Jesus the Galilean." 70 But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you mean."

71 And when he went out to the entrance, another servant girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." 72 And again he denied it with an oath: "I do not know the man."

73 After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Certainly you too are one of them, for your accent betrays you." 74 Then he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, "I do not know the man." And immediately the rooster crowed. 75 And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.

Two servant girls bring a full on panic attack to Peter, and this future apostle, this great big man denies the Lord. Then some bystanders get a hold of Peter's accent. *Peter is not from around here in Jerusalem. He's from the northern hills where the hillbillies live. He talks funny.*

The rooster crowed and Peter remembered the Lord's warning. You are going to deny me three times. The other Gospels say that Peter was cut to heart and wept bitterly.

Why was Peter so cut to heart? St. Luke gives us some insight. At the very moment of Peter's denial, just after the cock crows, according to **Luke 22:61**, the Lord Jesus, with swollen and beaten

face, looks through the open window to the courtyard outside and makes eye contact with Peter. It's probably around 2 o'clock in the morning. We read in **Luke 22:61** — “And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, “Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times.””

Peter weeps bitterly – he is utterly focused on who Christ is, and he has a God-centered repentance. He is consumed with the fact that he has denied the Lord he loves.

Jesus Shows His Commitment to Peter

You see, even in Peter's denial, Jesus is committed to Peter. And Jesus is committed to you in your failure. He looks at Peter through the window with *compassion*.

B. JUDAS' BETRAYAL: A SELLER OF CHRIST (Mt 27:1-10)

We won't say much here, except to compare Judas with Peter. Judas betrays Christ, tries to give the money back. He confesses that he's accused an innocent man. He's guilty. The priests took back the 30 pieces of silver. But Judas is *seller* of Christ. What do I mean? He's following Christ for what he can get.

Remember Satan's accusation against Job? “Does Job fear God for no reason?” (Job 1:9). In other words, Job doesn't serve you for your worship. He serves you for the stuff you give him.

Judas was broken that his plans didn't work out. He didn't move up in the ranks of the Sanhedrin for his betrayal of Christ.

Judas' is self-centered. Judas has a pity party and commits suicide. He never makes it to put his trust in Christ. **Mt 27:5**, “And throwing down the pieces of silver into the temple, he departed, and he went and hanged himself.”

Why Do You Serve Christ?

Dear friend, why do you serve Christ? Some people will say, *I serve Christ so I can go to heaven*. That's what the old evangelist Paris Reidhead called “utilitarian religion.” Do you serve Christ for what you can get out of him? Do you serve him so that when you die you can have an eternal vacation? That's not true Christianity. That's “*Judas christianity*.” It's false. It's not right. There is no salvation in that.

Conclusion

Look at how **Christ is committed to you**. Look at how many times he could have walked away, but he chose to lay down his life. Do you want what Christ can give you on earth or in heaven, or do you want Christ? You see heaven is not about having an eternal vacation. Do you want earth or heaven, or do you want Christ? That's the question.

It's about worshipping Christ. If that's not the desire of your heart you are not fit for heaven.

You say, why would I love Christ so much? Because He first loved you! Look at how he loves you!