

**LESSONS ON PREDESTINATION #51**  
**"The Battle of the Cross" (Part Five)**  
(Scriptures from NKJV)

Matthew 26:57-68:

*And those who had laid hold of Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. But Peter followed Him at a distance to the high priest's courtyard. And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end. Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. But at last two false witnesses came forward and said, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.'" And the high priest arose and said to Him, "Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?" But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, "I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!" Jesus said to him, "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." Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, "He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! What do you think?" They answered and said, "He is deserving of death." Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands, saying, "Prophecy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?"*

**INTRODUCTION:** We are now ready to continue on with the order of events occurring during what we call the Passion Week of our Lord. We have covered the events involved in the Lord's Supper where Jesus predicts His betrayal by Judas. We have followed Him to the Garden of Gethsemane and watched Him pray in agony. We have observed His betrayal by Judas and His arrest by the Jewish authorities. We have covered the first phase of the three-part trial before the Jewish ecclesiastical system of law. The first phase was before Annas, the former high priest, but well respected by the Jews. This preliminary hearing was for the purpose of establishing a charge against Jesus, which would then be sent to the Sanhedrin for a formal trial. Annas failed to achieve such and sent Christ on to the house of Caiaphas where the entire court was already assembled. This was during the night and was illegal as established by Jewish law. The Sanhedrin cannot legally charge Jesus without witnesses. They can only render a verdict, but cannot prosecute. They will proceed to do so anyway. We now progress to the informal trial before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin, presumably before dawn.

**A. EVENTS OCCURRING IN THE PASSION WEEK**

1. His trial before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin.

a. Scriptural texts: Matthew 26:57-68; Mark 14:53-65; Luke 22:54, 63-65; and in John 18:24 where John merely mentions the Caiaphas trial but does not record any details of the trial.

b. Jesus is now brought into the house of Caiaphas where He will be tried. The trial begins with the need for some witnesses to bring a charge against Jesus. They are seeking the death penalty in advance of having any witnesses available. They were able to find several false witnesses, but Mark tells us in chapter 14:56, **"Many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree."** He goes on to say in verses 57-59, **"Then some rose up and bore false witness against Him, saying, 'We heard Him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.' But not even then did their testimony agree."**

c. A charge has now been made against Jesus. It was based on the words which Jesus spoke when He cleansed the temple during the early part of His ministry. We read the account in John 2:18-22 - **"So the Jews answered and said to Him, 'What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?' Jesus answered and said to them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' Then the Jews said, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?' But He was speaking of the temple of His body. Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said."** Neither the witnesses nor the disciples understood that He was referring to His own personal body as being the temple of God. Instead the false witnesses claimed they heard Jesus say that He Himself was **"able to destroy the temple of God"** (Matthew 26:61), and in Mark's account they said that Jesus said, **"I will destroy this temple."** But Jesus made no such claim. His actual words were **"destroy this temple (His body) and in three days I will raise it up (His resurrection)."**

NOTE: When people are desiring to establish their point, they will often misquote their opponent's viewpoint. This occurs quite often in the predestination v. free-will debates. Neither side is justified when they resort to such measures. If your point is not strong enough to be proven, then do not try to weaken your opponent's position by misrepresenting his position. This so-called trial had no design to give Jesus a fair hearing.

d. Caiaphas is now under great pressure to get the trial finished before dawn to make it look like they followed the law by rendering a verdict the next day. In Matthew

26:62, 63, Caiaphas said to Jesus, **"Do you answer nothing? What is it these men testify against you? But Jesus kept silent."** He knew that His rebuttal would only have been futile and would give the entire illegal proceedings the appearance of legitimacy.

e. While trying to sort out the problem with the witnesses' testimony, Caiaphas places Jesus under oath to confirm that He was the Messiah or deity. The oath was designed to make Jesus legally obligated to answer truthfully. Jesus agreed to do so, and in Mark's account, He said **"I am"** (Mark 14:62). He then will make the statement which will lead to His execution. In Matthew 26:64 Jesus says, **"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."** This expression is based on a combination of two Old Testament scriptures. First, in Psalm 110:1,2, **"The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.' The Lord shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies!"** And second, in Daniel 7:13, 14, **"I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then 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 the one which shall not be destroyed."**

f. Jesus was saying, "Not only am I the Messiah and the Son of God, but one day you will see me glorified with my Father in heaven. You will then be standing before Me as your Judge." The title **"Son of Man"** was a commonly used title of the Messiah, and **"Power"** was a title referring to God. Because the ungodly members of the Sanhedrin had refused to receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior, they had sealed their doom. The Accused would then stand before them as the Accuser, and the judges would then become the judged.

g. Upon hearing the confession by Jesus, the high priest tore his robes and shouted, "He has blasphemed! We don't need any witnesses. We have all heard Him blaspheme the name of God. What is your verdict?" They all agreed that He should die. They had closed their minds to the truth, and no amount of evidence would open their eyes to it. It does not matter if this evidence takes the form of logical argumentation or miraculous physical deeds, their minds were closed. It is like the many people who have rejected the claims of Christ in that it was not that they had carefully examined the evidence about Him and found it to be untrue or unconvincing, but that they refused to even consider the evidence at all. Evidence alone does not convince the hard-hearted.

The tearing of the robe was supposed to be a symbolic gesture expressing great sorrow. We read in Job 1:20, **"Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground, and worshiped."** But the high priest was forbidden to tear his robe. In Leviticus 21:10 we read, **"He who is the high priest among his brethren, on whose head the anointing oil was poured and who is consecrated to wear the garments, shall not uncover his head nor tear his clothes."**

John MacArthur gives a good description of the action taken by Caiaphas when he says:

When the high priest ceremoniously tore his robes, he did so not out of grief and indignation over the presumed dishonor of God's name but rather out of joy and relief that, at last, Jesus had placed Himself into their hands, condemning Himself out of His own mouth. Although Leviticus 21:10 strictly forbade the high priest's tearing his garments, the Talmud held that judges who witnessed blasphemy had a right to tear their robes if they later sewed them up. By his traditional and theatrical display, Caiaphas dramatically gave the appearance of defending God's name, but inwardly he gloated over the illegal, unjust, and devilish victory he imagined he had just won. (MacArthur, *New Testament Commentary on Matthew*, p. 208).

h. The entire outcome of the trial had been predetermined in advance by the Jewish leaders as they had been deceived by Satanic influence. NOTE: In reference to the doctrine of predestination, I have observed this: all men believe in predestination. They just disagree on who should be free to do the predetermining, God or man? Those who are the most strongly opposed to God predetermining the future, are the most adamant for their right to predetermine their own future!

i. After reaching their decision, the members of the council turned into a mob. Mark tells us in 14:65, **"Then some began to spit on Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him, and to say to Him, 'Prophecy!' And the officers struck Him with the palms of their hands."** To spit in one's face was the ultimate insult to a Jew. In Numbers 12:14,15 we are informed it was an act to shame a person for some action they had performed. We read, **"Then the Lord said to Moses, 'If her father had but spit in her face, would she not be shamed seven days? Let her be shut out of the camp seven days, and afterward she may be received again.' So Miriam was shut out of the camp seven days, and the people did not journey till Miriam was brought in again."** Also in Deuteronomy 25:7-10 we read,

**"But if the man does not want to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate to the elders, and say, 'My husband's brother refuses to raise up a name to his brother in Israel; he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother.'" Then the elders of his city shall call him and speak to him. But if he stands firm and says, "I do not want to take her," then his brother's wife shall come to him in**

***the presence of the elders, remove his sandal from his foot, spit in his face, and answer and say, "So shall it be done to the man who will not build up his brother's house." And his name shall be called in Israel, "The house of him who had his sandal removed."***

2. The formal verdict rendered in the early hours of morning.

a. Scriptural texts: Matthew 27:1,2; Mark 15:1; Luke 22:66-71; John 18:1.

b. As we have stated, the Jewish trial took place in three phases. The first was a preliminary hearing before Annas, sometime after midnight. The second was an informal trial before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin, sometime before dawn. All of this was illegal. Thus a third phase occurred in the early morning hours of the next day to give the appearance of legality. This was merely to re-enact and restate in a formal way what had already occurred in the second phase.

c. The account in Matthew 27:1,2 is brief. We read, ***"When morning came, all the chief priests and elders of the people plotted against Jesus to put Him to death. And when they had bound Him, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor."*** When we read the council plotted to put Jesus to death, it means they had to erect civil charges against Him which would be accepted by Roman law, as Roman law would not execute a person on the charge of blasphemy.

d. The accounts in Mark and John both indicate that the third phase occurred in early morning. Meanwhile Luke 22:66-71 describes the re-enactment of the second trial and the formal verdict rendered. We refer to it again at this time.

***As soon as it was day, the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, came together and led Him into their council, saying, "If You are the Christ, tell us." But He said to them, "If I tell you, you will by no means believe. And if I also ask you, you will by no means answer Me or let Me go. Hereafter the Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God." Then they all said, "Are You then the Son of God?" So He said to them, "You rightly say that I am." And they said, "What further testimony do we need? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth."***

In verses 69 and 70 Jesus refers to Himself as the Son of Man. This is the title given to the Messiah in Daniel 7:13, 14. Then the council asks, ***"Are you then the Son of God?"*** This indicates that the two names both refer to deity. Jesus confirmed that He was. This sealed the verdict and closed the trial. They will take Him to Pilate's judgment hall to complete the Roman civil trial, in that the Jews could not perform capital punishment. Different charges, other than Christ claiming He was God, will have to be made in the

Roman trial. We will take up this in the next lesson.

e. A couple of closing comments are in order before we close.

**First**, when Jesus makes the statement that He will be given the most exalted seat at the right hand of the power of God, He is saying that the time will soon occur when He will be given all power in heaven and earth. This means that He will be the Judge on the final day of judgment. It also means that He will occupy the position held by Satan in the original creation. Thus, He along with His saints, will sit in judgment over the angels. This concept is overlooked by the vast majority of Bible teachers who, for various reasons, have overlooked or ignored the role of angels in God's redemptive order.

In dealing with a problem existing in the Corinthian church, Paul asks two questions which relate to Jesus ruling at the right hand of God. In I Corinthians 6:1-3 the text reads, ***"Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?"*** The two questions are:

**First:** ***"Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world?"*** Most Bible teachers will point out that with the saints being in union with Christ, they will have authority to judge the wicked along with Christ.

**Second:** ***"Do you not know that we shall judge angels?"*** This question usually goes unexplained by the majority of Bible teachers. Why? Because they are unacquainted with God's purpose to elevate man to a position of authority over angels in the new creation. Man was created a little lower than the angels in the old creation, but now in Christ, man is elevated in honor and authority over the angels in the new creation. I went for years not knowing how to explain this text until I did my study on the "Angels." In doing so, I began to find other teachers in church history who had reached many of the same conclusions which I was reaching. It was only then that I began to see the grand scheme of God in sending His Son into Adam's race. It was not only to save, but it was to elevate man over the angels!

***A great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying,***

***"Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever, amen."*** (Revelation 7:9-11)

A **second** thing to observe in this trial is to see how the humanity of Jesus, as the model man, responded to His mistreatment by His enemies. Though Peter denied Him at first, he would later describe the response of Jesus to His enemies in I Peter 2:21-23 - ***"For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth; Who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously."*** How would we respond if someone spit in our face and were mocked and beaten by a stronger opponent or opponents? Why did Jesus respond in the manner He did? Peter tells us in verse 24 - ***"Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness — by whose stripes you were healed."*** He must do so in order to bear our sin debt. Jesus came the first time to earth to bear the sins of His people, but when He comes the second time, it will not be to be humiliated again, but He will come as a sovereign Judge, to judge the wicked. There is a sense in which every person, who rejects Jesus as Lord and Savior, spits in His face and is guilty of blaspheming God. People who misjudge Jesus and deem Him as being either unworthy or unnecessary of being their Savior, will one day be rightly judged by Him. They may misjudge Jesus, but He will never misjudge them! They will get exactly the punishment worthy of spitting in the face of God!