

The Eternal Judge on Trial
The Gospel of John: That You May Believe | John 18:12-40
Southern Hills Baptist Church
November 16, 2017

Introductory Thought: Irony of Ironies

Before beginning a study of Jesus being placed on trial it helps to take a moment and remember who it is that is being judged. Carry these realities with you through this study.

- **Jesus is the Almighty Creator of All:** All time, space, and matter find their origin stories in Jesus. Everything is His! (Jn 1:1-3; Heb 1:1-3).
- **Jesus is the Eternal Judge:** As the Righteous and Holy One who is over all, Jesus will one day judge all of His creation. His verdict is eternal and final (Jn 5:22; Rev 18:11-16).

So this is Jesus, the Almighty Creator, the Eternal Judge. Yet, what we will witness in our passage today is...

- **The Creator being Tried and Examined by Creation:** Try to fathom this. Creation will take a posture of superiority to its Maker. Men who depend on Jesus for the next beat of their heart and breath in their lungs will stand over Jesus in judgment. Shattering would be appropriate here.
- **The Eternal Judge being Judged by Fallen Creatures:** The Great and True Judge being judged. Do you feel the scary irony here?

What took place in Jesus' trials was shocking. What is also shocking is that Jesus chose to endure any of it. Why did He? Deep Love. Abundant Grace.

Jesus Stands Before the Jewish High Priest: Annas & Caiaphas

John 18:12-14, 19-24

- **Blinding Power of Sin:** The guards who arrested Jesus here are the same men who fell to the ground moments earlier when Jesus said His name. They also saw Jesus healing Malchus' severed ear. How could they arrest Him? He was clearly divine! Sin's power to blind is far stronger than we recognize. Be warned Christian. Sin is a danger we can't afford to play with! Jesus has set us free. Don't place yourself back in its bondage.
- **God in "Captivity":** We read that Jesus was bound. If it wasn't so sad it would be funny. These guards tied rope around the hands of the Creator, as if the Sovereign One could be coerced to do anything.
- **3 Phases of the Jewish Trial:** John records the first of three appearances Jesus would make before the Jewish leaders: (1) Annas, (2) Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin, (3) Annas, Caiaphas, and the Sanhedrin.
- **Annas:** Former High Priest and Father-in-Law to the current High Priest.

- **Illegal Tactics:** Annas began questioning Jesus about His teaching, hoping He would incriminate Himself. This tactic was illegal as Jewish law demanded charges to be confirmed by witnesses or evidence. Jesus pointed this out with His response encouraging Annas to ask others.
- **Reasserting Control:** The officer present for the questioning saw the High Priest embarrassed by Jesus' observation and responded by hitting Jesus to show Him who was in control. Foolishness. Jesus was always in control. He had never lost control. He never will. Yet, in a display of love and self-control, Jesus endured this shame and disgrace.

Jesus Stands Before the Roman Governor: Pilate

John 18:28-40

- **Defiled:** The guards who delivered Jesus to Pilate refused to go into his home to avoid becoming unclean before Passover. Ironically, they had no issue in being complicit in the murder of an innocent man. That was ok, just not going into a Gentile's home. These men served a religion, not God.
- **Fulfilled Prophecy:** Just as Jesus foretold He was delivered over to the Gentiles (Mk 10:32-34) and lifted up in His death (Jn 3:14-15).
- **Not of this World:** The first question Pilate asked Jesus after taking the case is if Jesus was a king, an accusation levied by the Jews meant to raise the ire of the Romans. Jesus answered. He is! But His Kingdom is not of this world. His Kingdom has Divine source and origin.
- **Bear Witness to the Truth:** Jesus' Christmas mission, His purpose in coming into our world was to bear witness to the truth, to set people free with the gracious truth of the Gospel of God.
- **Ancient Post-Modernism:** Pilate's reply to Jesus' sharing He had come to bring truth was to question truth's very existence, a sentiment we see echoed regularly in our culture. In Christ, we can rest in a sure and eternal truth that won't shift or fluctuate. Jesus' truth is forever secure.
- **The Verdict:** Pilate had heard enough. He found no fault in Jesus, but in order to shift responsibility away from himself he gave the crowd an option: release Jesus or Barabbas. The Jewish leaders bribed the crowd to swing the vote to Barabbas, a decision of incalculable evil and injustice.

Concluding Thoughts:

Heavy Hearts: This story should make our hearts heavy with the sinfulness and evil of humanity. As ugly as this sin was, we so often embody it ourselves. We are the power-hungry, the greedy, the cowards, the skeptics.

Worshipful Hearts: Thankfully, Jesus mends heavy hearts through the abundant grace of the Gospel, which He began to purchase by enduring the shame and disgrace of these slanderous and belittling trials. Jesus went to depths we can't even imagine out of love for God the Father and His flock.

Messages available for download on iTunes or www.southernhillslife.org