

# Exalting Jesus Christ

## "The Trials of Jesus – Part 2"

### INTRODUCTION:

- I. Hundreds of years before Jesus Christ was born into this world, prophets of God wrote about the suffering and oppression, the injustice and shame that the Son of God would encounter in the hours leading up to His death.
  - A. Approximately 750 years before Jesus, the prophet Isaiah wrote this:
    1. **Isaiah 53:7-8a** – *He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth. 8 He was taken from prison and from judgment. . .*
  - B. And then some 150 years before the prophet Isaiah, the psalmist David wrote this touching prophecy concerning the suffering and injustice Jesus would experience at the hands of His accusers.
    1. **Psalms 69:7-9** – *Because for Your sake I have borne reproach; shame has covered my face. I have become a stranger to my brothers, and an alien to my mother's children; because zeal for Your house has eaten me up, and the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me.*

2. **Psalm 69:20** – *Reproach has broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness; I looked for someone to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none.*
- II. Let's return to our series "Exalting Jesus Christ" and to the gospel of John so we can take a look at "The Jewish Trials of Jesus – Part 2."
- A. As you may recall from our last lesson, we took a few moments to discuss how Jewish law protected an accused from every conceivable injustice.
1. However, all three Jewish trials of Jesus were conducted illegally.
    - a. The first illegal trial took place when Jesus was dragged in chains through the night to the home of Annas the former High Priest.
      - (1). Jesus was not only illegally questioned by Annas, but was also physically abused by one of the arresting officers.
    - b. The second illegal trial took place during the night at the home of Caiaphas the High Priest where some members of the Sanhedrin were gathered in a vain attempt to find witnesses who could provide credible evidence against Jesus.

- c. The third illegal trial took place in the Hall of Hewn Stone where the entire Sanhedrin gathered to officially condemn a man they had already determined was worthy of death.

## **BODY:**

- I. As we mentioned in our last lesson, the first trial of Jesus was blatantly illegal and violated every principle of Jewish justice.
  - A. John tells us Jesus was first brought before Annas, the former High Priest.
    1. **John 18:13-14** – *And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was high priest that year. 14 Now it was Caiaphas who advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.*
    2. **John 18:19-24** – *The high priest then asked Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine. 20 Jesus answered him, "I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet, and in secret I have said nothing. 21 Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have heard Me what I said to them. Indeed they know what I said."*  
*22 And when He had said these things, one of the officers who stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, "Do You*

*answer the high priest like that?" 23 Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you strike Me?" 24 Then Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.*

2. What made this trial of Jesus illegal? There are several legal precedents that were cast aside, but let me mention just a few:
  - a. First, trials were never permitted to take place at night.
    - (1). It was in the pre-dawn hours that Jesus was brought to Annas.
    - (2). And then, still in the pre-dawn hours, Jesus was taken to the house of Caiaphas.
  - b. Second, a man could not be arrested or even be considered on trial for any offense until the testimony of every witness had been examined and ruled credible and material.
    - (1). Jesus had not only been arrested like a common criminal, there are no witnesses present during His trial before Annas.
  - c. Third, under Jewish law the accused could not be asked self-incriminating questions.
    - (1). And yet, Annas, *"asked Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine."*

d. And fourth, it was forbidden to subject an accused to physical abuse of any kind before they were legally judged guilty.

(1). But when Jesus challenged the former High Priest about asking self-incriminating questions in the absence of any credible witness, one of the arresting officers "*struck Jesus with the palm of his hand. . .*"

B. The second illegal trial of Jesus took place when He was brought before Caiaphas, the ruling High Priest.

1. John doesn't provide us with any details concerning this trial. In fact, all he says is:

a. **John 18:24** – *Then Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.*

b. John doesn't include any details simply because his gospel is not a synoptic gospel – not a synopsis of the life of Jesus – but was written for the express purpose of proving the deity of Jesus Christ.

2. Luke also says very little about this particular trial:

a. **Luke 22:54** – *Having arrested Him, they led Him and brought Him into the high priest's house.*

3. However, Matthew and Mark reveal a lot about what took place in those pre-dawn hours – in the hours before Peter denied the Lord for the third and final time.
- II. As we take a closer look at this particular illegal trial of Jesus, one thing becomes obvious – the enemies of Jesus cast aside every legal precedent and every rabbinical law to find Jesus guilty of crimes worthy of death.
- A. First, this illegal trial not only took place at night, it took place in the home – or palace – of Caiaphas the high priest.
1. **Matthew 26:57** – *And those who had laid hold of Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.*
  2. **Mark 14:53** – *And they led Jesus away to the high priest; and with him were assembled all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes.*
  3. Trials before the Great Sanhedrin could only be a public trial held during the daytime, and then only in the Hall of Hewn Stone within the temple.
  4. But this trial of Jesus not only excluded the people of Jerusalem, it was also conducted while they were still sleeping in their beds.

- B. Second, notice that Caiaphas was waiting for the arrival of Jesus along with the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people.
1. They were all gathered together in the palace of the High Priest waiting for Jesus.
  2. This whole incident is obviously a well-planned plot to convict an innocent man.
- C. Third, since this was an illegal private gathering of the Sanhedrin none of the witnesses were examined publically, and what witnesses they produced all gave conflicting testimony.
1. **Matthew 26:59-60a** – *Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, 60 but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none.*
  2. **Mark 14:55-56** – *Now the chief priests and all the council sought testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. 56 For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree.*
- D. Fourth, two witnesses were finally produced whose testimony was not only immaterial and irrelevant, but who also offered contradictory testimony.

1. **Matthew 26:60b-61** – *But at last two false witnesses came forward 61 and said, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.'"*
2. **Mark 14:57-59** – *Then some rose up and bore false witness against Him, saying, 58 "We heard Him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.'" 59 But not even then did their testimony agree.*
3. Actually, Jesus had once said these things:
  - a. If you remember from our earlier studies, John spoke of Jesus cleansing the temple at the beginning of His ministry.
  - b. During that incident Jesus was asked for a sign proving He had the authority do these things.
  - c. Jesus replied: **John 2:19** – *"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."*
  - d. Then John added: **John 2:21-22** – *But He was speaking of the temple of His body. 22 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.*



4. However, this is hardly credible enough to condemn a man to death. If anything the average juror would consider this kind of statement delusional – the kind of outlandish claim only a mentally unstable person would make.
  5. In any event, the members of the Sanhedrin didn't bother to even consider this useless testimony.
  6. So, up to this point, things are not going well for the prosecution.
    - a. There was simply no reliable testimony upon which they could condemn Jesus.
    - b. Therefore, the High Priest had to find another way of finding Jesus worthy of death.
- E. So, casting aside all respect for Jewish law, the High Priest asks Jesus a question that was specifically intended to self-incriminate.
1. **Matthew 26:62-63** – *And the high priest arose and said to Him, "Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?" 63 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!"*
  2. **Mark 14:61b-62** – *Again the high priest asked Him, saying to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?"*

3. The reply Jesus gave must have sent a shockwave through the entire assembly.
  - a. **Matthew 26:64** – *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."*
  - b. **Mark 14:62** – *Jesus said, "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."*
4. This bold proclamation of Jesus comes from a Messianic prophecy found in Daniel chapter 7.
  - a. **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."*
  - b. This prophecy is not speaking about the second coming of Christ (as so many believe), but rather it speaks of the Lord's

return to heaven, where He will be seated at the right hand of God.

- c. It speaks of His arrival in heaven when Jesus will be given "dominion" (the authority and power to rule or reign); when He will be given "glory" (as King of kings and Lord of lords); and when He will be given "a kingdom" – an "everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away," and a "kingdom" which "shall never be destroyed."
  - d. And it speaks of the Lord coming in swift judgment as King of kings and Lord of lords against Israel – within the lifetime of those who heard Him on that occasion.
  - e. This happened in AD 70 with the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and the end of Judaism as it once existed.
5. Isaiah used this same imagery in his prophecy concerning the swift judgment that the Lord would bring against the enemies of Israel – in this case, Egypt.
- a. **Isaiah 19:1-2** – *The burden against Egypt. Behold, the Lord rides on a swift cloud, and will come into Egypt; the idols of Egypt will totter at His presence, and the heart of Egypt will melt in its midst. "I will set Egyptians against Egyptians;*

*everyone will fight against his brother, and everyone against his neighbor, city against city, kingdom against kingdom."*

6. Even Jesus used this same imagery earlier when He spoke with His disciples about the coming destruction of Jerusalem.
  - a. **Matthew 24:29-31** – *"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."*
- F. And finally, this second illegal trial of Jesus ended with an illegal verdict.
  1. **Matthew 26:65-66** – *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! 66 What do you think?" They answered and said, "He is deserving of death."*
  2. **Mark 14:63-64** – *Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "What further need do we have of witnesses? 64 You have heard*

*the blasphemy! What do you think?" And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.*

3. If you recall, under Jewish rabbinic law, a capital trial could not begin and end on the same day unless the accused was acquitted of all charges and set free.
4. But if the accused was found guilty, the members of the Sanhedrin were required to adjourn, and spend the entire night in prayer and meditation before rendering their verdict the following morning.
5. There was none of that here.
  - a. There was no night spent in meditation and prayer.
  - b. There was no night spent asking for God's guidance and help in rendering a just and fair verdict.
6. Furthermore, if you recall, the final verdict could never be unanimous.
  - a. The Jews considered a unanimous verdict as indicating an unfair trial.
  - b. And yet, Mark tells us: *they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.*
- G. But, once again, the indignities Jesus would suffer in the next hours were just beginning.

1. Remember, Jewish law prohibited an accused from being mistreated or physically abused?
  2. Unfortunately, Jesus was not granted that protection under the law:
    - a. **Matthew 26:67-68** – *Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands, 68 saying, "Prophecy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?"*
    - b. **Mark 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.*
    - c. **Luke 22:63-65** – *Now the men who held Jesus mocked Him and beat Him. 64 And having blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face and asked Him, saying, "Prophecy! Who is the one who struck You?" 65 And many other things they blasphemously spoke against Him.*
- III. The third trial illegal Jewish of Jesus took place early the next morning when the Sanhedrin officially met.
- A. This gathering of the Sanhedrin is hardly a trial in the real sense of the word.

1. They had already decided Jesus was worthy of death – despite the fact that He was condemned on the basis of His own testimony.
  2. The purpose of this assembly was to simply give the appearance of a trial and to render their official verdict.
- B. This trial is mentioned by Matthew, Mark, and Luke.
1. **Matthew 27:1** – *When morning came, all the chief priests and elders of the people plotted against Jesus to put Him to death.*
  2. **Mark 15:1** – *Immediately, in the morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council; and they bound Jesus, led Him away, and delivered Him to Pilate.*
  3. Luke provides us with more detail: **Luke 22:66-71** – *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, 67 "If You are the Christ, tell us." But He said to them, "If I tell you, you will by no means believe. 68 And if I also ask you, you will by no means answer Me or let Me go. 69 Hereafter the Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God." 70 Then they all said, "Are You then the Son of God?" So He said to them, "You rightly say that I am." 71 And they said, "What further testimony do we need? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth."*

- C. Ordinarily, this would have been the end of the matter. The accused would be taken away and executed.
  - 1. However, just a few years before Jesus was crucified, Rome had taken away Israel's right to put criminals to death in capital cases.
    - a. This meant the accused must be tried and judged worthy of death under Roman law, not just Jewish law.
    - b. Therefore, it was necessary to take Jesus to Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, and have Pilate condemn Jesus to death.
  - 2. So, in our next lesson we'll see how these religious leaders had to change the charges they brought against Jesus.
  - 3. And we'll also see how Pilate reacted to these obviously trumped-up charges, and what ultimately led him to crucify a man he knew was innocent.

**Conclusion:**

- I. Despite this travesty of justice, there are some important things we learn about Jesus during the three Jewish trials.
  - A. In fact, there are three things that seem to stand out more than any other.



1. First, throughout this terribly unjust and mentally-fatiguing ordeal Jesus maintained His dignity.
  - a. He never lost control.
  - b. While His accusers were ranting and raving and making all kinds of emotional displays, Jesus maintained His dignity to the very end.
2. Second, through this entire ordeal Jesus also maintained His courage.
  - a. When asked if He was the Messiah, Jesus answered clearly and concisely.
  - b. He knew the question was designed to incriminate Him and find Him guilty of blasphemy, but He answered the question anyway – courageously, even though He knew it would mean His death.
3. And finally, once again, despite everything the Lord endured on that terrible night, Jesus maintained absolute complete confidence.
  - a. Jesus knew He would ultimately triumph.
  - b. He knew, without any doubt whatsoever, that there would be glory beyond the cross.

- II. It's hard to imagine how someone would allow themselves to be subjected to all the humiliation, injustice and suffering Jesus experienced up to this moment.
  - A. And yet, what He endured during those three illegal trials was nothing compared with what lay ahead.
    - 1. Jesus will not only endure a Roman scourging (under which many men simply died), He will experience the worst suffering imaginable – crucifixion on a Roman cross.
      - a. And yet, all this was done for you and for me.
    - 2. Jesus said: **John 15:13** – *Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.*
      - a. This means Jesus is your friend – a friend unlike any friend you've ever had – because He laid down His life for you.
    - 3. But then Jesus added: **John 15:14** – *You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.*
      - a. Are you a friend to Jesus? Do you do whatever He commands you to do?
      - b. Have you obeyed His commands to come to Him in faith, repenting of your sins, confessing Him before others, and His command to be baptized in His name for the remission of your sins?

- c. And are you continuing to live a life in keeping with His commandments – a life that glorifies Him in everything you do and say?
- B. As you think about your life, if you have to honestly admit you're really not a friend to Jesus, you can be.
  - 1. Start right now to do whatever He commands you.
    - a. You can become a friend of Jesus right now by obeying the gospel and by being baptized into Christ. Don't wait until a more convenient time – that time may never come again.
    - b. And others of you can become a friend of Jesus once again by simply obeying His command to repent and confess your sins to His Father in heaven so that you can once again be cleansed from all unrighteousness.