



World Christian Fellowship

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Illegal Trial of Jesus!

**Matthew 26:59-68; Mark 14:53-65; Luke 22:66-71;
John 18:12-14, 19-24**

Matthew 26:59-68, *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. But at last two false witnesses came forward⁶¹ and said, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.' " ⁶²And 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!"*

⁶⁴Jesus 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."

⁶⁵Then 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."⁶⁷ Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others

struck Him with the palms of their hands, ⁶⁸saying, "Prophecy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?"

As we trace our Lord's steps to the cross, to the resurrection, to His ascension, and His commissioning of His own for the ministry that He left behind.

These are great truths coming to us from the Lord Himself.

We will examine the illegal, unjust trial of Jesus.

This is Wednesday early morning just after midnight.

Jesus has **celebrated the Passover** with His disciples on the Tuesday evening, instituted the **Lord's Table**.

Taught them some profound truth recorded in **John 13-16**, prayed to the Father for them, **John 17**.

Leaving the upper room with the eleven disciples, Judas is already dismissed to carry out his act of betrayal, proceed to the Mount of Olives, to a place familiar to them called the Garden of Gethsemane.

They arrive at the garden somewhere around midnight, and Jesus enters into three prayer sessions with the Father, in which He does battle with the tempter.

Out of those times of prayer, He comes strengthened and ready for the cross. Satan has thrown at Him the last flurry of temptation.

Jesus has become victorious, and He sets His mind resolutely to the cross.

No time passes after the conclusion of that prayer until the garden is approached by upwards of a thousand people, Roman soldiers, temple police, Jewish leaders, Sanhedrin members, including the high priest. They have all come to arrest Jesus.

There is no crime or no indictment, or nothing He has done, but they want Him dead.

Jesus is a threat to their religion.

He is a threat to their positions of leadership.

He is a threat to take away the hearts and minds of the people to follow after Him.

He is a miracle worker.

They can't compete at that level, and they are fearful.

They are also energized by Satan to carry out this deed, and so all the redemptive history that God has laid out is coming to its climax in the cross and resurrection of Christ.

Satan:

This is a Satanic hour.

Luke 22:53, *When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize Me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness."*

When Judas left the upper room, before Jesus instituted the Lord's Table, "Satan having entered into Judas, he went out, and it was night." It is hell's hour, and Satan is energizing Judas.

Satan and his demons are also energizing the high priest, the Sanhedrin, and all that are involved in the execution of Jesus Christ.

Satan has been trying to prevent Christ from going to the cross. Certainly, in the first great wave of temptation recorded in **Matthew 4 and Luke 4**, where right after Jesus was baptized, He was tempted, Satan's effort there was to divert Him away from the cross.

In the **Garden of Gethsemane** as our Lord was sweating great drops of blood, Satan was still trying to get Him to do whatever He had to do to divert from the cross. Because Satan

knew that the cross would provide the ultimate sacrifice for the salvation of all the redeemed of all the ages.

It appears Satan's ploy was to keep Him away from the cross.

But apparently by now, he is resigned to the fact that Jesus is going to the cross that is in the inevitable plan of God.

Satan's effort then is to cause the cross to be so strong, and the death there so fatal, that Christ cannot rise again.

While at first, we see Satan trying to divert Christ from the cross, we now see Satan himself amassing all of hell and earth together, in terms of evil force, to kill Him on the cross in such a devastating and final way that there can be no resurrection.

This does demonstrate to us both the impotence and inconsistency of Satan.

It appears now that he is energizing the betrayal, he is energizing the death of Christ, to keep Him dead, to keep Him fatally wounded, and unable to rise again.

Even when He did rise Satan spread lies about that He had not risen, trying to stop the message of the resurrection, if not the resurrection itself.

Behind the scenes is that one of whom Jesus in **John 8:44**, "*He is a murderer from the beginning.*"

Behind it all is Satan. This is a Satanic moment as Jesus moves to the cross.

God:

This is also **a holy moment that is God at work.**

God means for the anger, hatred, evil of Satan, to fit within His own holy redemptive purpose.

Genesis 50:20, *But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.*

Always keep in mind that whatever latitudes Satan has in which to operate is always within the confines of God's will and purpose.

Peter said on the day of Pentecost that Jesus Christ was crucified by the determinant counsel and foreknowledge of God.

It is a plan that has its origin, in one sense, in hell, but has its genuine source in heaven.

Evil men.

A third party involved in the arrest and execution of Christ, and that is evil men.

We find here these evil rulers who have long ago conspired to eliminate Jesus Christ.

John 11, just after Lazarus had been raised from the dead, a few weeks before met together and conspired.

John 11:47-48, *Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, "What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. ⁴⁸If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation."*

This man is a doer of miracles.

They never denied the miracles.

They knew He did miracles.

They were undeniable.

They were of proportions that no one could deny, and they were of a frequency that no one could escape.

Their thought was that all the Jews would begin to follow Jesus. The Romans would react by coming against the Jews, and they would dethrone them, take away their position, destroy their temple, wipe out their nation, and it would be the end of them.

They saw this whole movement toward Jesus, and the crowd that had cried, *"Hosanna to the Son of David, Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord."*

When He rode into the city, posed a great threat to their security, because the Romans might see this as an insurrection brewing, move in to squelch the insurrection, and wipe them out totally.

This is what prompted Caiaphas then to rise and speak.

John 11:49-53, *And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, ⁵⁰ nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish." ⁵¹ Now this he did not say on his own authority; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, ⁵² and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad. ⁵³ Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death.*

Unwittingly and stupidly and out of a mouth of hatred, came a prophecy of the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ for the redemption of His people. But the Jewish leaders saw it as a threat.

They see that miracle of healing **Malchus** ear. One would say to yourself, "Certainly the incredible creative power that gives an ear instantaneously to someone who has lost his is

something to reckon with. We better stop and examine who this is.”

But they go right pass that signpost as well.

**Didn't they even want to know if He was their Messiah?
Why wouldn't they have put on a thorough examination and
found out if He was the Messiah?**

No, they were so locked into their own false religion.

They were afraid to find out the truth. Because if they found out that He was the Messiah, His own words had damned them.

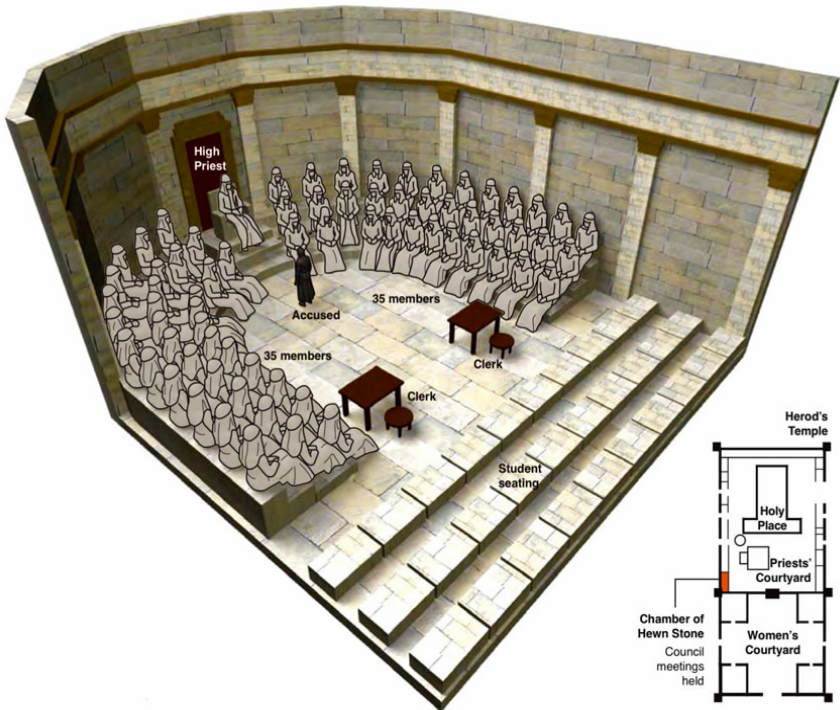
Rather than find out the truth, they wanted Him eliminated. If for any moment they had thought that He might not be, I think they would have conducted a more thorough investigation.

The scene is filled with a recklessness, with a relentlessness that pushes pass the reality, miracles, to get rid of Him in spite of all this.

Jewish people had a very wonderful system of jurisprudence and justice.

THE SANHEDRIN

The Jewish high court consisted of 71 men and was led by the high priest. The Sanhedrin council could decide almost any fate of its people—except the death penalty, which was decided by the Romans. The courtroom of the Sanhedrin was located within the Chamber of Hewn Stone inside the Temple.



Their supreme court was the Sanhedrin, the Jewish council that met in Jerusalem, made up of **70 leading elders**, and then the high priest making it **71**. They would always have an odd man in the voting.

That great group of men was the supreme court of Israel, and it was their decision to deal with Jesus.

The supreme court of Israel was built on the premise that everyone in a trial is entitled to three things.

- **Public trial,**
- **Defence, and**
- **At least two or three witnesses.**

It was built into their laws that any false witness would pay the same penalty he sought for the one he witnessed against.

They built into their safeguard system also that no court could convene at night, or in any other place than the Judgment Hall itself.

- No courts could convene even in the **late afternoon**, lest justice be hurried up, to get over before the day was ended.
- **No one could be executed the same day** in which he was tried. No trial for execution could be held on a feast day, or the day before a feast day, that there always had to be a day intervening. That all the votes had to be carefully counted.
- **No one could incriminate himself by giving testimony against himself**, which testimony could stand alone against him.

All those were built-in safeguards.

They violated every single one of them!

- They did not give Jesus a public trial, but they held it privately.
- They did not give Him any defence, and they brought no witnesses to speak on His behalf.
- They could not find two or more witnesses to convict Him of anything.

They bribed false witnesses, contrary to their own system of punishing false witnesses. They were not allowed to prosecute, they did that. No prior prosecution.

- There was no indictment.
- There was no crime.
- They met in the middle of the night.
- They sentenced Him one day, executed Him the same day, and it was on a feast day.
- They met outside the Hall of Judgment and never bothered to count the votes.

Every way you look at it, they violated their own laws.
This trial of Jesus has six parts.

Three of them were before the Jewish tribunal,
Three of them were before the Romans.

In the Jewish religious trial,

- Jesus went to Annas,
- Annas to Caiaphas, and
- Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin.

In the Roman secular civil trial,

- it was Pilate,
- Pilate to Herod,
- Herod back to Pilate.

All six of those sum up the whole mock trial of Jesus in which justice was violated at every turn.

V 59, Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death,

Jesus was confronted with the Sanhedrin and Caiaphas.

The law of Israel said no one is to be tried any other place than the Hall of Judgment. It is to be during the day, and it must be public, it is to be in the Hall of Judgment, which was in the temple complex.

Jesus goes in to be confronted with the Sanhedrin, and they are going to have to originate charges. This violates the law, too, because the Sanhedrin was a jury and a judge, not a prosecutor.

- They couldn't invent a crime.
- They couldn't invent a prosecution.
- This was beyond their purview.
- They were not to originate charges.
- They could only investigate charges that had been brought.

Since the session with Annas failed to bring a charge, they had nothing to deal with, so they had to become prosecutors. They had to invent a crime and then try it. The only thing they had was a sentence.

They had to make up a crime to go with it.
Everything was illegal and unjust.

The time: it was night which is illegal.

The place: the house of the high priest which is illegal.

The procedure: no crime.

The function: prosecutor rather than judge and jury.

The season: they were doing this on a feast day at the feast time, when no such thing could take place.

The means: the bribery of a traitor named Judas, and no bribery was tolerated.

All the illegalities of the trial before Annas are compounded, in that convening of the Sanhedrin and Caiaphas in his house.

V 59, Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death,

What they wanted to do to Jesus?

Find out the truth?

No, they didn't want to find out the truth.

They wanted to put Him to death. They wanted to kill Him. Now, the only way you can kill an innocent man is to have people lie about him. The only witnesses who could witness against Jesus would be liars, because He was a perfect person.

Jesus was perfect God in human flesh, and perfection violates nothing. There was never a crime. He never did anything wrong, ever, at any time, in any way, shape or form.

Therefore, the only people who could condemn Him would be liars.

They went out then, in the middle of the night, trying to stir up some liars, who would come in and do the very thing which their law condemned with such ferocity.

But their passions were so controlled by hatred and by Satan and the demon forces that were behind this activity. This was very much within the determinant counsel of God that Jesus die for the sins of the world.

They are doing the very thing that **they have spent all their life not doing trying to save people from the testimony of false witnesses. Now trying to get false witnesses to lie**, so they can kill somebody.

Unthinkable, that judges should do this.

They were plotting His death.

They had to have witnesses.

Because it says in **Numbers 35, Deuteronomy 17, Deuteronomy 19**, must have two or three witnesses.

All the chief priests and elders and council, the whole Sanhedrin went seeking false witnesses against Jesus that they might kill Him.

Jesus never got a fair trial.

He was not condemned because of something He had done.

He was condemned because of hate.

V 60, but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. But at last two false witnesses came forward

Nobody could give a viable testimony. There were some people who wanted to do it, but nothing that worked.

It is hard for liars to agree, since they were lying.

Since there are no facts to deal with, it's hard for them to get together.

Mark 14:56, *For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree.*

Their witness agreed not together. Everybody comes up with a different lie, and they couldn't get any continuity.

The frustration mounts until at last two false witnesses came. Here come two that have gotten together, and they got their story sort of together.

V 61, and said, *"This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.' "*

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.' " ⁵⁹But not even then did their testimony agree.*

The Lord has given us these two, one of them has a testimony recorded in Matthew, the other's testimony is recorded in Mark.

Look at the difference.

In **Matthew** says, *"I am able to destroy the temple,"*

In **Mark**, *"I will destroy the temple."*

In **Matthew** says, *"And build it in three days,"*

In **Mark** says, *"And within three days I will build another made without hands."*

What is interesting is they say Jesus said this, and He didn't say that.

John 2:19, *Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."*

Jesus said, "You destroy this temple, and I will raise it up."

John 2:21, *But He was speaking of the temple of His body.*

But they got together and twisted and perverted this thing. The problem is the two of them didn't agree.

They dropped the issue right after this.

These people should never have been admitted as witnesses. A witness had to know the year, the month, the day, the hour of the day, and the location of the testimony given of what supposed accusation was rendered. There were very strict rules about the limitations of disagreement which would be tolerated between witnesses. They wouldn't have qualified at all.

If I didn't know Jesus Christ was perfect, sinless, the Son of God as He claimed, this incident alone would convince me that He was.

I wouldn't need anything else.

Why?

Hell is running this whole show.

Satan has entered Judas.

This is the hour of the power of darkness.

All the best of hell, Satan and all his most brilliant, powerful, resourceful demons, are after an accusation against Jesus. All earth's leaders in that place are also after an accusation of Jesus.

When all earth and all hell, energized by supernatural resources and intelligence, and desperately wanting to find something against Jesus Christ can't find anything, that tells me there isn't anything to find.

This is one of the greatest apologetics for the perfection of Jesus Christ anywhere in the pages of Scripture. If there was anything He ever did wrong, they would have found it. If it had to be revealed by demons, they would have found it.

But there was no crime! Absolute perfection!!

This is God in human flesh, no less. They couldn't find absolutely nothing.

These people were bribed witnesses. They misrepresented what He said.

No one could be executed for what He said anyway.

Especially if it was true, and **where was His defence?**

It is illegal, every bit of it.

- An illegal confrontation with Annas,
- An illegal convening of the Sanhedrin, and
- An illegal conspiracy against Jesus Christ,

During it all is all hell and earth that there is in the supernatural and the natural world, come together against Jesus Christ nobody can come up with anything.

What a blessed Saviour we have!

The only people on trial this day really were the people who were accusing Jesus. They show themselves to be wretched, wicked, sinful, and unjust men.

Christ will always, by His very presence, mark those who are of Satan. When you come into confrontation with Christ, you will be exposed, and they were that day. At this point, Caiaphas tries to take charge.

They met in Caiaphas' house in a large room.

When He went to Annas' house, He was in a courtyard.

Those houses were large because they were very wealthy men. They would have a wall outside, you go into the wall, and there is a courtyard there.

In the case of Annas, He remained in the courtyard, but now He goes into the courtyard, and is taken into a large room adjacent to the courtyard.

V 62, *And the high priest arose and said to Him, “Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?”*

Aren't you going to say anything?

Frustration has reached its maximum.

They have just had a pile of these false witnesses coming and going, trying to concoct lies about Jesus, none of it successfully.

Jesus stands there, with a gaze right into the eyes of Caiaphas that must have burned his soul and never says a word. All this fury and frustration and hatred is mounting and mounting and mounting. They are waiting for Jesus to say something they can attack to let out their passion. But He says absolutely nothing.

They want Jesus to say something so they can twist what He says and make that the new issue. Up to this point, all they can hear is the echo of their own stupidity and anger, and it's stifling.

But Jesus said nothing, because there was nothing to say. If they weren't going to uphold Jewish law, He would. Jewish law said that a man was not to incriminate himself.

The law does not permit the death penalty as a sentence for a sinner by his own confession.

Jesus had nothing to say. Their law provided for Him to stand there silent. He had to be accused by others and proven guilty by others.

Besides that, there was nothing to reply to because all there had been disagreeing concocted supposed statements that He had supposedly made that weren't even accurate.

As He stood there and let the echo of their stupid words ring through the hall of Caiaphas' house until it was absolutely infuriating them.

Aren't You going to answer?

What are these witnessing against You?

What was the answer?

Nothing!

The calmness of Christ against the fury of Caiaphas is remarkable. Nobody here sees Jesus on trial when you look at the story, you see them on trial. Jesus is not on trial.

He stands silent in majesty, looking into the eyes of Caiaphas, and no doubt gazing at the other men who are around Him.

- No need for retaliation.
- No need for vindication.
- No need for self-defence.

He stands there resolutely headed for the cross, knowing this is His hour to die for the sins of the world. There is nothing for Him to defend Himself against, because there is no accusation that's been made legitimately, and so He stands there silently.

V 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!"*

Caiaphas must have continued badgering Him to say something, and He continued silent. The prophet Isaiah said when He was led to His trial, "Like a lamb before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth." He opened not His mouth.

Caiaphas knew it wasn't the silence of guilt.

- ✓ It was the silence of innocence.
- ✓ It was the silence of dignity.
- ✓ It was the silence of majesty.
- ✓ It was the silence of integrity.
- ✓ It was the silence of trust.

Silence was deafening, paralyzing, and only the reverberation of the words of the false witnesses bounced around the room, and the air was thick with yellow guilt and the condemning silence of Jesus.

The air was electric with the **breach of justice**, the **hatred in their hearts**, and the **evil of their words**. All they could hear was the echoing condemnation of their own malice.

They desperately wanted Jesus to pierce that painful silence—to utter a word they could use to **condemn Him** and shift the crushing burden of their guilt. They longed for an outraged act of self-defence, a sound to legitimize their continued attack. Instead, they were utterly **rebuked by His perfect, holy silence**.

Caiaphas came to the end of his rope and bringing in people to testify against Jesus.

He uses the most sacred oath that a Jew could ever call for! You answer this question truthfully on the basis that You are vowing before the living God.

V 63, *“I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!”*

This is that which they want Jesus to say, because to them, to claim to be the Son of God is to claim to be deity is blasphemy, if you are not God.

Only God has the right to that, and it blasphemous for a man to claim to be God.

They want Jesus with His own mouth to blaspheme, and then they will have their reason for execution.

Leviticus 24:16, *And whoever blasphemes the name of the Lord shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall certainly stone him, the stranger as well as him who is born in the land. When he blasphemes the name of the Lord, he shall be put to death.*

There is no crime at all. The only crime they could come up with was that He said He was God, and that wasn't a crime, because that was the truth.

Jesus was executed not for saying He was but for He said He was.

He breaks into the scene with the last ploy and puts on Jesus the heavy oath.

Leviticus 5:1, *'If a person sins in hearing the utterance of an oath, and is a witness, whether he has seen or known of the matter—if he does not tell it, he bears guilt.*

1 Kings 22:16, *So the king said to him, "How many times shall I make you swear that you tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the Lord?"*

Are You the Messiah, the promised one, the promised King?

He claimed to be the Messiah.

Jesus read the scripture from Isaiah in the synagogue, closed the scroll in His hands, set it down.

Luke 4:21, *And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."*

I am the Messiah. I am the one the Scripture speaks of.

When Jesus met the woman of Samaria, she expressed her belief, saying, "I know that Messiah comes." He responded with a **direct, unmistakable claim**: Jesus said to her, "*I who speak to you am He.*" (**John 4:26**)

Jesus **affirmed** that He was the promised Messiah, the deliverer and Saviour of Israel. This was not a title He denied, but one He embraced. The very fact that Caiaphas later asked the question confirms the Sanhedrin was aware of this profound truth.

Matthew 21:9, *Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: "Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!' Hosanna in the highest!"*

Messianic title!

Jesus had claimed to be the Messiah. But He had not flaunted that. He had not verbalized that overtly and dramatically, lest He cause problems outside the proper plan of God.

While He claimed to be the Messiah in no uncertain terms.

Matthew 16:20, *Then He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ.*

Jesus avoided the danger.

He avoided the threats.

He avoided what might happen when the people were upset at such a claim.

He claimed it in a cautious way.

Furthermore, they knew that He had claimed that He was not only the Messiah, He also claimed to be the Son of God.

Caiaphas asks Him that, *“Are You the Son of God?”*

What did he mean by that?

He meant deity.

Why else would they call it blasphemy?

If He only meant a son of God like everybody is a child of God who loves God, or everybody is a child of God who is created by God’s creative power as source, if he meant just that, there wouldn’t be blasphemy in saying He was.

What he meant was what Christ meant.

When He said He was Son of God, He meant He was equal with God, a Father and a Son of the same essence, the same nature.

When Jesus said He was the Son of God, He was saying He was one with God.

John 10:30, *“I and My Father are one.”*

In the Gospel of John constant claim of Jesus to be the Son of God. Deity in human flesh, equal with God in every sense.

John 19:7, *The Jews answered him, “We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.”*

These are the things that Caiaphas knows Jesus claims to be the Messiah, the anointed one, the coming King and Prince. Of course, a threat to their rule and to his high priesthood.

Further, that He claims to be the Son of the living God. No one could claim that, even in a cautious way, without it spreading like wildfire.

Caiphas wants to hear out of His own mouth those blasphemous claims affirmed, so that he will have reason to execute Jesus.

They would know that if Jesus was put to oath by the living God, He would answer.

V 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."*

Jesus takes the oath of the living God and says it is true. This is no time to be cautious anymore. It's time to die.

Time to be up front with all of this.

He claims to be Christ. He claims to be God without hesitation. Jesus quotes from Daniel one of the great and familiar Messianic prophecies.

Daniel 7:13, *"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.*

Jesus says, I am God and soon you shall see Me exalted to the right hand of the power.

Jesus speaks here of the fact that He is going to be exalted for a coronation, and He will return to earth as judge and King to establish His eternal Kingdom.

When Daniel outlined how the Messiah would come and be exalted, how the Messiah would be lifted to the right hand of God, how the Messiah would come in clouds of glory, He spoke of Me.

“Hereafter you will see.”

Caiaphas, this isn't the last time you are going to see Me. You are going to see Me again. You are going to see Me when I come in clouds of glory as judge of all the earth. You are going to see Me at the Great White Throne when I call out of the graves all those that have lived and rejected Me and My Father, and I become your eternal judge.

This is not the last time. You will hereafter see that I am exalted to the right hand, and I come in power and glory as the anointed King and judge.

Yes, I am the anointed.

Yes, I am Son of Man, Son of God.

Jesus calls Himself here “Son of Man,” because that's the phrase that is used in the prophecy of Daniel, and that was His common title for Himself. He is Son of Man, Son of God, fully man, fully God.

They say He has incriminated Himself with such blasphemy. He has the audacity to claim to the fulfilment of **Daniel 7:13-14**, to be equal with God and elevated to God's right hand.

Indeed, that is exactly right.

Hebrews 1:3, *who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person,*

Jesus Christ was the express image of God's person, the perfect representation of God. When He had finished His work, it was exalted to the right hand of God and has taken His place at the right hand of God.

Someday He will come in great glory in the clouds of heaven.

Matthew 24:30, *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.*

My death will usher Me into God's presence for My coronation. I will stay at the right hand of God as King and ruler and come again in glory.

Those who now stand in judgment on Christ will someday be judged by Him. The tables will be turned.

V 65, *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!*

Was it blasphemy?

No, it wasn't, because what He said was true.

But the high priest didn't want to know the truth.
He didn't want to examine it.

John 10:37-39, *If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; ³⁸but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him.* ³⁹*Therefore they sought again to seize Him, but He escaped out of their hand.*

They said He did miracles. They knew He raised Lazarus from the dead, there was no question about that. They knew Lazarus was dead, there was a funeral going on and they knew he came to life. They didn't want to know the truth. They closed their minds to it for fear of it.

There are people like that today, who reject Christ not because they have examined Him and found it to be not so, but because they are afraid to examine it, because it will overturn their life and expose them for what they are.

Caiphas does what a high priest had a right to do.

Leviticus 21:10, *'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;*

The high priest could not tear his garments for his own sorrow but should be expected to tear his garments when God was dishonoured. Full drama!

He was not grieved because God's name is dishonoured. He is happy because Jesus can now be executed. He is joyous, but he puts on a little play, this is theatrics.

Caiphas goes into some sort of ancient histrionics, which were typical among ancient peoples, who when they wanted to express grief or sorrow or distress or trouble or intense emotion, they would rip their clothes.

The **Talmud** even says that those judges who faced times of **blasphemy have a right to rip their clothes** and then sew them back up again. It may well have been that this whole group had garments that had been sewed many times, because they had gone through these kinds of theatrics before.

But the high priest rips his clothes, cries "Blasphemy," outwardly wanting to appear to defend the holiness of God, inwardly joyous at getting rid of Jesus Christ.

V 65, *What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy!*

The end of the trial.

- No one to testify for Jesus.
- No evidence of anything.
- No proof that He indeed was not the Son of God.

V 66, *What do you think?" They answered and said, "He is deserving of death."*

They all start shouting back, and this is not according to judicial protocol at all.

Where is the scribe who is recording?

Where is the one who is writing down the "yeas" and writing down the "nays," and the waiting for each to give his vote with a pause, so that each one knows the seriousness of his decision?

Mad mob, screaming for His blood. No justice.

No vote.

He is guilty of death.

He is a blasphemer.

Mark 14:64, *And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.*

It was unanimous. They all chimed in.

The usual careful vote was thrown out. This is mob rule.

The law of the **Mishnah** said you had to postpone the vote for a death a day. You had to postpone the execution. No, they want Him dead fast.

Look how they respond. This is the supreme court of Israel.

This is the religious aristocracy of Judaism.

V 67-68, *Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands, ⁶⁸saying, "Prophecy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?"*

This is the high priest and the elders and the chief priests and the scribes. This is supposedly the best of all the leaders, come together to constitute the supreme court.

Unbelievable. To show you how utterly possessed they were by the demons of hell.

Luke 22:65, *And many other things they blasphemously spoke against Him.*

They did many other things to blaspheme Him.

The blasphemer here is not Jesus. The blasphemers are all the rest of these people. Jesus claimed to be God. That is not blasphemy but the truth. Spitting in the face of God is blasphemy of an absolutely inconceivable type.

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.*

They blindfolded Him so He couldn't see, and then they slapped Him around and asked Him to say "Who slapped You? If You are the Messiah, tell us who slapped You?"

Frightening.

To the Jews, the supreme sign of contempt was to spit. **(Numbers 12:14 and Deuteronomy 25:9)**

To this day, there is a tomb in the **Valley of Kidron** that's known as **Absalom's tomb**. Of course, the Jewish people have long hated the memory of Absalom, because Absalom was the son of David who was a traitor against his own father, and tried to take his own father's life. David is beloved by the Jewish people. When anybody walks by Absalom's tomb even to this day, if they are faithful to Judaism tradition, **they spit on Absalom's tomb**.

Spitting is a symbol of disdain, and hatred. They spit in the face of God, the face of Jesus Christ.

Other people buffeted, that's **ekolaphisan**, it means to hit with your fist. They literally punched Him, as if He were a punching bag, and others slapped Him with the palms of their hands.

Ridiculed and mocked His supposed deity by saying, “Tell us with this rag over Your head, who hit You?”

When the Sanhedrin was done with their little game, they got tired of it, they turned Him over to the temple police, and they kept slapping Him and doing the same thing.

The whole nation was rotten. This is a group of people who have abandoned all sense of virtue and righteousness and holiness.

They spit on the face of one who smiled on large throngs of people and taught them to love their enemies. The face of one that beamed graciously when a sinner became a saint. The face of one who mirrored the loving heart of God.

Inconceivable.

This whole thing is nothing but a frame up. Some religious leaders here who pretend to know God, but the truth of the matter is, when one comes to them who is God, they spit on Him. They are so far from the truth.

Jesus said, *“If you are not for Me, you are against Me.”*

The irony of the situation is that those who misjudge Jesus will be judged rightly by Him some day. The tables will be turned.

Here we find judges who are nothing but criminals, and they are and will be justly condemned.

Here is the damning sin, it is the sin of unbelief, it is the sin of proud, impenitent, independent, self-sufficient unbelief. It is the sin of standing apart from Christ and thinking you can be right with God without Him.

I look at this scene, and I am overwhelmed at the grace of Christ.

- ✓ My deserved trial is enacted in His undeserved trial.
- ✓ My deserved sentence is enacted in His undeserved sentence.
- ✓ My deserved execution is carried out in His undeserved execution.
- ✓ My deserved condemnation is carried out in His undeserved condemnation.

God should spit in my face, and punch me, and slap me, and execute me, and condemn me, but Christ took my place.

I was once a captive at the will of Satan, but Christ became a captive that I might be set free.

We see the scene it is unimaginable.

This scene will be reenacted, only everything will be reversed.

If you stand with Christ, you are protected forever by His loving grace, and He bore all of this for you.

If you have not received Jesus Christ, you stand with the rejecters. However repulsive their behaviour might seem to you, it is your behaviour, it is rejection.

The degree of hostility may vary, the rejection is the same, and so will the judgment be.

Christ stands with open arms, He died for you, He died for the men who spit on Him, who punched Him and slapped Him, and He welcomes any sinner to receive His forgiveness.