



CAPITOL COMMISSION

The Unlawful, Unjust Trial of Jesus Christ

JUNE 15-17, 2011

David Andersen / PO Box 2020, Chesterfield, VA 23832 / 804-796-9411 / www.capitolcom.org

Matthew 26:57-68 *“And those who had seized Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the scribes and elders were gathered together. 58) But Peter also was following Him at a distance as far as the courtyard of the high priest, and entered in, and sat down with the officers to see the outcome. 59) Now the chief priests and the whole council kept trying to obtain false testimony against Jesus, in order that they might put Him to death; 60) and they did not find any, even though many false witnesses came forward. But later on two came forward, 61) and said, ‘This man stated, ‘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 to Him, ‘Do you make no answer?’ What is it that these men are testifying against You?’ 63) But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest said to Him, ‘I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God.’ 64) Jesus said to him, ‘You have said it yourself; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you shall see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, AND COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN.’ 65) Then the high priest tore his robes, saying, ‘He has blasphemed! What further need do we have of witnesses? Behold, you have now heard the 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 with their fists; and others slapped Him.” (NASB)*

“THE SILENCE OF THE SAVIOR IN THE FACE OF EXTREME PROVOCATION WAS THE OPENING ACT IN THE DRAMA OF DIVINE LOVE. THE BRUTALITY OF ISRAEL’S RELIGIOUS LEADERS IN THEIR TREATMENT OF CHRIST WAS A TERRIBLE INDICTMENT OF THEM, THEIR NATION AND THE WORLD.” JOHN PHILLIPS

What was unique to the Jewish justice system that made them boast that theirs was the best in the world? In what ways were every essential of their system of justice ignored? What are the five things that were continually done in this passage? How did Jesus’ silence fulfill Scripture and confound His enemies? Who is actually guilty of blasphemy in this trial? Have

you ever heard of another instance of felony assault and battery against a defendant by the judges of the court after a capital punishment verdict has been rendered?

FOCUS ON FUTURE SATELLITE BIBLE STUDIES:

- JUNE 22-24: MATTHEW 26:57-68 THE REPENTANCE OF A LEADER IN SIN

Israel alone had a system of jurisprudence founded upon divinely revealed Scripture. They were commanded in Deuteronomy 16:18, 20, “You shall appoint for yourself judges and officers in all your towns which the Lord your God is giving you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment. Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue, that you may live and possess the land which the Lord your God is giving you.” If a community had less than 120 men who were heads of families, they could have at least three judges appointed by the current judges; if 120 or over, they could have a tribunal of 23. Usually, these were also leaders in the local synagogue. All were under the authority of the Great Sanhedrin consisting of 71, and led by the high priest. The Law required that a person who purposely gave false testimony would suffer the punishment of the accused sentence if they were found guilty (Deut. 19:16-21). Also the accusing witness in a capital case was to initiate the execution, making them stand behind their testimony with their actions also (Deut. 17:7). Procedure protected the defendant against self-incrimination so that his confession alone was not sufficient for incrimination.¹ Also, the court officers would require all evidence against the defendant to be read in the full hearing of the open court. The Sanhedrin could not initiate charges against a person, but could only consider charges brought before it by an outside party. If there was a unanimous vote for a conviction, the accused were set free, because the necessary element of mercy was presumed to be lacking. In cases involving capital punishment, the

¹ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Matthew 24-28*, (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1989), 199.

BIBLE STUDY LOCATION INFORMATION

WEDNESDAY @ 7:00AM –BIBLE STUDY – FREDERICKSBURG – (CALL 804-683-2285 FOR SPECIFICS)
THURSDAY @ 7:00AM –BIBLE STUDY – RT. 10, IRONBRIDGE SPORTS PK, NOON – WYTESTONE PLAZA – 8TH & MAIN – 2ND FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
FRIDAY @ 7:00 AM –BIBLE STUDY – IN THE TIDEWATER AREA (CALL 804-683-2285 FOR SPECIFICS)

Virginia

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governing rule was to be, “The Sanhedrin is to save, not destroy, life” and a fast day before sentencing.

“IT IS OBVIOUS THAT, WHEN PROPERLY ADMINISTERED, THE JEWISH SYSTEM OF JUSTICE WAS NOT ONLY EMINENTLY FAIR, BUT MERCIFUL. IT IS JUST AS OBVIOUS THAT THE SYSTEM DID NOT OPERATE EITHER FAIRLY OR MERCIFULLY IN JESUS’ TRIAL, BECAUSE THE SANHEDRIN VIOLATED VIRTUALLY EVERY PRINCIPLE OF ITS OWN SYSTEM OF JURISPRUDENCE.”

JOHN MACARTHUR

I. ILLEGAL CONVENING & CONSPIRACY MT. 26:57-61

The arrest with no warrant or accusation was a flagrant injustice and especially their assembling the Great Sanhedrin with a pre-determined verdict of death (Jn. 18:14) when no charges had been made. In order to provide time for the Sanhedrin to assemble, they “*led Him to Annas first; for he was father-in-law of Caiaphas*” (Jn. 18:13). Annas controlled the sales of the vastly overpriced “approved” sacrificial animals in the temple as well as the thieving money changers. His lucrative business, contemptuously called “the bazaars of Annas,” was twice disturbed by Jesus cleansing the temple and calling it a “den of thieves” (Mt. 21:13). Annas tried to get Jesus to incriminate Himself, but after wisely answering He was sent to Caiaphas (Jn. 18:19-24). Caiaphas and his family, “*the chief priests and the whole council kept trying to obtain false testimony against Jesus*” (v. 59). They “*kept trying*” to find two false witness that could agree on some trumped up charge by which they could condemn Jesus in their court and before Pilate in his Roman court. The closest that this Great Sanhedrin, turned kangaroo court, could come to a valid charge was regarding the destruction of Christ’s temple and His resurrection in three days but even that testimony fell apart upon closer examination. Caiaphas and Jesus knew there was only one possibility left – His continual claim to be the Messiah, the Son of God!

“CAIAPHAS WOULD NATURALLY SEEK TO GROUND HIS ACCUSATION OF JESUS BEFORE PILATE ON ANYTHING RATHER THAN HIS CLAIMS TO MESSIAHSHIP AND THE INHERITANCE OF DAVID. IT WOULD BE A CRUEL IRONY IF A JEWISH HIGH PRIEST HAD TO EXPOSE THE LOFTIEST AND HOLIEST HOPE OF ISRAEL TO THE MOCKERY OF A PILATE.” ALFRED EDERSHEIM

II. UNJUST SELF-INCRIMINATION MT. 26:62-66

“*And the high priest stood up and said to Him, ‘Do you make no answer? What is it that these men are testifying against You?’ But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest said to Him, ‘I adjure You by the living God, that you tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God.’*” According to prophecy (Isaiah 53:7), He continually and majestically had remained silent. Yet under oath, Jesus validated oaths in court and confessing that He indeed was the hope of all Israel and the world, He boldly said, “*You have said it yourself; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you shall see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, AND COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN.*” Then, with evil joy but outward horror, Caiaphas tore his high priestly robes and cried, “*He has blasphemed!*” The trial is closed and the verdict is called for, “*He is deserving of death!*”

“THE HIGHEST COURT OF THE HEBREWS, THE SACRED AND HALLOWED SANHEDRIN, WAS IN THIS CASE CLEARLY GUILTY OF JUDICIAL MURDER.”

BURTON COFFMAN

III. ILLEGAL & UNJUST CONDUCT MT. 26:67-68

Now that they had rendered their verdict, all judicial precedent is abandoned and the wicked leaders vent their anger with spittle, fists, slaps and rods against His loving face. Thus, the Scriptures had prophesied, “*His visage was marred more than any man*” (Isaiah 52:14).

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) What is your commitment to justice and human life?
- 2) Are you willing to embrace witness and proposed evidence that you know is false?
- 3) Do you submit to Jesus Christ as Lord of your life or vent your will and decisions against Him?