

Jesus and His Judgment

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[0 : 00] Pilate said to them, Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law. The Jews said to him, It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death.

This was to fulfill the word that Jesus had spoken They are men that had hated Jesus for a number of years and here they finally had seen this opportunity around the time of the Passover to take him into capture and to bring him before the Sanhedrin to be judged.

That judgment had taken place in an illegal fashion and the accusations brought against him entirely trumped up and they had failed miserably for most of the part of that evening in bringing any kind of accusation that would stick.

You'll remember if you go back in the synoptic gospels that you'll find one after another came and brought false accusation and it completely discredited and even the Jewish leaders with their hatred couldn't really find anything that they could wrap their thinking around and bring just cause for murdering Jesus.

Now realize that earlier on they had wanted to kill Jesus and there had been various attempts. Remember? In one particular instance they had tried to take him to the height of a place and throw him off and he just kind of walked through the crowd and disappeared.

[1 : 41] And they had often desired some way or another to put Jesus to death because he was an irritation he was embarrassing I mean can you imagine these Bible scholars that they were when Jesus would put them on the spot by...

Here's his favorite one Have you never read? Have you never read? I mean these were guys that knew the Old Testament law by each word and they could recite it they knew exactly what the Old Testament law and he would just nail them.

Have you never read? And he seemed to specialize in embarrassing them publicly I mean it's not like he drew them aside and said by the way you may want to bone up on your Deuteronomy here you know it's like put them out on the spot and they hated him they wanted to kill him they couldn't find a moment to do it and they were afraid of the crowd.

Finally they had been able to bring and don't think that Pilate didn't have a part to play in this there's nothing that took place in Jerusalem that Pilate didn't know about.

I shouldn't say nothing that's an overstatement but he pretty well knew what was happening politically and particularly during the time of the Passover which was a time that the Jews had a tendency of getting pretty riled up here was Pilate with his Roman soldiers in the midst of Jerusalem and he knew what was going on soldiers came a cohort you remember when Pastor was preaching on that I didn't know that a cohort was 600 some men now there may have been a few less that showed up but they didn't happen to kind of troop across town to take Jesus without Pilate knowing and so here we have these religious hypocrites who are trying to bring charges against Jesus and they finally ended up having the opportunity of saying he's blasphemed now how did that happen?

[3 : 42]

you remember that the high priest had said art thou the Messiah the son of the living God and Jesus said yep you're right thou hast said and oh that was it opportunity to accuse him of claiming to be God and deserving of death there was a problem they didn't have the legal authority of executing him publicly and doing so in such a fashion that would have been a complete embarrassment to Jesus and to his disciples and so they were required by Roman law to bring this person who they had an accusation against to Pilate and so here we find in verse 28 they end up at at Pilate's headquarters early in the morning I love what it reads next they themselves did not enter the governor's headquarters so that they would not be defiled but could eat the Passover you put your finger on this passage and you recognize the Jewish hypocrisy is stunning what had they been doing earlier?

what? they had been involved in a false judgment of an entirely holy and innocent man and they brought false charges one after another that they'd all been party to none having succeeded until finally are you the Messiah?

yes and here they are outside Pilate's headquarters and they are unwilling to go in now read what it says here they themselves did not enter the governor's headquarters so that they would not be defiled but could eat the Passover this issue of defiling if you go back into the Old Testament you would know that there were certain things you could do that would defile you you could touch a dead body that would defile you you could you could also touch something that a dead body had touched and you'd be defiled there were a number of different things that could you could eat something that would defile you but there is no passage in the Old Testament that I'm aware of and as I was researching I didn't come across any passage that indicated that merely coming into the home of a Gentile would defile you and here they are filled up with their own self-righteousness completely satisfied with their own character and completely unwilling to go into the home of a Gentile were there things that happened in a Gentile home that could conceivably defile them yes there were as Jews but it was presumptuous to think that any and every Gentile home would defile a person and so here they were unwilling to go into the home of Pilate or into the courtyard there of Pilate and they inquired and had him come out to them so here he is he comes outside and he says to them what accusation do you bring against this man and I want you to recognize that here they are these legalistic people kind of wrapped up in their own self-righteousness thinking about what they were bringing Pilate to do or what they wanted Pilate to do and he asked them a question and listen to their answer you look down there in verse 30 they said if this man were not doing evil we would not have delivered him over to you now by the way what evil had Jesus done can he think of anything that he'd done later in Peter's sermon in Acts chapter 2 you'll remember that Peter as he began to preach to the Jewish nation there he said listen you know what Jesus did you know his miracles you know his behavior he taught among you all his acts were publicly done before you

Jesus relied on the same logic when he was before the Sanhedrin they said what is it that you're doing he says you've heard me teach I've taught publicly and I've acted publicly nothing secret and I want you to recognize that here we see the the crass legalism of these spiritual leaders pretty caught up and self-satisfied with themselves and and yet completely brain dead to their own sin and the hardness of their own heart makes me stop and ask myself the question are we ever in our own heart caught up in some aspect or another of legalism where we've got this certain set of things that we're all good with and we kind of look at other people and get a pretty critical attitude towards them and fail to recognize that we're being involved in hypocrisy ourselves I want you to think with me just for a moment are we ever as deeply convicted by our lack of love and humility as we are by lying or stealing or gossip let me go over that slowly are we ever convicted as deeply now what do I mean by deeply convicted how many of you don't don't raise your hand and let me know you're one of them how many of you have ever lied and had your conscience just bug you to death you ever done that okay

I yeah lie steal I can still remember a pack of gum I stole when I was in seventh grade I remember years later I remember driving through Lafayette Indiana because it had plagued me and I thought well I can stop off at the store and I can go back in and say hey listen I'd like to ask for forgiveness for stealing this pack of gum and when I drove down that street I made a this was years later I made a detour to go through that city and the store had been razed to the ground it's like took my self-righteousness right out the window here's my point the Pharisees the scribes the high priests they were all about their little set of standards about their self-righteousness and they were quite satisfied with false accusation and a dishonest judgment of Christ and here they were planning and putting in place the murder of an absolutely righteous man engaged in the most wicked act of dishonest judgment ever in all of history

[10:20] Pilate plays along with them and I love his guile he comes out hey what's the problem here we wouldn't be bringing him if it really wasn't a bad bad guy okay and so we read there Pilate says well hey take him verse 31 take him yourselves and judge him by your own law it was their law that they had relied upon when he came before the Sanhedrin and it was their law that really caused the high priests and the others to say man he deserves to be killed why because he has blasphemed and made it clear that he sees himself as God Christ now when they come to Pilate the accusation that they were going to bring to Pilate was not that Jesus readily recognized himself as the son of

God and equal to God what was it that they were going to accuse Jesus of before Pilate being a king the Messiah the anointed one that was going to come and in Jewish thinking at least deliver the nation of Israel from the heel and the oppression of Rome and so here is Pilate playing along with them a little bit and he says hey what's the problem well he's a guilty man well go judge him now we come down to verse 31 and they say this the Jews said to him latter part it is not lawful for us to put anyone to death how do you think that sat with them it was like a very subtle slap do you know why it was a reminder to the Jewish spiritual leaders that they were under authority under the authority of Rome they did not have the right of execution that they would have had the right if they had not fallen under

Roman's authority and it was Rome alone that had the authority to execute an individual and I want you to know that Rome had been brutal in dealing with individuals who had overstepped the boundaries and exercised Jewish authority apart from Rome incidentally one of the reasons that Pilate a little bit of sidebar history here one of the reasons that Pilate was so sensitive to responding to the Jewish leaders was because previously at one point he had been very brutal in suppressing Jewish rebellion and he slaughtered a bunch of them earlier and he had actually been rebuked by the Caesar so he was not quite as inclined to be heavy handed in dealing this instance another instance is recorded where he brought in the what were they the the banners he brought them into Jerusalem and had them posted in very significant places the banners of the legions and the

Jews had said you need to take those out of here because they're offending us and he said well I'm going to leave them here and if you complain anymore I'm going to slaughter you and so the Jewish leaders pulled open their coats and said do it now well in the back of his mind he was remembering that he had already been rebuked by Caesar for previous harshness and he backed away and so here they are they're pressing in on Pilate to execute!

Jesus! I want you to recognize that what was taking place in this moment was not just a matter of religious leaders and political leaders kind of acting independently they were following the plan of God look at verse 32 this was to fulfill the word that Jesus had spoken to show by what kind of death he was going to die do you know how Jewish executions as a general rule took place does anybody know how Achan died he was stoned and I can tell you that the Jews would have probably loved to have stoned Jesus how did Stephen die stoned it was their hey let's pick up these heavy chunks of rock and put this person to death no they had to rely upon a pagan foreign government to do their dirty work and so here they are making this appeal

[15:00] I want you to look secondly at the political hypocrisy we see displayed here we get into verse 33 so Pilate entered into his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him are you the king of the Jews evidently the issue of are you the son of God had back put over to the side and they had brought this accusation listen this guy that we're bringing to you we're really what's he asking is this an observation you are making yourself as a result of information you have gathered or is this an accusation that these Pharisees and scribes and religious leaders have brought against me where is this information coming from Pilate quite full of himself and confident in his position of authority what's he say am I a Jew your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me what have you done 36

Jesus answered my kingdom is not of this world if my kingdom were of this world my servants would have been fighting that I might not be delivered over to the Jews I want you to turn back just for a moment to what you find in Matthew chapter 26 verse 63 through 65 so you understand clearly the contrast between what he had been accused of and actually what Jesus had to say here Matthew chapter 26 verse 63 through 65 Jesus had remained silent in front of the high priest and the high priest said I adjure you by the living God tell us if you are the Christ the son of God Jesus said you have said so

I tell you from now on you will see the son of man seated at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven then the high priest tore his robes and said he has uttered blasphemies these two contrasting accusations!

One Jesus assuming or stating that he was the Messiah king of the Jews and the other equal with God now in front of Pilate what are they bringing they are bringing the accusation that Jesus proclaimed himself to be king and would have been a political threat to Roman authority and so going back if you will there to John chapter 18 we pick up on Pilate's concern was hey listen who really are you and Jesus made it clear this issue of my kingship is not about this present kingdom and you have no reason to be concerned following that you find there in verse 37 Pilate says to him so my kingdom is not of this world so you are a king verse 37 Jesus answered you say that I'm a king for this purpose I was born and for this purpose I've come into the world to bear witness to the truth everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice

I want you to recognize this morning as we look at this passage that we find here this conflict between Pilate's concern for the Roman kingdom in contrast with Christ making it clear which kingdom he was talking about and here is Jesus saying listen my kingdom is not of this world not of this world and if it were of this world my people would be actively engaged in martial activity in battle for my kingdom sake and those who are Christ's are not engaged in physical combat for his great name I want to make that point clear over and over again throughout church history the characteristic of the church of the living God has not been one that is actively engaged in military activity for the sake of the cross it's radically different how many of you know what is on the flag of

[19:43] Saudi Arabia does anybody know how many of you recognize that all over this world there are people who claim to be Muslims that are in active battle for the sake of their religion in fact here's the fact if you die in battle you get a free path straight to heaven it's woven into their theology getting to heaven apart from martyrdom is a very very difficult and uncertain journey for a Muslim did you know that it's a long path lots of suffering but if you die as a martyr whatever happened prior to that is all erased and you go straight to heaven do not you know how it is there it is Jesus in sharp contrast said hey my people my servants are not engaged for that for the sake of my kingdom

I do like the fact that Jesus in verse 37 did not deny his regal authority in office and then he spoke very positively of his kingdom and his reign for this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world to bear witness to the truth what I want us to see in the remainder of our time is Jesus not a revolutionary but one engaged in revealing the truth of God to man and here he says I I am here to bear witness to the truth everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice do you notice what happens next Pilate lets it be known very clearly that he doesn't get it how do I know that he says what is truth so let me ask you this question fundamentally what is the truth that

Jesus came to make clear to us today that we need to know and have our hearts focused on for one it is this that God reigns supreme and he will judge all men God reigns supreme and he will judge all men I think about the message over in Acts chapter 17 where Paul is preaching to a large group in Athens in the Agora and what does he say the day is coming when God is going to judge men by his son the Lord Jesus Christ and here is something that I want to make undeniably clear to every one of you the fact of the matter is this there is a God in heaven and all of us will someday stand before God to give an account we will answer for our lives and he will judge us and apart from the Lord Jesus Christ and salvation that is in his name all of us stand justly condemned for our sins

I think it's important for us to get our hands around that because at the heart of the gospel is the fact that there is a God in heaven who is the judge of the whole earth and his judgment will be just and his judgment apart from Christ will be condemnation and eternal suffering for our sins when Jesus said I've come into the world and my purpose is to bring the truth the truth that he was bringing is this I am moments from the cross and the reason I'm going to die on the cross is because God has judged sin and he will condemn those who do not believe in the finished work of my sacrifice on the cross why did he come to make the truth plain what is the truth God is the judge all men stand justly condemned and Christ Jesus came into the world to die for our sins and offer salvation for all who come to him in faith now here's the issue how did

Pilate react when Jesus said I'm the truth I've come to make the truth plain yeah whatever what is the truth kind of a subjective well I full of himself and quite persuaded that truth was something that was negotiable and kind of he could handle Pilate to a certain degree thought he made the truth remember that when Jesus was not overly cooperative and didn't do what Pilate wanted he says don't you understand that I have the right or the authority to condemn you no no look here he goes out to the Jews and he says hey listen I find no guilt in this man and he tries to negotiate with the crowd and how did that go they already made up their mind exactly what they wanted out of Pilate and they were bound and determined to get it and here are these people who Jesus had healed he fed he cared for he gave no reason for anyone to hate him other than the fact as it tells us repeatedly in

[25 : 02] John Jesus made it clear that there was sin in their lives that condemned them and they disliked seeing the light because it revealed their hearts and so when they had the opportunity what did they do they cry out for Barabbas and they ask that this man be delivered to them as a replacement and Barabbas was a murderer and seditious they were ready to trade Barabbas for Jesus so let me ask you the question this morning practically speaking as you sit here for one have you honestly responded to the truth that Christ Jesus came to make clear the truth that God is in heaven and he is the judge of the whole earth and he will judge sin and I hope that you're sitting here this morning recognizing that this issue of coming to grips with where you are is critical it's essential and I would appeal to you that if you're sitting here today and you're thinking well hey listen

I have a good background I grew up I learned the Bible verses I went to Awana I was baptized by Pastor Kenoyer that's an extra one I was like I'm good but you have never come to the place of realizing the darkness of your own soul and the absolute hopelessness of salvation through your own efforts and you recognize today by the grace of God you have no answer for the sin of your heart I want for your sins he died on the cross he rose again and it tells us in scripture that he offers salvation to whosoever will believe in him here's this moment an absolutely godless group of religious leaders who are doing their best to suppress the truth a pagan governor who has no interest in the truth and

Jesus standing before them condemned who says my purpose in coming is to make the truth plain and make it clear so I wonder this morning if you were in that place of judgment and you were seated in that situation and you were judging the truth would you say listen I hear what Jesus is saying I recognize him as my God and Savior and I receive him or like Pilate truth is a pretty nebulous thing and I don't care about it I'm not interested in put it off I want to appeal to you right now come to grips with the truth of your heart recognize Jesus came into the world to be the savior of the world to die for our sins and rise again and trust in him let's close in prayer our father God this morning as we realize the absolute emptiness of spiritual hypocrisy and shallowness of wicked hearts as we realize the bankruptcy of a government system that is not rooted in your word we're thankful that the sharp contrast to this is the nature and character of our savior the

Lord Jesus Christ who came into the world to save sinners and this morning as we see these two distinct opposite pictures we pray that our heart is drawn to the Lord Jesus Christ and those of us who are here that know him will just revel in the sweetness that he is our savior he is our Lord and our redeemer and our lives would be lived to say thank you moment by moment I pray also for those that are here today that do not know Christ that today would be the day that your spirit would convict them of the absolute bankruptcy of their soul and they would be drawn by grace to trust in Jesus alone we ask this in Jesus name amen let's stand together as John leads us in our close