

Christ Beaten & Accused

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[0 : 00] Let's turn again to Luke's Gospel, Luke chapter 22. We've been working through this Gospel for quite some time, but we're coming towards the end now.

Last time we were looking at it, we were seeing Peter's denial of the Lord Jesus, Jesus' arrest and betrayal. And now we find where Jesus is before the council and then being brought before Pilate. We read in verse 63, Now when the men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking him as he beat him, they also blindfolded him and kept asking him, Prophecy, who is it that struck you? And they said many other things against him, blaspheming him. But then in Jesus, in answer to their question, we see in verse 67, He says, when they asked him, Are you the Christ? He said to them, If I tell you, you will not believe. And if I ask you, you will not answer. But from now on, the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God.

[1 : 10] And so on. Now as we see here, Jesus is very firmly in the hand of the enemies. But we have also been seeing that Jesus has handed himself over to his enemies.

That on the one hand, while there is no question whatever that the wickedness of man and the powers of darkness are at work in the capture of the Lord Jesus Christ and this hatred of Christ manifesting itself so clearly, we also see that Jesus has walked headlong, deliberately, purposefully, to the place where he is captured.

He hasn't been taken against his own will. He has made it very clear and he has shown all the way along that he is in control every step of the way. But we see here, and it's one of the most awful moments really, in the Bible where we see in fact there is a descending, as it were, it's like going down and down steps like in a lighthouse.

One of these is just a circular descent in these times where it becomes more and more painful when we see what happens to the Lord Jesus Christ.

And we see Christ being viciously beaten here. We see the vicious, ugly cruelty of sin. These things are very obvious here.

[2 : 40] Here is Jesus and he's defenseless. And we've got to remember, again, he has handed himself over, but we see these people, we see the real, vicious, thug element at work here, beating the defenseless, where there is this awful abuse going on.

And this, although we look at it here, this goes on all over the world. We live in an incredibly painful world.

It's a wonderful world in many ways, and we all recognize that and agree with it. It's a beautiful world in many ways and a wonderful world in many ways. But it's also a dark world, often a sad world.

And all over the world, there is hatred and there is cruelty. In fact, it tells us in the Bible that cruelty is in the dark places of this world.

And the darker a place is, the more cruel it is likely to be. And that is one of the great impacts and effects where the gospel comes in power.

[3 : 47] Where gospel, for instance, of revival were to break out upon a place that was in darkness and in cruelty, that cruelty would stop.

People's lives would change. Love would become manifest. There is nothing like the gospel for changing society. And that's what we need. And we are living, we can see it in our own land.

We pick every day, we pick up the paper. And we see just this violence. Violence from north, south, east and west. Life is cheap.

We used to read about that way, way back. And you'd think about in the darker days of society and days where life was cheap.

And I remember when I was growing up thinking, well, I'm glad I don't live in days like these anymore. But we're back into them. Back into the days of violence. Into the days of abuse. [4 : 44] Into the days of thugs. Just beating. Just there's this violence. There's this cruelty. And it's beginning to manifest itself in our nation more and more and more.

And that is because the light of the gospel is being withdrawn. And God is handing. There's no question whatever, but that God is handing us over to ourselves more and more and more. And you know, there's no greater judgment than could come upon us. And if God were to completely hand us over to ourselves, we would be reeling. Often we seem to be going from one crisis to another.

Well, we would go if God were to abandon us completely. I wouldn't like to think of how our nation would become. But that is where the dark places are.

There is cruelty. And again, when you see the way that Jesus is being hit and sort of just the violence that's been enacted against the Lord Jesus Christ, you say to yourself, this is quite extraordinary.

[5 : 54] But then again, you say to yourself, well, when you think about it, down throughout the centuries, it's always been the same. The early days and the times of the Roman persecution.

We read about it. Our history books will tell us of the incredible violence. You remember we read about where the Christians were thrown to the lions, where there was the most horrendous acts of torture perpetrated against the Christian.

You say to yourself, it doesn't make sense. And you say to yourself, why? Because the Christian is somebody who is seeking the welfare of the society that they live in, seeking to promote peace and well-being and doing good.

And yet, despite all they do, suffering violence, it doesn't make sense. But then again, you turn around and you say, well, you look at Jesus. This is what they did to Jesus.

And if they did this to Jesus, then it's only inevitable, you may say, but that those who follow the Lord Jesus Christ are liable to experience the same thing.

[7 : 00] And so we find that there's this awful time in Jesus' experience. Now, when they were holding Jesus, we read about that in custody and mocking him, blindfolded him, and they were striking him, and so on.

You know this, we've got, it wasn't just the odd hit here or there. This was vicious. This was incredible hitting. In fact, Jesus' face became disfigured because of the brutal attacks that he was receiving.

The prophecy of Isaiah tells us that his face, his visage, was marred more than any. There was a disfigurement over the face of our Lord Jesus Christ through the viciousness of the beating that he's receiving here.

And we've always got to remember all these things. And so they're now holding this court in order to try Jesus. Because, you see, what they've got to do is they've got to get a charge.

A charge that they can bring before the Roman authorities. They want Jesus dead. So they have to find some charge that will stick. And then they're going to bring him to the Roman authorities and they're going to say, look, this man is guilty of this.

[8 : 21] He deserves death. So they've got to find something. And so they're wanting Jesus to confirm to them that he is a king.

Because there was no use of them going to the Roman authorities and saying, this man says he's a prophet. The Roman authorities would say, well, so what? We're not interested. But if they came saying, this man says he's a king, the Roman authorities would have to take notice of that.

Because there wasn't any king allowed to come sort of to oppose the Roman ruler, the emperor. And like those who were set by the Roman authorities. So for any person to take to become a self-styled king was straightaway opposition.

It was a threat to Rome. And it would be dealt with very harshly. It would be dealt with by death.

And so this is why the Jewish counselors say, this is a charge.

[9 : 23] If we get him to proclaim that he's a king, we've got him. Because we know that the Roman authorities will deal with him very harshly. So this is the angle that they're coming at.

Now, of course, this court that is held here was highly illegal. On many different ways. One of the things both about Roman law and Jewish law is it was fair.

Roman law was fair and Jewish law was fair. But this court here was anything but fair. Because, for instance, Jesus is not allowed a defense.

Can you imagine a court today where there is only a prosecution and no defense? You would say to yourself, well, that's illegal. You can't have that. Neither could you have it under Jewish law.

Defense. There was always defense. But Jesus was not allowed a defense. Jesus is tried on the feast day. And again, that was highly irregular.

[10:26] They didn't have courts on the feast day. And again, the verdict came on the same day of the trial. And when it was a capital crime, a crime that was in their eyes deserving of death, there was always two days given between the trial and the judgment.

So, in many ways, the whole thing was completely irregular. They were going flying against their own judgment, their own rules, their own regulations, because they were determined that speed and all urgency was needed in order to get rid of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so we see these two groups of people. We see the soldiers. And they're the ones that are mocking Christ. And they're hitting him and striking him.

And then we see the Jewish leaders. And both of these groups, although they act differently, they are both the same. They are both rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ.

And, you know, in a sense, these two groups, the soldiers who are violent and who are mocking, in a sense, this mocking that you see here stands so much for, there are many people today who reject Christ, and they are mocking Christ at the same time.

[11:52] There's a lot of people. Not in here. But there are many people who mock Christianity. They mock the Christian. They just have no time for it.

And these soldiers, in a sense, represent the many people who are rejecting Christ, and they do it by way of mocking. But then the religious leaders are those who are also rejecting Christ, but they have a veneer of religion.

And they have this religious kind of cloak that's over them, and they appear to be religious people, but underneath they're as hard as nails. And they're still rejecting Jesus.

And these are the people who can actually be in church. And that's something why we've always got to examine ourselves. The Bible is always saying to us, look, examine yourself.

That's why I don't believe the first category, those who are mocking Christ. You won't find them in here. Because those who mock Christ and are rejecting Christ by a way of mocking do not want to be where Christ is or Christ's people are.

[12:58] But you can have the second group, those who reject Christ with a veneer of religiosity, and yet underneath, hard as nails, and still pushing Jesus away.

Make sure, my dear friend, that you don't fall into that category. Because it's dangerous, and it's all too possible. But then they began to question Jesus.

And they say in verse 67, If you are the Christ, tell us. This is what they're saying. But Jesus, he very strongly hints here at the unfairness of the trial that he's going through.

Because he's saying to them, It's impossible for me to get a fair trial. Because you're not going to believe whatever I tell you. This is what Jesus said. If I tell you, you won't believe.

And if I ask you, you will not answer. Jesus is showing to them. He's saying to them, I know what you're doing. I'm in a no-win situation here. It doesn't matter what I say or don't say.

[13:57] I am still going to be guilty before you. That is, you've already, you've already passed sentence on me before I'm even tried. But then Jesus makes quite an amazing statement.

And he says to them, But from now on, the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God. It really is quite an extraordinary statement.

Because, humanly speaking, at this moment, it would appear that if there is any person who has no power, and no authority, and no say in the matter, it is Jesus.

And yet he's saying to them, All power is mine. From now on, the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God. Now, throughout the Gospels, Jesus referred to himself as the Son of Man.

And that is in keeping with what we read about in Daniel, where we read about the Son of Man, that awesome figure. Remember, that awesome figure who receives authority from the ancient of days.

[15:09] And we see that Son of Man there riding upon the clouds. And here we come again. And you see, this is how we were talking about that this morning, how Scripture ties in with Scripture.

Back in Daniel's prophecy, we have it as this, the Son of Man receiving the authority from the ancient of days, riding on the clouds. And that's, we read about this in Mark's Gospel tonight. Jesus said this, You shall see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of power and coming with the clouds of heaven. And from his own lips, these men heard the truth and they heard that Jesus was the Messiah.

And yet, they won't accept him. They reject him. And, you know, when you see the rejection of the Jewish leaders, you say to yourself, You know, this is madness.

Here are men, when you think about it, here are men who are steeped in the Bible, right? These aren't ignorant people. These are men who've made it their life's work to study the Scriptures.

[16 : 22] The religious leaders studied the Scripture. And if we are serious students of the Word of God, it becomes so clear to us who the Lord Jesus Christ is.

You know, I've read of people who have been bitterly opposed to the Gospel with a hatred of Christianity, who have read the Bible and have set out reading the Bible in order to disprove it and to disprove the whole thing, the whole Gospel of Jesus Christ.

And they've been converted. They have become so persuaded through a serious study of the Word that Christ is who He says He is. The Bible, there is an authority and a clarity in the Bible.

And it just shows the incredible prejudice and blinkeredness of sin. Because these men should have been able to see this is the Christ. They heard it from His own lips.

His ministry was a fulfillment of the prophecies. Everything was being fulfilled in their hearing, in their midst, all these years, the three years of Christ's ministry.

[17 : 43] And yet, they were blinkered to it. Let's apply this to ourselves. What about you? Do you believe what the Word of God says?

Do you believe the Word of God? I believe you do. Do you believe the testimony of Scripture regarding the Lord Jesus Christ?

Do you believe all that it says? I believe you do. I believe that the vast majority of people that come to church, not just here, but wherever, that they do believe what the Word of God says.

So then you have to pose the question and you say to yourself, well, if I believe what the Word of God says, why is it that I continue to reject Jesus?

Because when you logically think about it, it is the most absurd thing to do. It is the greatest act of folly. when the Bible makes abundantly clear who Christ is and the price of rejecting Him, of what it involves for me if I reject Jesus.

[19 : 05] The Bible makes it very clear. So you see, this is why it is such a strange thing where intelligent, lovely people who know the Word, who believe what the Word says and yet continue not to somehow put into practice what the Word says and take on board what the Word says and personally deal with what the Word says.

And in a sense, it is just like what was happening there. These people who knew the truth and yet were suppressing the truth, they were pushing it away.

So you see, it is an incredibly dangerous thing to do. And Jesus is showing us here that the roles are going to be reversed. He was standing before them.

They were, at least they thought, they were in judgment of Him. Jesus says it is going to be very different. One day, He said, one day you shall see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of power and coming with the clouds of heaven.

What an awesome thought when Jesus is at the right hand. That is speaking of power. It is speaking of authority. It is speaking of honor. And Jesus is going to return into this world and He's going to come as King.

[20 : 28] Not in the way of humiliation where He came into an outhouse in Bethlehem all these years ago. Not as somebody that is not recognized as a King.

Or there'll be complete recognition. every eye will see Him. And He said to Him from now on the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God.

And back in Mark's Gospel it tells us that they will see Him. Christ riding on the clouds of heaven.

And that picture of the clouds of course speaks of something of the power and the glory of God.

You'll find the cloud so often you'll find the cloud in the wilderness. That was the presence of God as He led Israel through the wilderness.

The pillar of fire by night and the pillar of cloud by day. You remember when Solomon dedicated the temple and it tells us of the great cloud where God's presence filled the temple.

[21 : 32] Again on the Mount of Transfiguration we have the cloud speaking again of the presence of God. Remember the weight of God's presence that was felt there by the disciples. And again at the ascension of Jesus there are the clouds and when He returns again there will be the clouds coming in His power.

And you know on that day there will be no mockers or scoffers or rejecters or infidels. All mocking will die in people's throats. There won't be one person who will be a doubter or an atheist or an agnostic or an unbeliever in the sense of that they do not believe the testimony of the scripture. Everybody will see Him. Everybody who is alive in this world when Jesus Christ returns will say that's Him. There will not be one moment's doubt but that this is the returning King of glory. It's going to be an awesome spectacle. Maybe maybe we'll see it. We don't know. Nobody knows when it will be. Not even the angels in heaven know when that will be. Jesus has said that. That His return will be. And the thing is He's going to come back as King and He's going to come back as Judge. An altogether righteous Judge.

[22 : 55] And all His saints will be gathered with Himself. Are you looking by the way are you looking forward to the return of Jesus? If you were told tonight Jesus is returning tonight what would your response be right now?

That before midnight sometime between now and midnight that Jesus were to return what would be your response? Would it be panic?

Fear? Or would you be saying as the church in Revelation says even so come Lord Jesus? Is there an anticipation an expectation a quiet longing in your heart?

Or is there a dread a fear? It tells very much of where you are or how you're feeling with regard how you answer that very question.

one day he will return. And so we find that Jesus is telling those who they think are in judgment over him it's going to be the other way around.

[24 : 18] And then we see the urgency of the council in getting the backing of Rome to put Jesus to death. And once Jesus has made that statement they said right we've heard that's all we need let's get him to let's get him to Pilate.

And so that's what we read in chapter 23 the whole company of them arose and brought him before Pilate. You can see them charging along and they're saying to themselves we've got him we've got him and they began to accuse him.

Now when you see the accusations there's three accusations that they bring against Jesus before Pilate and really they're quite unbelievable. See what they say we found this man misleading our nation.

It's not extraordinary. They were the ones who were misleading the nation. These religious leaders were taking people to hell. They were pointing people in the wrong direction.

Jesus was the way who came in saying I'm the way the truth and the life. Jesus was leading the people in the right direction and yet they're saying he's misleading the nation.

[25 : 25] And you know it's the same today. If you find if Christians raise up their voice and speak you'll find straight away people there'll be this outrage and outcry.

They're misleading what they're speaking untruths. Nothing changes. Then the second accusation is really again quite extraordinary. We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar.

Caesar. What a lie. Jesus never forbade people to pay tribute to Caesar. Cast our minds back.

Remember as we were going through Luke? They tried to trip him up in this very thing.

And they said to him, do you remember the occasion, is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not?

They were hoping that he would say, no it's not.

And he said, show me a coin. Remember? They showed him a coin. Whose inscription is on this coin? And they said Caesar. And remember what he said? Well, you give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and give to God what belongs to God.

[26 : 33] Jesus didn't on any occasion say to them that it was not lawful to give tribute to Caesar. Just downright lies. But then the last one, they're saying he himself is Christ, a king.

Now, these last two charges were actually very serious. To try and prevent people paying tribute to Caesar and to make himself a king were really capital offenses, carried the death penalty.

But it's very interesting that even although Pilate asked Jesus, are you king of the Jews? And Jesus said, you have said so, more or less he's saying what you're saying is so. Now, I don't know

whether Pilate spent any more time with Jesus asking him other things or not.

But you'll notice in verse four that Pilate said to the chief priest in the crowd, I find no guilt in this man. No crying, no guilt.

Pilate could see straight away this was an innocent man. There is no guilt. And what makes Jesus' subsequent the sentence of death that is passed upon him and his crucifixion really quite remarkable is that you see here the Roman judicial system which was renowned in many ways for its fairness utterly failing.

[28 : 00] And you see Pilate we'll look at that as we go on God willing next time we will see Pilate who is doing everything in his power and he has the power to release Jesus but he doesn't.

It's quite remarkable. But you know the one thing unless we come to finish that I think we must not overlook here is the pain that must have been in Jesus' heart.

You know sometimes we tend to forget this side of it all. Whenever you are falsely accused and whenever you have a real sense of injustice and you say this is so unfair it does something doesn't it right down in your heart.

Everybody feels that when there's a total miscarriage of justice and when lies are told and lies are believed and when everything is twisted round it hurts.

You remember when Peter denied Jesus remember we were looking at how Jesus turned and he looked at Peter.

[29 : 19] We saw what that look conveyed. Let's not forget Jesus was looking for comforters and he didn't find one. Comforters found a none.

Although he is God a very God he's also a man a very man. All these things hurt. The violence hurt him. Jesus was hurt physically and mentally and emotionally in every conceivable bit of his being he was hurt.

More so than you or I could ever be because he was pure and sinless. Because of our sin we often our judgment of things is twisted.

However right it may be there's still an element of twistedness. That's our nature. There was none of that in Jesus. He saw everything as it really was.

And sin in its ugliness was screaming and pushing him. Let's not forget all this. Why was he there? Why did he give himself?

[30 : 28] It's for you and me. let's not sit back and look at this as just a picture. But let's be there and involve ourselves.

Because Jesus could turn around at any moment to us and say I was there for you and you and you and you. That's why he was there. Let's remember that.

This is why Jesus came into this world. Why he gave himself. what are we then going to do with Jesus? Are we tonight going to side with the rejecters of Jesus?

I hope not. When you look at these men who rejected Jesus and how they treated Jesus, are you siding with them? Or are you going to say, Lord, it's time I came on board.

Lord, it's time I came on your side. Please help me. Help me tonight to come on side with you.

[31 : 36] Let's pray. Lord, we pray to bless us. We pray to help us to believe this word. We pray that we may follow Jesus with all our heart, that we be not found with the rejecters, but found with those who believe and accept.

Take us all home safely, we pray, and do us good. Guide us and keep us and cleanse us from our sin. In Jesus' name we ask it. Amen.