

Resurrection Life of Jesus Church

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

RLJ-1977

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PART 74: THE SANHEDRIN TRIAL

PETER'S DENIAL

Prior to Jesus' arrest, the God-man foretold Peter's denial three times. Then He asked if any of the men had a sword, indicating they should acquire one. Jesus found it acceptable when the apostles showed Him two swords in their possession. **Luke 22:35-38**

Then when Judas showed up with a bunch of soldiers, Peter used one of the swords to cut off the ear of Malchus. The God-man immediately told him to sheath the weapon and healed Caiaphas's servant. **Luke 22:49-51; John 18:10-11**

The apostle Peter was bewildered. Why would Jesus instruct Peter to get a sword and then forbid him from using it? The Bible does not provide an answer.

The soldiers led Jesus directly to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, probably as a mark of respect to the older man, confirming the reality that he was a conspirator in the plot to kill the God-man. **John 18:13-14**

Annas wanted to see the prize for himself, yet he did not want to delay the malicious prosecution, and was anxious for the kangaroo court assembled at Caiaphas' house to deliver a guilty verdict. **John 18:24**

Peter was the only apostle that stopped running away and returned to follow the soldiers escorting Jesus at a distance. He infiltrated the palace of the high priest and mingled with the servants that had gathered to witness the proceeding. **Matthew 26:58; Mark 14:54; Luke 22:54-55**

John recorded there another disciple – known to the high priest – that had access to the household. This man of authority followed Jesus to the palace of Caiaphas and used his clout with the female servant that kept the door to grant Peter access. **John 18:15-16**

The mystery man could have been Nicodemus since he stood up for Jesus when the God-man was rejected by the Pharisees. **John 7:45-53**

FIRST DENIAL

John reports that Peter was immediately confronted at the entrance to Caiaphas's palace by a damsel acting as the doorman.¹ **John 18:17**

Matthew, Mark, and Luke record that as the proceedings against Jesus took place, a damsel in the palace approached Peter, recognizing him as someone that had been with Jesus. **Matthew 26:69-70; Mark 14:66-68; Luke 22:55-57**

¹ A damsel was a young unmarried woman working as a maid.



SECOND DENIAL

Peter moved out onto the porch and another servant accused him of having been with Jesus. This time Peter denied it with an oath.² **Matthew 26:71-72; Mark 14:69-70a; Luke 22:58; John 18:25**

THIRD DENIAL

The third confrontation came an hour later when Peter's speech revealed his Galilean dialect. He got animated and began to swear and curse in his denial of knowing Jesus. Just as the God-man predicted, the Roman trumpet sounded three times immediately after the third denial and Peter left the palace and wept bitterly. **Matthew 26:73-74; Mark 14:70b-72**

The Romans divided the night into four periods (watches), each consisting of three hours, the first beginning at six in the evening. The changing of the guard at the end of a watch was marked by the sound of a trumpet. The last of the four watches was closed by the blowing of a horn at three in the morning, which was sounded three times to imitate the crowing of a rooster.

Luke states that an hour later another person recognized Peter's Galilean accent and confidently affirmed he was a disciple of Jesus. Peter tried to play innocent about the matter and that's when the Roman trumpet sounded the fourth watch. The God-man turned and silently looked directly into Peter's eyes and the apostle was overcome with grief. Whatever he had hoped to accomplish was over and he dejectedly left the palace and wept bitterly over his repeated betrayals. **Luke 22:59-61**

John testified that a relative of Malchus recognized Peter as being in the Garden of Gethsemane with Jesus. **John 18:26-27**

The three denials by Peter culminated at 3:00 AM Wednesday morning. It would not be until sometime Sunday morning that Jesus was resurrected and the women discovered the grave was empty. Peter did not mingle with the other apostles during the next four days for two reasons:

1. He was ashamed of his arrogant words. **Matthew 26:33**
2. His loathsome behavior at denying Jesus. **verse 69-75**

PETER'S CHARACTER

What do we know about Peter's character:

- ❖ He witnessed an astounding miracle catch of fish and immediately left everything behind to follow Jesus.
- ❖ Peter was a go-getter evidenced by the fact that he jumped from the boat on the Sea of Galilee to walk on the water and meet with Jesus.
- ❖ He recognized early on that Jesus was the Messiah.

² Comparable to swearing on your mother's grave.

- ❖ He was clearly a leader. Peter, John, and James were selected for the Mount of Transfiguration and to pray with the God-man in the Garden of Gethsemane.
- ❖ He was a brave man and tried to defend the Messiah when the ungodly Jewish leadership arrested Jesus.
- ❖ Peter infiltrated the palace of the high priest to see if there was anything he could do. He was not very good at being covert and felt it was necessary to lie in order to protect his cover while keeping an eye on Jesus.

GOD'S GRACE

Peter agonized over the fact that he had denied Jesus three times, even though he had confidently stated he would never let Jesus down. The God-man knew that Peter was grieving and that is why the angel instructed the women at the tomb to tell the apostles – and Peter as well – that Jesus was risen from the dead. **Mark 16:5-7**

KANGAROO COURT

The high priest also served as the supreme judge when it came to the adherence to the Torah and the Talmud. The Jewish leadership from the time of King Solomon had established the doctrine of the Kabbalistic messiah who would be anointed by God and re-establish the golden age of Israel. **Acts 1:6**

The Talmud serves as the central text of Rabbinic Judaism and the primary source of Jewish religious law. It was referred to as the “tradition of the Elders” at the time of Jesus. The God-man stated the Jewish leadership used the Talmud to supersede the laws of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy). **Matthew 15:1-3; Mark 7:1-13**

They rejected Isaiah’s prophecy of the suffering Messiah who would atone for the sins of mankind.³ **Isaiah 53:1-5**

There is no specific teaching in the Old Testament that the Messiah would be “God incarnated into human form,” only that He would share the nature of God. **Isaiah 9:6-7**

The incarnation was not revealed until Gabriel informed Mary that she was going to be impregnated by the Holy Spirit and give birth to the Messiah. **Luke 1:26-37**

It is important to understand that the four Gospels did not exist at the time of Jesus’ trial and the incarnation had only been revealed as Jesus taught publicly.

The Talmudic rabbis had declared that capital cases needed to be decided by a Sanhedrin of a minimum of twenty-three judges and two witnesses. The offense had to be witnessed by at least two people, and if the judgment was rendered too quickly, the accused was acquitted on the assumption that the judges had not adequately

³ Isaiah was active as a prophet from 740-700 B.C.

considered the defendant's innocence. This was ironic due to the speed of Jesus' trial and the use of multiple liars to bring false witness against the God-man.

Caiaphas accused Jesus of equating Himself as God, the rest of the Sanhedrin agreed, and according to the Talmud, this blasphemy was punishable by death.

This was a plain case of prosecutorial misconduct. No justice would be served with two false witnesses and prejudicial judges. When the two liars finally came up with a plausible story, Caiaphas stood up and demanded an answer from Jesus, but He refused to submit to the kangaroo court. **Matthew 26:57-62; Mark 14:55-61**

Luke stated that Jesus was blindfolded and beaten before He was questioned by Caiaphas. **Luke 22:63-65**

GOD'S RESPONSE

Caiaphas saw that the God-man was not going to be baited into a response and changed tactics. He commanded Jesus – as though He was under oath – to tell them the truth about His Messiahship. The irony was astounding because these men wanted to kill an innocent man and were using the Sanhedrin to fulfill their murderous agenda.

Jesus complied with the demand, but the muted answer wasn't going to satisfy Caiaphas and God-man took it a step further. There wouldn't be any Mr. Nice Guy with the second return. The Son of Man derives His authority from God the Father to execute judgment upon the human race, and on that day in the future, grace and mercy will be a thing of the past. **Matthew 26:63-64; Mark 14:62; Luke 22:67-70**

The God-man's fate was sealed once Jesus "confessed" to the high priest and the rest of the Sanhedrin that He was the Messiah and Son of God. His claim was unacceptable to the Kabbalistic leadership because He did not fit mold of what they expected and waited for in a messiah.

Caiaphas acted shocked and tore his inner and outer garments because of the supposed blasphemy, failing to realize that the Son of God was standing calmly before him with thousands of unseen angels ready to avenge the travesty of justice being committed against the Creator. **Matthew 26:65; Mark 14:63; Luke 22:71**

DEATH SENTENCE

Caiaphas then turned to the other members of the Sanhedrin and asked what the sentence should be? The response was unanimous and immediate – death! **Matthew 26:66; Mark 14:64**

The Jews were allowed to pass judgment on their own countrymen concerning religious laws; however, capital punishment was reserved only for the Roman occupational government. **John 18:31**

ABUSE OF JESUS

Following the death sentence, some of the Sanhedrin began to openly show their contempt for the Son of God by spitting in His face. This was one of the highest insults imaginable, and they added to it by blindfolding Jesus, striking Him in the face with their fists, demanding that He declare who did it in an effort to ridicule the man they utterly

hated and reviled. The hands of Jesus were bound so that He could not protect Himself from the blows. Even the servants joined the gruesome and bloody beating that unfolded. **Matthew 26:67-68; Mark 14:65**

As the Son of God, no blindfold was going to eradicate His omniscience. Jesus was not going to placate these malevolent men, but you can be sure that the Creator will declare it when these same men stand before Him at the Great White Throne Judgment.

This conduct was prophesied by Isaiah who foretold the abuse the Messiah would receive at the hands of the men. Jesus was struck on the cheeks, His nose was bloodied, His eyes were blackened and puffy, and his facial hair was ripped out. Can you imagine the anger of the holy angels watching the horror unfold? **Isaiah 50:6**

SUMMARY

Nehemiah was the last true leader after the return from Babylon. He ruled Judah as a Persian province from 465-424 B.C. The insidious Kabbalah began to make inroads, and with it, the teaching of a militant messiah who would restore Israel to its golden age slowly took root among the Jews. From 167-37 B.C., Judah was ruled by the Hasmonean dynasty, the most well-known of this family group were Mattathias and his sons, who were able to defeat the Seleucid Empire.

The high priests began to elevate the Talmud above the Old Testament, while the Kabbalists laid the foundation for the militant messiah that would restore Israel to its former glory.

It did not take long for the ungodly Jewish leadership to recognize that Jesus was a threat to their worldview because the God-man labeled the teachings of the Talmud and the Kabbalah as originating with the Devil. **John 8:39-59**

The ungodly Jewish leadership could not match the miracle power exhibited by Jesus and lamented the fact that His supernatural power caused large numbers of Jews to believe that the God-man was the Messiah foretold by the prophets. The Devil is known for killing of men and women of God that cannot be browbeaten into complying with him and Caiaphas and his minions didn't act any differently. **John 11:45-53**

The resurrection of Lazarus was a threat and these same men planned to kill him as well. **John 12:9-11**

The irony is that Caiaphas and the leadership of priests, scribes and Pharisees believed they were following God, when in fact, they were following Lucifer. They failed to realize that God came to earth in the form of man and interacted with them.

From the fateful day in which the God-man was condemned to die, hell continues to be enlarged because the descendants steadfastly refuse to acknowledge that Jesus was the Messiah. This is how they have lived and died for the last two millennia and nothing has changed for the majority of the Jews in the 21st century.

Remember, it's not so important how you begin your life after salvation, but how you finish it!

Do you have an ear to hear with?