



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Last Year of the Life of Christ, Part 63”

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Informed. Insightful. Intelligent.



The Last Year of the Life of Christ, Part 63

Matthew 26:59-68, Mark 14:55-65, Luke 22:63-65

The Chief Priests and the Elders and the entire Sanhedrin kept trying to find false witnesses to testify against Jesus in order to execute Him. They could find none. Though many false witnesses came forward to accuse Him, their testimony did not agree.

Thank you very much for coming to hear the message for today. Before we begin our next lesson, let us reiterate our reason for attending Church.

We attend Church to obtain the mind of Christ, meaning, to have the Bible illuminated in our minds so that we can clearly understand the principles that Jesus taught and base our daily personal decisions on those principles.

We come to Church because we want to be obedient to the Bible, which is the doctrine of Jesus Christ, in an informed, insightful and intelligent manner.

As we left our last lesson, Jesus was being arrested after breaking up the fight that Peter started with the cohort of soldiers sent by the Sanhedrin. The devil chose Peter, probably because he was the leader and boldest of the disciples, as the focus of his temptation. After Jesus told the disciples to arm themselves, Peter drew the logical conclusion that he was supposed to defend Jesus physically when Jesus was threatened. So Peter pulled his sword on the men coming to arrest Jesus, and managed to wound one of the High Priests' servants, cutting off his ear. But Jesus did not want the repercussions of turning His arrest into a fight, because to do so would allow the devil to win the conflict. The prophet spoke of Jesus in **Isaiah 53:7**, when he said:

7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth.

Jesus did not speak to defend Himself, but rather to set the tone for the entire Passion experience when He spoke to Peter, in **Matthew 26:52-54, John 18:11**:

Then [Jesus] told Peter, "Put your sword back into its sheath. Everyone who uses the sword will die by the sword. Don't you understand that even now I could call to My Father and He would send Me more than twelve legions of angels? But then how would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen like this? Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given Me?"

Jesus was giving Himself to those that were coming to arrest Him although He could easily have defeated them, because for Jesus to give Himself was the will of God. The Passion experience was, in part, a conflict between God and the devil, with Jesus Christ as God's point man. Jesus' real enemies in the



conflict were not the scribes, Pharisees, chief priests, and the Sanhedrin, but rather was Satan. The terms of the conflict were simple. The devil wins if he can tempt Jesus into sin. Jesus wins if He resists the temptation to sin. **Hebrews 4:15** tells us:

15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

The phrase “tempted as we are” lets us know that Jesus was engaged in the same conflict against sin that we are. Jesus faced a parallel temptation to the temptations that entice us into sin. The simple truth of our earthly reality is that the devil has tried and is constantly trying to entice every person that even lived into sin so that he can argue against anyone’s entrance into the kingdom of Heaven, based upon God’s declaration that the wages of sin is death. Since the devil has been and will continue to be successful in enticing us, we cannot merit entrance into heaven based upon our own goodness. Our entrance into Heaven does not depend upon how well we compare to other people, but how well we compare to the absolute standard of sinlessness. But God, in His wisdom, developed the sacrificial system so that one sinless person could satisfy the sentence of every sinner by dying in his place. The design of God is that Jesus Christ is the sinless person that will provide a sacrifice for everyone else by living a sinless life and then dying to pay the penalty that we owe for the sins that we have committed. Since the sacrifice of Jesus Christ was God’s plan to allow mankind into heaven, the devil was especially interested in seeing Jesus fail. If the devil could entice Jesus into sin, then Jesus could not be a sacrifice for our sins; He would be dying for His own sin, and the human race would continue to be lost.

I know that I have covered this concept many times before. I think that I have repeated this concept, in one form or another, during each of the sixty-two previous sermons in this series. But I will continue to emphasize this sin situation because it is the practical and intellectual basis for the church. Ultimately, the goal of the church is not to produce good deeds, although the church does encourage all of us that have the opportunity to do the good deeds that allow us to live according to the dictates and doctrines of the Bible. The New Testament does encourage us to live good lives and treat our families and neighbors well, but the New Testament also makes it clear that God is not developing a utopia on earth. God considers this life to be a temporary life to prepare us for our everlasting life by developing our faith in Jesus Christ.

Everlasting life is the goal. **John 3:16-17** tells us:

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

So, in order to save the world, in order that we might have everlasting life,



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Jesus chose to not defend Himself when the cohort of soldiers and leaders of the Jews came to arrest Him. In order to save His disciples, Jesus chose to heal the man whose ear Peter cut off.

Jesus submitted to the arrest, and was transported to the house of Annas, as **Matthew 26:57, Mark 14:53 Luke 22:54 and John 18:12-14, 19-24** records:

Then the cohort of soldiers and the chief captain and the officers of the Jews took and bound Jesus.

They led Him away first to Annas because he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was the high priest that year. (It was Caiaphas who had advised the Jews that it would be prudent for one man to die for the people.)

The high priest questioned Jesus about His disciples and His teaching. Jesus answered him, "I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in the synagogues and in the temple where all the Jews assemble. I said nothing in secret. Why do you question Me? Question those who heard Me. They know what I said."

Jewish jurisprudence depended upon witnesses to ascertain the truth.

Deuteronomy 19:15-21 says:

15 "One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established.

16 If a false witness rises against any man to testify against him of wrongdoing,

17 then both men in the controversy shall stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges who serve in those days.

18 And the judges shall make careful inquiry, and indeed, if the witness is a false witness, who has testified falsely against his brother,

19 then you shall do to him as he thought to have done to his brother; so you shall put away the evil from among you.

20 And those who remain shall hear and fear, and hereafter they shall not again commit such evil among you.

21 Your eye shall not pity: life shall be for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

So, Annas asked Jesus for a confession. Jesus' legal strategy was to tell Annas that the law specifies that the Jews must produce witnesses to testify against Him. But, as Jesus knows, the guilty verdict is already in and the Jews are not looking for evidence, but for justification. After Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, which was certainly a godly act, **John 11:45-54** records:

Many of the Jews who visited Mary and saw what Jesus did believed in Him. But others went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done [in raising Lazarus from the dead]. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting and said, "What are we accomplishing? This



man is performing many miracles. If we let Him continue, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our temple and our nation.”

One of them, named Caiaphas, was high priest that year. “You know nothing!” he told them. “You don’t see that it’s necessary for one man to die for the people so the whole nation won’t be destroyed.” He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he was prophesying that Jesus would die on behalf of the nation—and not for the nation only, but that He might gather together all of God’s children who had been scattered all over the world.

From that day on they discussed how they might kill Him.

The High Priest exclaims, “**You don’t see that it’s necessary for one man to die for the people so the whole nation won’t be destroyed.**” But what nation is the High Priest talking about? Certainly not the Nation of Israel, because Jesus raising men from the dead will neither destroy Israel or start a war with Rome. Jesus is not a Zealot, and has no alliance with those Jews that wish to overthrow Rome. Jesus has counseled with and healed Jews, Romans, Samaritans, and everyone else that has come to Him, so it is clear that Jesus has no political agenda. So what nation is the High Priest talking about?

Well, there are three nations in the Palestine.

The first and most dominant is the political nation of Israel presided over by the King, Herod, and the Roman procurator Pontius Pilate.

The second is the financial nation of Israel, which is part of the political nation, and is presided over by the tax collectors.

The third is the religious nation of Israel, presided over by the High Priest and the Jewish religious leadership.

The individual Jews are citizens of all three nations, as they are under Roman rule, pay Roman taxes, and also pay Temple taxes. Jesus is undermining the third nation. Rather than coming to participate in the rituals and give their offerings and sacrifices at the Passover, the people have come to see Jesus. The religious nation is losing revenue and influence because of the popularity of Jesus Christ.

After the religious nation sent their best men to argue with Jesus, the Pharisees ask the High Priest, “**What are [our arguments] accomplishing? This man is performing many miracles.**” People are skipping the ceremonies in order to experience the reality. The Pharisees tell the High Priest, “**If we let Jesus continue [performing miracles and raising men from the dead], everyone will believe in Him**”.

Jesus is changing the religious landscape of Judaism. By His miracles, Jesus is making the ceremonies of two thousand years of Judaism disinteresting. The Jews are considerably less interested in observing ancient rituals than they



are in watching Jesus heal and listening to Him talk about the Kingdom of Heaven.

Jesus is demonstrating a holiness that is more holy than the holiness of the High Priest, and the Jews are being attracted to it.

So, now we know Jesus' crime. Jesus is upsetting the religious order. No longer will the religious focus of Israel be the ceremonies instituted by Moses, but rather the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven. As **Matthew 3:1-2** tells us:

1 In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea,

2 and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"

Jesus is also preaching, as **Matthew 4:17**:

17 From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

There is a difference between the Kingdom of Israel and the Kingdom of Heaven, and you have to leave one to get to the other. God prophesied the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven, but the men in leadership in the Kingdom of Israel didn't want to give up their Kingdom.

When they brought Jesus to Annas, Jesus recognized that the Jewish leadership was so invested in the Kingdom of Israel that they would not be able to transition into the Kingdom of God voluntarily. The Jewish leadership knew who Jesus was; His miracles should have convinced anyone of His identity, especially anyone that studied the Old Testament Scripture as much as they did. Jesus knew that there was no conversation available that would convince them, and so Jesus declined to make an argument to Annas. He said, **"I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in the synagogues and in the temple where all the Jews assemble. I said nothing in secret. Why do you question Me? Question those who heard Me. They know what I said."**

Jesus reply to Annas made the arresting party defensive. Having arrested Jesus with no accusation, with no evidence, with no crime, now they have no confession. Jesus has proven, by His answer, that He knows the legal system, and is not at all intimidated by their treatment of Him. Jesus' calmness, combined with their guilt, makes them defensive, so they strike out, as the lection continues:

Matthew 26:57, Mark 14:53 Luke 22:54 and John 18:12-14, 19-24

When [Jesus] said this, one of the officers standing nearby struck Jesus in the face. "Is this the way You answer the high priest?" he demanded.

"If I spoke wrongly," Jesus answered, "explain my error. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike Me?"

When the blow came, Jesus took it calmly, and simply spoke to further convict the man that struck Him of his sin. All throughout the trials, Jesus gives the Jews chances to repent. Jesus spoke to convict the Jews of their sins, not to



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defend Himself, because He needed no defense. Jesus came that we might all recognize our sins and repent of them. But the Jews refused to repent. The lection continues:

Matthew 26:57, Mark 14:53, Luke 22:54, John 18:12-14

Then Annas sent [Jesus], still bound, to Caiaphas the high priest. Those who had seized Jesus led Him away to the high priest's house, where all the chief priests and the elders and teachers of the law had gathered.

Matthew 26:59-68, Mark 14:55-65, Luke 22:63-65

The Chief Priests and the elders and the entire Sanhedrin kept trying to find false witnesses to testify against Jesus in order to execute Him. They could find none. Though many false witnesses came forward to accuse Him, their testimony did not agree.

At last two stepped forward and spoke against Him: "We heard this Man say, 'I'll destroy this temple of God made by human hands, and in three days I'll build another, not made by human hands.' " But even then their statements did not agree.

Remember **Deuteronomy 19:15-21**. The witnesses should have been evaluated and found false because of the lack of agreement in their witness. But the court is not looking for the truth, but for two witnesses that can stand up and say the same thing. God has confounded their ability to scheme with one another, and every time one of them gets up to witness, he tells the story differently than did the person with whom he was scheming. But remember that the outcome of this trial has already been decided. The high priest, who is the judge, has already decided the guilt of the defendant, and he is only considering evidence that will convict, not evidence to acquit. Since sufficient evidence is not forthcoming from the witnesses, the judge turns to the defendant for self-incrimination, just as did Annas. The lection continues:

Matthew 26:59-68, Mark 14:55-65, Luke 22:63-65

So the high priest stood up before them and questioned Jesus. "Do You refuse to answer?" he demanded. "What is this they're accusing You of?"

But Jesus was silent and made no answer.

Jesus did not speak for the reason that I gave earlier. So the High Priest turned to the Oath of the Testimony, which was legally only given to the witnesses to ascertain that the witnesses' testimony was true, not to the defendant for self-incrimination. The lection records:

Matthew 26:59-68, Mark 14:55-65, Luke 22:63-65

Once more the high priest said to [Jesus], "Are You the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One? I charge You under oath by the living God: tell us whether You're the Messiah, the Son of God."



The point of this trial was to send Jesus to the Cross. The Jews wanted to send Jesus to the Cross to keep their kingdom intact. Jesus agreed with God the Father that He would voluntarily go to the Cross as a sacrifice to save all mankind. But the witnesses did not agree, the evidence was not forthcoming, and the only way that Jesus could go to the Cross was to send Himself. This was fitting, because although Jesus was being crucified for sin, Jesus could not be convicted of sin; the sin for which Jesus was being crucified was not His own sin, but for your sin, and my sin, and the sin of the whole world. Jesus' situation was exactly as He told His disciples in **John 10:17-18**:

17 "Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.

18 No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."

Without Jesus' cooperation, there is no arrest. Without Jesus' cooperation, there is no conviction. No one is taking Jesus' life, but Jesus is laying His life down voluntarily. He says, as our lection continues:

Matthew 26:59-68, Mark 14:55-65, Luke 22:63-65

"It's just as you have said," Jesus answered. "I AM. Furthermore, I tell all of you that later on you will see the Son of Man sitting by the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven."

Jesus confesses that He is the Messiah. The evidence supports His claim. Jesus has healed the sick, raised the dead, cast out demons, cleansed lepers. Jesus has walked on water, changed water into wine, restored sight to blinded eyes and hearing to deaf ears. Jesus has gone from one end of the Palestine to the other doing the good works ordained by God, and no one, including those that are judging Him, can duplicate His ministry.

It's not that the Jews that are trying Jesus are ignorant of that which He has done. They have already confessed that if they let Jesus continue doing miracles, everyone will believe in Him. Jesus has done the works of the Messiah, but the Jew's disbelief rests on the prophecy of the Christ's birth. The argument started after Jesus walked on water and fed the five thousand, in **John 7:37-42**, which says:

37 On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.

38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

39 But this Jesus spoke concerning the [Holy] Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

40 Therefore many from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, "Truly this is the Prophet."



41 Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Will the Christ come out of Galilee?"

42 Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?"

The Scripture to which the Jews referred was **Micah 5:2, 4**, which says:

2 "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting."

4 And He shall stand and feed His flock In the strength of the LORD, In the majesty of the name of the LORD His God; And they shall abide, For now He shall be great To the ends of the earth;

So the Bible says that the Messiah will be born in Bethlehem, and Jesus, as far as they know, is from Galilee. Jesus was actually born in Bethlehem through a set of fortuitous circumstances, but the Jews don't know that, as **John 7:43-52** continues:

43 So there was a division among the people because of Him.

44 Now some of them wanted to take Him, but no one laid hands on Him.

45 Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why have you not brought Him?"

46 The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this Man!"

47 Then the Pharisees answered them, "Are you also deceived?"

48 Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him?

49 But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed."

50 Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night, being one of them) said to them,

51 "Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?"

52 They answered and said to him, "Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee."

The Jews know that a Messiah is coming, and God has testified that the Messiah will be able to wield the strength of the Lord, as Jesus has. The Jews also know that the Messiah will come from Bethlehem, and, if they were actually trying to arrive at the truth, they would ask Jesus to clarify the Biblical discrepancy, at which time Jesus could call His mother as a witness to testify as to where He was born. But the Jews were so intent on executing Jesus that they never asked the obvious question, but acted on their assumption. The lection continues:

Matthew 26:59-68, Mark 14:55-65, Luke 22:63-65

Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Listen, you have heard His blasphemy. What do you think?"



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“He deserves to die!” they answered. Everyone condemned Him as deserving death.

A declaration that Jesus is the Messiah is only blasphemy if it is not true. But it is true, and Jesus is going to perform the single most miraculous event in the history of the world to prove that He is the Messiah. The Jews finally have that which they think is a damning confession from Jesus, and begin abusing Him, as the lection continues:

Matthew 26:59-68, Mark 14:55-65, Luke 22:63-65

Some of them began to spit in His face and strike Him with their fists. The men who were holding Jesus began to mock Him. After they had blindfolded Him, they kept slapping His face and taunting Him. “Prophecy!” they said. “Prophecy to us, You ‘Messiah’! Who just struck You?”

And they said many other insulting things to Him.
Matthew 27:1-2, Mark 15:1, Luke 22:66-23:1

As soon as daylight came, all the elders of the people—both the chief priests and the teachers of the law—met together against Jesus to execute Him. They brought Him up to the whole Sanhedrin and said, “If You are the Messiah, tell us.”

Jesus said to them, “If I were to tell you, you would certainly not believe. And if I were to ask the questions, you would not answer Me or let Me go. But from now on the Son of Man will be seated by the right hand of the power of God!”

“So You are the Son of God?” they all said.

“It’s just as you say,” He replied, “because I AM.”

“Why do we need further witnesses?” they said. “We have heard it ourselves from His own mouth!”

Then the whole crowd arose and tied up Jesus and took Him to appear before Pontius Pilate, the governor.

These Jews have had their trial before God. They thought that they were trying Jesus, but the fact is that God is trying them, as He is trying all of us. The evidence for the Messiahship of Jesus Christ is before all of us, and all of us have to vote to either accept or reject Jesus’ statement that He is the Christ. It’s not just the Jews that have to vote on Jesus; we all have to vote.

Some of the Jews were blessed to have the opportunity to change their vote. **Acts 9:1-20** records:

1 Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest

2 and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the [Christian] Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

3 As [Saul] journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven.



4 Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, **“Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”**

5 And [Saul] said, “Who are You, Lord?” Then the Lord said, **“I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.”**

6 So [Saul], trembling and astonished, said, “Lord, what do You want me to do?” Then the Lord said to him, **“Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”**

7 And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one.

8 Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus.

9 And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

10 Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, **“Ananias.”** And he said, “Here I am, Lord.”

11 So the Lord said to him, **“Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying.**

12 **And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight.”**

13 Then Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem.

14 And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name.”

15 But the Lord said to him, **“Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.**

16 **For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake.”**

17 And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

18 Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.

19 So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus.

20 Immediately Saul preached the Christ in the synagogues, that [Jesus Christ] is the Son of God.

Saul was a Pharisee, and was very likely at the trial of Jesus. But the Lord chose to change Saul the Pharisee and persecutor into Paul the Apostle, who wrote over half of the New Testament and spent the rest of his life spreading the gospel of the one that he voted to crucify. If we read our Bibles and study Christian history, we will see 1.8 million people gave their lives in the persecution



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of the first three centuries of the church; they agreed to be executed because of their belief in Jesus Christ. The testimony of history is overwhelming. The evidence for Jesus Christ is overpowering. It can only be resisted by those that want to maintain their own kingdom, as did the Jews, rather than become part of the kingdom of God.

As we go down from this place, let us not make the mistake that the Jews made; let us rather remember that which Jesus Christ did for us, His birth in Bethlehem, in fulfillment of prophecy, and His miraculous life and resurrection from the dead. Let us vote yes that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, and be saved by His blood. Remember **John 3:16-17:**

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

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