

Luke 22E

- Tonight we begin our study of the trial of Jesus of Nazareth
 - As I mentioned last week, there are actually three distinct trials
 - Two separate religious trials conducted by the Jewish leadership
 - One civil trial conducted by the Romans
 - Though even the civil trial was really three separate scenes split between two different Roman rulers
 - Even more striking than the complexity of the events of that night was the short period of time in which it occurred
 - The entire trial process probably began in the last hours of Wednesday night and were finished by early morning on Thursday
 - So it should be obvious that if we aren't careful in our observations of the text, we could easily miss important details and perhaps confuse the events
- In fact, though we left off in verse 63 of chapter 22, I want to remind you of an earlier verse in order to set the scene properly for you tonight
 - In verse 54 we learned an important detail

[Luke 22:54](#) ¶ Having arrested Him, they led Him *away* and brought Him to the house of the high priest; but Peter was following at a distance.

- The first place they led Jesus after the arrest in the garden was to the house of high priest, we're told
 - This is the place Luke places the scene of Peter's denial
 - If Luke's gospel was the only gospel we had, then we would never have known which high priest Jesus met
 - Because in His day, there were actually two high priests in Israel

- When the Roman's entered Judea and took control of Jerusalem a few decades prior to Christ's birth, they permitted the Jews to maintain their religious leadership
- But the leadership was expected to support Roman rule
- The senior most religious leader within Israel was the high priest, and in Jesus day, the High Priest held his position for life
 - A man named Annas was high priest in Israel from AD 7-14
 - In AD 14 Annas did something to upset the Roman governor of the day, and Annas was deposed
 - The Roman governor removed Annas from his position as High Priest
 - This act upset the Jews of course, so the governor tried to lessen the sting of Annas' removal by appointing one of Annas' sons in his place
 - That son was quickly succeeded by another of Annas' sons, and then by Annas' son-in-law
 - In the day that Jesus was crucified, that son in law was the man serving as high priest, a man named Caiaphas
 - But at this point, Old Man Annas is still alive and living in Israel
 - So he stills carries considerable sway in the affairs of Israel
 - Because as long as he was alive, the Jews still saw Annas as their high priest
 - So they would give deference to him, even as they simultaneously gave homage to the Roman-installed high priest, Caiaphas
 - So this is why on the night of Jesus' trial, he is actually tried by both high priests, though Luke only records the stop at Annas' house
- We know that Jesus went first to Anna's house because of John's gospel

[John 18:12](#) ¶ So the *Roman* cohort and the commander and the officers of the Jews, arrested Jesus and bound Him,
[John 18:13](#) and led Him to Annas first; for he was father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year.

- So as we look at the scene in Luke’s gospel we begin at Annas’ house
 - In this house the first trial takes place
 - Though Luke doesn’t offer a description of the trial itself, John again provides those details

[John 18:19](#) ¶ The high priest then questioned Jesus about His disciples, and about His teaching.

[John 18:20](#) Jesus answered him, “I have spoken openly to the world; I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and I spoke nothing in secret.

[John 18:21](#) “Why do you question Me? Question those who have heard what I spoke to them; they know what I said.”

[John 18:22](#) When He had said this, one of the officers standing nearby struck Jesus, saying, “Is that the way You answer the high priest?”

[John 18:23](#) Jesus answered him, “If I have spoken wrongly, testify of the wrong; but if rightly, why do you strike Me?”

[John 18:24](#) So Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

- At this point, we begin to witness the hypocrisy of these religious leaders
 - Jewish law had a long list of strict rules for how a Jewish arrest and trial was to be conducted
 - And like our law today, these rules existed largely to protect the accused and ensure a fair trial
 - Some of these rules include:
 - No arrest should be a by product of a bribe
 - Judas
 - No steps of the criminal justice system should take place after night

- The entire proceeding takes place at night
- Judges and members of the Sanhedrin could participate in the arrest
 - Members of the Sanhedrin were present at the arrest
- All trials must be public and Sanhedrin trials could only be conducted in the Temple Compound
 - Private homes
- There had to be two or three witnesses and their testimony had to be in perfect agreement
 - We'll see that the witnesses were terribly inconsistent
- The accused was not allowed to testify against himself and he couldn't be condemned on the basis of his own words alone
 - Jesus was compelled to testify against Himself
- The high priest was forbidden to tear his garments
 - The high priest will do that in the end
- The charge of blasphemy could only be committed if a man pronounced the very name of God
 - Jesus is charged with blasphemy but He never meets the requirements of the crime
- Trials could not be conducted on the eve of a Sabbath or a feast day
- And there were many others
 - We can already in the text we've already studied how many of these requirements were set aside for Jesus' trial
 - The trial
 - But that's nothing new for these men

- They routinely set aside rules when it suits them
 - We'll point out their violations as we go along
- The purpose of the trial was to establish whether Jesus had violated any of the Jewish religious laws or rules
 - As John describes it, the High Priest Annas questions Jesus about His disciples and His teaching
 - The goal is simple
 - They are looking for anything in Jesus' teaching or in His instructions to His disciples that could serve as a basis for a charge
 - This is a fishing expedition
 - They don't have a specific charge in mind, though they hope to pin something like blasphemy on Him
 - Something that has the death penalty associated with it
 - Of course, the other purpose in asking about the disciples was to determine if charges could be brought against any of them as well
 - Jesus' answers to Annas to show their failure to follow their own rules of order and procedure
 - They were the ones who were supposed to do an investigation and produce a credible charge against Jesus
 - Instead, they simply arrested Him and then began to pick at him until He gave them something they could bring Him down by
 - In retaliation for speaking the truth, the officers of the High Priest strike Jesus
 - And other mistreatment follows, which was just the beginning
 - Annas quickly grows frustrated and sends Jesus to Caiaphas

- This ended the first trial, but essentially nothing was gained
 - No charge was confirmed so no verdict could be rendered
 - The way they are going about this process almost makes you wonder why they bothered to go through the process
 - This was typical for these men
 - They longed for the approval of men
 - Appearances were important to them
 - But appearances were all that mattered, but not the truth
- At this point in Luke's gospel, (v. 63) the account of jumps to the very end of the second trial, officiated by Caiaphas
 - We'll return to Luke's account in a minute
 - But before we get there, I want to fill in the gaps in the events of the trial as provided in the other gospels
 - As I've said before, since we're studying Luke, I prefer to stay as close to the text of Luke as possible without straying too far into the other gospels
 - But this is one case where I believe it's necessary to see all the detail
 - So we will take a few moments to see what transpired in this second trial before Caiaphas
- From John's gospel, we have already learned that Jesus was ushered into Caiaphas home for the second phase of the trial
 - Not only Caiaphas, but he has assembled the entire Sanhedrin

[Mark 14:53](#) ¶ They led Jesus away to the high priest; and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes *gathered together.

- The 71 rulers of the nation of Israel, chief priests, elders, scribes, and the high priest himself

- At least a couple of men were absent from this council that night, including Joseph of Arimathea who John says was a believer and was not in agreement with the death sentence
 - So Annas' home had merely been a courtesy stop out of respect for Old Man Annas and his position within Israel
 - But this is going to be the place where the real verdict would be rendered
- The success of this trial, as with any trial, depended on having good evidence of a crime
 - And the best evidence, and the only kind of evidence that could work in these circumstances were credible witnesses
 - Mark goes on to record how the Sanhedrin sought earnestly for witnesses against Jesus
 - Yet they couldn't secure reliable witnesses

[Mark 14:55](#) Now the chief priests and the whole Council kept trying to obtain testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, and they were not finding any.

[Mark 14:56](#) For many were giving false testimony against Him, but their testimony was not consistent.

[Mark 14:57](#) Some stood up and *began* to give false testimony against Him, saying,

[Mark 14:58](#) "We heard Him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands.'"

[Mark 14:59](#) Not even in this respect was their testimony consistent.

- As Mark describes the scene, the entire council was looking for witnesses against Jesus, yet witnesses consistently disagreed with one another in the various details of their testimony
 - These facts bring out a few more examples of violations of Jewish law committed by these religious leaders
 - First, the trial is being conducted in a home, and not the compound
 - Secondly, Jewish law required that though all members of the council may argue for acquittal, not all members of the Sanhedrin are permitted to argue for guilt

- But here we see the entire council seeking witnesses against Jesus, so as to put Him to death
- Third, the accused couldn't be condemned on the basis of witnesses' testimony unless their testimony agreed perfectly
 - You can see what these men are doing
 - They have canvassed the crowds that followed Jesus in the past week
 - And they are looking for anything to seize upon
 - Someone heard Jesus says He could destroy the temple and rebuild it
 - Remember that statement was made on the way out of the temple in full hearing of others
 - The full explanation didn't come until Jesus was on the Mount of Olives in private
 - But this example shows you how the conspiracy against Jesus worked
 - If anyone had anything negative to say against Jesus, they were invited to be witnesses at the trial
 - And who knows why people choose to come forward, but come forward they did
 - I find it ironic that in the midst of these proceedings, the ones working so hard to find an accusation to make against this sinless man were the same ones violating their own law over and over again
- From here we go to Matt's gospel to follow the details of the trial before Caiaphas

[Matt. 26:62](#) The high priest stood up and said to Him, "Do You not answer? What is it that these men are testifying against You?"

[Matt. 26:63](#) 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."

[Matt. 26:64](#) Jesus *said to him, "You have said it *yourself*; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you will see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN."

[Matt. 26:65](#) ¶ Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has blasphemed! What further need do we have of witnesses? Behold, you have now heard the blasphemy;

[Matt. 26:66](#) what do you think?" They answered, "He deserves death!"

- After the testimony of the witnesses citing Jesus' comment about destroying, the high priest turns to Jesus and demands that he respond to the charges
 - In this demand, the high priest broke another rule of Jewish trials
 - A defendant couldn't testify against himself – no option
 - And here we see Jesus exercise His right to remain silent
 - This leads the High Priest to place Jesus under an oath
 - He says I adjure you (exorkizo) – to administer an oath
 - And then the High Priest says something fascinating
 - The high priest says tells us if you are the Christ, the Son of God – the Messiah
 - What caused him to ask that question?
 - One moment he was asking about charges related to showing disrespect for the Temple
 - The next he's asking Jesus if He's the Messiah
 - Simply by asking this question the high priest is condemning himself
 - For by the question he is admitting his knowledge of Jesus' claim to be the Messiah
 - Now we know that he didn't accept it
 - But the only explanation for him asking the question the way he did was that he had knowledge of Jesus' claim to messiahship
 - This man knew the Jesus has a credible claim to be the Messiah but refused to accept it
 - He knew enough to know that if he placed Jesus under oath and asked the question, he would get an affirmative answer

- In response, Jesus points out that the High Priest himself had brought up the issue of Messiah and had stated the claim
 - Jesus then said that there would be a day in the future when they would be required to acknowledge the truth themselves when they see Christ's return to earth in power
 - That's an important thing for all of us to remember
 - There is a day appointed by God when the entire world will know that Jesus is His Son
 - And God is content to wait until that day to bring that knowledge to the entire world
 - In the meantime, we all wait together
- The high priest then responds by tearing his clothes, and asking the council if they need witnesses, in light of Jesus' statement
 - This statement violated numerous Jewish laws
 - For example, the HP couldn't tear his clothes to incite the council
 - They couldn't condemn without witnesses
 - They couldn't condemn on the testimony of the accused
 - They couldn't pronounce judgment on the same day as the trial
 - The charge of blasphemy was only appropriate if the accused spoke the name of God
- At this point, we can rejoin Luke's account

[Luke 22:63](#) ¶ Now the men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking Him and beating Him,

[Luke 22:64](#) and they blindfolded Him and were asking Him, saying, "Prophecy, who is the one who hit You?"

[Luke 22:65](#) And they were saying many other things against Him, blaspheming.

- The injustice continues, after the verdict has been rendered by the council, the guards take advantage of the opportunity to mistreat the prisoner in their custody

- They mock him and beat him
 - It's so easy to read past those words and fail to appreciate the degree of mistreatment taking place
 - A beating by a group of men is a severely painful experience
 - And in the blindfolding, they could take a punch when Jesus wasn't expecting it and the body couldn't be prepared to take the punch
 - The urge to run, to save himself must have been increasing with the sting of each punch
- But consider who it is
 - He is God
 - He spoke the creation into existence
 - With one word, He could bring everyone who hit him or insulted him to the pit of hell
 - He could call a legion of angels to his side
 - With one word from His mouth he stilled storms on the Sea of Galilee
 - He cast out demons
 - He is the deity who created everyone of these men who now assault Him
 - No matter how long I ponder this, I can't get my mind around it
 - This is the Biblical definition of love
 - To lay one's life down for friends
 - That while were still enemies of God, Christ died for us
 - All the while that Jesus is being beaten, He is fulfilling His purpose of dying so that perhaps someone in that very room would one day be saved from their sin

- Then the final moment of the second religious trial

[Luke 22:66](#) ¶ When it was day, the Council of elders of the people assembled, both chief priests and scribes, and they led Him away to their council *chamber*, saying,

[Luke 22:67](#) “If You are the Christ, tell us.” But He said to them, “If I tell you, you will not believe;

[Luke 22:68](#) and if I ask a question, you will not answer.

[Luke 22:69](#) “But from now on THE SON OF MAN WILL BE SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND of the power OF GOD.”

[Luke 22:70](#) And they all said, “Are You the Son of God, then?” And He said to them, “Yes, I am.”

[Luke 22:71](#) Then they said, “What further need do we have of testimony? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth.”

- The council tries to maintain at least the appearance of respectability,
 - Though they had already arrived at the verdict, they waited until daybreak to conclude the trial so that they could appear to abide by the rules against conducting trials at night
 - Not only that, but they move the trial to the council chamber, which was in the Temple compound
 - They essentially re-enact the core element of the trial for the sake of the crowd
 - Now of course, the crowd isn’t necessarily aware that this trial started earlier
 - The whole point of this trial was to give it a sense of legitimacy in the eye of the people
 - They again ask Jesus to say whether He was the Christ
 - Jesus says why bother?
 - If I were to tell you, you wouldn’t believe me
 - In other words, the only point in me testifying of myself is for the purpose of bringing faith
 - But if faith isn’t going to be the result of my testimony, then there is no point in the confession
 - Secondly, Jesus says if I ask, you wouldn’t answer

- This is another damning statement
- Jesus is basically saying that if I were to ask you what you thought about me, you would stay silent
- He's referring to the way they refused to answer anytime He asked them who they thought he was
- They wouldn't answer because they were always faced with the dilemma of how to deny who He was in light of all that Jesus had done to prove Himself
 - They couldn't agree with Jesus, of course,
 - But they couldn't refute the claim either because they couldn't otherwise explain away Jesus' power and words
- Likewise here, Jesus says if I asked you to address these same claims, you wouldn't answer me
 - Which is an acknowledgement in itself that you know the proof and you nevertheless refuse to accept it
 - Therefore, Jesus' witnessing would be pointless
- But then He says that He will be gone and seated in His proper place at the right hand of God
- Finally, I think Jesus senses it's time to put an end to the charade
 - They ask Him the question yet again
 - Are you the Son of God?
 - And Jesus answers plainly I am.
 - For those who try to tell you that Jesus never claimed to be God, you can bring them here
 - And as expected, his statement brought the council what they were looking for
 - It was a true statement, but because they refused to believe it, they considered it blasphemy

- So the charge going forward into Chapter 23 and the trial before Pilate will be blasphemy
- A charge that Pilate couldn't care less about – not a charge that the Romans would even think to act upon

[Luke 23:1](#) ¶ Then the whole body of them got up and brought Him before Pilate.

[Luke 23:2](#) And they began to accuse Him, saying, "We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, and saying that He Himself is Christ, a King."

[Luke 23:3](#) So Pilate asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" And He answered him and said, "*It is as you say.*"

[Luke 23:4](#) Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, "I find no guilt in this man."

[Luke 23:5](#) But they kept on insisting, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching all over Judea, starting from Galilee even as far as this place."

- By this point, we are at the early morning hours of Thursday
 - Jesus hasn't slept in nearly 36 hours
 - He's been beaten, probably to the point where his face has been bloodied
 - His sides ache
 - He's been spat upon
- And as He stands before Pilate, the group of religious leaders who brought him to Pilate are worked up into a tizzy
 - Pontus Pilate was the governor of Judea, and he normally resided in Caesarea
 - He would have been in Jerusalem because of the need to provide extra security during the Passover
 - We know that Judas would have been required to testify before Pilate Wednesday night to obtain an indictment against Jesus
 - This could explain why Pilate was up and dressed early to receive this group on Thursday
 - He was expecting the prisoner who was indicted to be presented before him for trial

- In Luke's gospel, we see the Jews jumping to new accusations before Pilate
 - Accusations that would have gained the support of the Roman governor
 - But these were not the charges made during the religious trial
- And in fact, the religious leaders didn't start with these accusations
 - In John's gospel we see how the encounter started

[John 18:28](#) ¶ Then they *led Jesus from Caiaphas into the Praetorium, and it was early; and they themselves did not enter into the Praetorium so that they would not be defiled, but might eat the Passover.

[John 18:29](#) Therefore Pilate went out to them and *said, "What accusation do you bring against this Man?"

[John 18:30](#) They answered and said to him, "If this Man were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him to you."

[John 18:31](#) So Pilate said to them, "Take Him yourselves, and judge Him according to your law." The Jews said to him, "We are not permitted to put anyone to death,"

[John 18:32](#) to fulfill the word of Jesus which He spoke, signifying by what kind of death He was about to die.

- As they first bring Jesus to Pilate, they have no charge to bring
 - They merely expect Pilate to accept their own pronouncement of guilt
 - Why don't they have a charge and a case to make against Jesus?
 - Because the charge of blasphemy is not a crime to the Romans
 - And Pilate appreciates this fact as he makes his response
 - He says if He violated your law, judge him yourself according to your law
 - But then they say, we can't because we can't put him to death
 - This is Pilate's first clue that they are requesting the death penalty
 - John's comment that this was to fulfill scripture is a reference to the manner of Jesus' death

- Because only the Romans could carry out the death penalty, Jesus' manner of death would be different than if the Jews could carry out the penalty
 - Jews would stone
 - Romans would crucify
 - And scripture called for Jesus to be lifted up, to hung on a tree between criminals
 - So this was a fulfillment of scripture
- Pick up here next week...