

# Ministry of Grace Church

## Matthew 27 – Part 1

### Preface:

Last week we looked at the events that occurred in the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus went to pray with His disciples after the Last Supper. When Jesus needed His closest friends to support Him, they deserted Him and slept when He asked them to stay awake. Then, the crowd of religious leaders and soldiers come to arrest them. He was taken, at night, to be tried by the High Priests Annas and Caiaphas, but they couldn't find anything illegal about His life. Then Caiaphas commanded Him to tell them whether or not He is the Christ, the Son of God. When Jesus affirmed that He is, in fact, the Son of God, they accused Him of Blasphemy and took Him away. As He was being led away through the courtyard, Peter denied knowing Him for the third time and the rooster crowed. When this happened, Jesus looked at Peter, who suddenly remembered being told that before the rooster crowed, he would deny Jesus three times. He, then went out and wept bitterly.

This week, we will learn about the third, brief religious trial and the three civil trials. We will discover that the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, was found to be without spot or blemish, thus showing Him to be acceptable as the Passover Lamb.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Trial & Jesus Sent to Pilate

#### **Matthew 26:1-2**

**<sup>1</sup>When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death. <sup>2</sup>And they bound him and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate the governor.**

**Mark 15:1-5** – <sup>1</sup>And as soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. And they bound Jesus and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate. <sup>2</sup>And Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" And he answered him, "You have said so." <sup>3</sup>And the chief priests accused him of many things. <sup>4</sup>And Pilate again asked him, "Have you no answer to make? See how many charges they bring against you." <sup>5</sup>But Jesus made no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed.

### Notes:

We noted in the previous lesson that there were two trials before the High Priests. One before Annas and the other before Caiaphas. Both of these trials were illegal by Jewish law because they were conducted at night. In an apparent attempt by the religious leaders to make Jesus' conviction legal, the chief priests and elders (the Sanhedrin) met briefly in the morning to declare Jesus guilty and deserving of death. Although this third trial (Slide 2A) was conducted during the day time, it too was illegal (Slide 2B) because there were no witnesses there. Then, they bound Him and led Him away to Pilate for the first of three civil trials.

Do you remember what He was found guilty of? (Slide 3A) He was found guilty of blasphemy because He claimed to be the Son of God! How ironic is that?

## Judas Hangs Himself

### **Matthew 27:3-10**

<sup>3</sup>Then when Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he changed his mind and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, <sup>4</sup>saying, “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.” They said, “What is that to us? See to it yourself.” <sup>5</sup>And throwing down the pieces of silver into the temple, he departed, and he went and hanged himself. <sup>6</sup>But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said, “It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since it is blood money.” <sup>7</sup>So they took counsel and bought with them the potter's field as a burial place for strangers. <sup>8</sup>Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. <sup>9</sup>Then was fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, saying, “And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price had been set by some of the sons of Israel, <sup>10</sup>and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord directed me.”

**Acts 1:18-19** – <sup>18</sup>(Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. <sup>19</sup>And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.)

### Notes:

Judas was apparently present at the third religious trial and saw them convict Jesus and sentence Him to death. As a result, Matthew says that Judas “**changed his mind.**” Some translations say that he “**repented.**” The Greek word normally translated “repentance” is *metanoō*, which means “to change one’s mind.” But, that’s not the word Matthew used. Instead, he used the word *metamelomai*, which means “to regret.” Repentance implies changing one’s belief about something, whereas regret simply means not liking the result of one’s actions.

Notice that Judas had not betrayed Jesus because he thought Jesus was a fake. He was upset because Jesus hadn’t done what Judas had wanted Him to do. When he went back to the chief priests and elders, he *proclaimed that Jesus was innocent (Slide 3B)* and attempted to give back the “blood money.” Apparently, they were in the temple area when they had this discussion because it says that Judas threw the money into the “temple.” This is from the Greek word *naos*, which indicates the inner temple area (the Holy Place), not the outer temple courtyard (*hieron*). What the chief priests and elders did next only highlights their religious hypocrisy. They were willing to use temple money to purchase the betrayal of an innocent person, but they were unwilling to put the same money back into the temple treasury. They justified their hypocrisy by using the money to purchase a field to be used for burying strangers who had no place in the land. Everything they did was for appearances sake and this transaction was no different. Because the field was bought with the “blood money” it was called “the field of blood,” which is what the Aramaic word *akeldama* means.

Judas then went out and hanged himself. If we read about this in **Acts 1:18-19**, there seems to be a contradiction. The only way to make sense of these two descriptions is that Judas did, indeed, hang himself and was not discovered for several days afterward. Apparently, the tree branch on which he hanged himself broke and Judas’ body fell to the ground. Then, after several days, when the body bloated it burst open.

Matthew tells us that this fulfilled a prophecy of Jeremiah. However, there is no passage in the writings of Jeremiah that says what Matthew claims. There are some allusions to the potter in **Jeremiah 18:2-12** and **Jeremiah 19:1-15**, but nothing close enough to declare that these verses are what Matthew was referring to. If we look in the book of Zechariah, we see what seem to be what Matthew was referencing:

Then I said to them, “If it seems good to you, give me my wages; but if not, keep them.” And they weighed out as my wages thirty pieces of silver. Then the LORD said to me, “Throw it to the potter”—the lordly price at which I was priced by them. So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD, to the potter. (**Zechariah 11:12-13**)

The best explanation for this is in the common practice in the 1<sup>st</sup> century of referring to passages in the prophets as being attributed to Jeremiah. The reason for this is the fact that in their Scriptures, Jeremiah was the first book of the prophets. A couple of weeks ago, we talked about the fact that what we call The Old Testament is referred to by Jews as the Tanakh. This word is derived from the first letters of the three sections, the Torah (the Law), the Nevi'im (the Prophets), and the Ketuvim (the writings). Since Jeremiah was the first of the prophets in the Nevi'im, it was a common practice to refer to all prophecies as being from Jeremiah, that is, from “the prophets.”

## **Jesus Before Pilate**

### **Matthew 27:11-14**

**<sup>11</sup>Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus said, “You have said so.” <sup>12</sup>But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he gave no answer. <sup>13</sup>Then Pilate said to him, “Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?” <sup>14</sup>But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.**

**Luke 23:1-12** – <sup>1</sup>Then the whole company of them arose and brought him before Pilate. <sup>2</sup>And they began to accuse him, saying, “We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ, a king.” <sup>3</sup>And Pilate asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” And he answered him, “You have said so.” <sup>4</sup>Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, “I find no guilt in this man.” <sup>5</sup>But they were urgent, saying, “He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee even to this place.” <sup>6</sup>When Pilate heard this, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. <sup>7</sup>And when he learned that he belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him over to Herod, who was himself in Jerusalem at that time. <sup>8</sup>When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had long desired to see him, because he had heard about him, and he was hoping to see some sign done by him. <sup>9</sup>So he questioned him at some length, but he made no answer. <sup>10</sup>The chief priests and the scribes stood by, vehemently accusing him. <sup>11</sup>And Herod with his soldiers treated him with contempt and mocked him. Then, arraying him in splendid clothing, he sent him back to Pilate. <sup>12</sup>And Herod and Pilate became friends with each other that very day, for before this they had been at enmity with each other.

**John 18:28-40** – <sup>28</sup>Then they led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to the governor's headquarters. It was early morning. They themselves did not enter the governor's headquarters, so that they would not be defiled, but could eat the Passover. <sup>29</sup>So Pilate went outside to them and said, “What accusation do you bring against this man?” <sup>30</sup>They answered him, “If this man were not doing evil, we would not have delivered him over to you.” <sup>31</sup>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.” <sup>32</sup>This was to fulfill the word that Jesus had spoken to show by what kind of death he was going to die. <sup>33</sup>So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” <sup>34</sup>Jesus answered, “Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?” <sup>35</sup>Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?” <sup>36</sup>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. But my kingdom is not from the world.”<sup>37</sup> Then Pilate said to him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.”<sup>38</sup> Pilate said to him, “What is truth?” After he had said this, he went back outside to the Jews and told them, “I find no guilt in him.”<sup>39</sup> But you have a custom that I should release one man for you at the Passover. So do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?”<sup>40</sup> They cried out again, “Not this man, but Barabbas!” Now Barabbas was a robber.

### **Notes:**

Matthew refers to Pilate as the “governor.” This is from the Greek word, *hēgemōn*, which refers to a leader or a ruler. The Romans would refer to Pilate as a procurator, that is, the imperial governor assigned by the Emperor. Pontius Pilate was the sixth Roman procurator to serve in Judea. He was not liked by the Jews because he did things that deliberately violated their Law which he deliberately did to provoke them. He was a ruthless person who was more than willing to have people killed to accomplish his purposes. However, Pilate’s position was always rather precarious because of his bad relationship with Israel and because of Rome’s changing policy with the Jews.

The chief priests and scribes refused to enter the governor’s palace for this trial because it would make them ceremonially defiled and it would prevent them from eating the Passover. As a result, according to John’s gospel account, Pilate came outside to talk to them and hear their accusations.

The Jewish leaders accused Jesus of three crimes. They claimed that He was guilty of misleading the nation, forbidding the paying of taxes, and claiming to be a king. (Slide 4) Pilate ignored the first two charges, probably because they were difficult to prove. He chose to focus on the fact that Jesus claimed to be king, because anyone claiming to be a king was considered a threat to Rome. Finding Jesus guilty of claiming to be a king would both please the Jews and impress the Emperor at the same time.

This is now the most critical of the trials that examined Jesus. Pilate, as the imperial governor, had the power to condemn Jesus to death by crucifixion if he determined that He was a threat to Rome. Or, he could find him not-guilty and release Him. Pilate questioned Jesus about the other charges brought against him by the chief priests and elders, but Jesus did not respond. Then, apparently to save time and effort, he asked Jesus directly, “Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus replied that what Pilate said was true, He was the King of the Jews. Jesus then explained His kingship,

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. But my kingdom is not from the world.

This convinced Pilate that Jesus was not a revolutionary and, therefore, was not a threat to Rome. So, Pilate went outside to tell the scribes and pharisees that he found no fault in Jesus. This was the first time that Pilate declared Jesus to be innocent. However, this caused the religious leaders to call out more vociferously, “He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee even to this place.” Then, hearing that Jesus was from Galilee, he sent Jesus to Herod, hoping that Herod would solve his political predicament for him.

Herod had heard of Jesus and had been hoping that he could see Jesus do some miracle. However, Jesus had already been declared innocent by Pilate, so He was not required to answer any more questions and he remained silent before Herod. Frustrated that not only was Jesus not going to perform a miracle for him, but that He wouldn’t answer a single question from him, Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate.

## Preparing The Passover

### **Matthew 27:15-23**

<sup>15</sup>Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. <sup>16</sup>And they had then a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. <sup>17</sup>So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?” <sup>18</sup>For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up. <sup>19</sup>Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, “Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream.” <sup>20</sup>Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. <sup>21</sup>The governor again said to them, “Which of the two do you want me to release for you?” And they said, “Barabbas.” <sup>22</sup>Pilate said to them, “Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?” They all said, “Let him be crucified!” <sup>23</sup>And he said, “Why? What evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Let him be crucified!”

**Mark 15:6-11** – <sup>6</sup>Now at the feast he used to release for them one prisoner for whom they asked. <sup>7</sup>And among the rebels in prison, who had committed murder in the insurrection, there was a man called Barabbas. <sup>8</sup>And the crowd came up and began to ask Pilate to do as he usually did for them. <sup>9</sup>And he answered them, saying, “Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?” <sup>10</sup>For he perceived that it was out of envy that the chief priests had delivered him up. <sup>11</sup>But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release for them Barabbas instead.

**Luke 23:13-25** – <sup>13</sup>Pilate then called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, <sup>14</sup>and said to them, “You brought me this man as one who was misleading the people. And after examining him before you, behold, I did not find this man guilty of any of your charges against him. <sup>15</sup>Neither did Herod, for he sent him back to us. Look, nothing deserving death has been done by him. <sup>16</sup>I will therefore punish and release him.” <sup>18</sup>But they all cried out together, “Away with this man, and release to us Barabbas”— <sup>19</sup>a man who had been thrown into prison for an insurrection started in the city and for murder. <sup>20</sup>Pilate addressed them once more, desiring to release Jesus, <sup>21</sup>but they kept shouting, “Crucify, crucify him!” <sup>22</sup>A third time he said to them, “Why? What evil has he done? I have found in him no guilt deserving death. I will therefore punish and release him.” <sup>23</sup>But they were urgent, demanding with loud cries that he should be crucified. And their voices prevailed. <sup>24</sup>So Pilate decided that their demand should be granted. <sup>25</sup>He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, for whom they asked, but he delivered Jesus over to their will.

### **Notes:**

Having received Jesus back from Herod, Pilate was now once again faced with making a decision that could affect his position with Rome and with the Jews. This was the third Roman trial that Jesus faced. (Slide 5) After Jesus was returned from Herod, Pilate’s wife came to him and pleaded with him not to do anything rash regarding Jesus because of a dream that she’d had. At this point it appears that Pilate was determined to release Jesus, (Slide 6) so he went back outside to speak to the Scribes and Pharisees.

Pilate told the crowd that he had found nothing deserving of death in Jesus and neither had Herod. This was the second time that Pilate declared Jesus to be innocent. So, Pilate told the crowd that he was going to punish Jesus and then release Him. This was the point where Pilate offered to release either Jesus or Barabbas in keeping with the Passover custom. He probably selected Barabbas because he was such a notorious criminal, having stirred up an insurrection against Rome and having committed murder as well. Surely, he thought, the people would not want him to release the likes of Barabbas!

However, the Chief Priests and Scribes had so stirred up the people that they demanded Barabbas be released to them. There is an interesting word play here. The Aramaic word *abba* means “a father” and the Aramaic word *bar* means “a son.” Therefore, Barabbas means “a son of a father.” So, in asking for Barabbas, the people were saying, “we want a man released, a son of a father, not our God, The Son of The Father.”

## **Pilate Washes his Hands**

### **Matthew 27:24-26**

**<sup>24</sup>So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves.” <sup>25</sup>And all the people answered, “His blood be on us and on our children!” <sup>26</sup>Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified.**

**Mark 15:12-15** – <sup>12</sup>And Pilate again said to them, “Then what shall I do with the man you call the King of the Jews?” <sup>13</sup>And they cried out again, “Crucify him.” <sup>14</sup>And Pilate said to them, “Why? What evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Crucify him.” <sup>15</sup>So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.

### **Notes:**

Realizing that he would not be able to persuade the crowd to have Jesus released, Pilate performed his now famous hand washing, while declaring himself innocent. He thought that in doing so, he was releasing himself from any responsibility in Jesus’ death. The people responded that they and their children were responsible.

What is interesting to note is that these people and their children were severely judged by God. Less than 40 years after Jesus’ crucifixion, Jerusalem was sacked and many of the people were slaughtered.

So, my question is, “Who was responsible for Jesus’ death? Was it Pilate? Was it the religious leaders? Was it the people of Jerusalem? From a strictly human viewpoint, it was all of them. In fact, it was all of mankind. However, from a divine viewpoint, Jesus was responsible for His own death. We will see from next week’s lesson that Jesus was not killed. He gave up His life and He did it for you and me.

Before Jesus was crucified, however, Pilate had Him scourged. Scourging is performed with a whip that is made up of a number of leather straps, each one having pieces of bone and metal tied-in along the length of the strap. As it was applied to the back of the victim it was also pulled sharply. The effect was to tear open the skin along the entire area of the back and sides.

## **Jesus is Mocked**

### **Matthew 27:27-31**

**<sup>27</sup>Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole battalion before him. <sup>28</sup>And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, <sup>29</sup>and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” <sup>30</sup>And they spit on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. <sup>31</sup>And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him and led him away to crucify him.**

**Mark 15:16-20** – <sup>16</sup>And the soldiers led him away inside the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters), and they called together the whole battalion. <sup>17</sup>And they clothed him in a purple cloak, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on him. <sup>18</sup>And they began to salute him, “Hail, King of the Jews!” <sup>19</sup>And they were striking his head with a reed and spitting on him and kneeling down in homage to him. <sup>20</sup>And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. And they led him out to crucify him.

**Luke 22:63-65** – <sup>63</sup>Now the men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking him as they beat him. <sup>64</sup>They also blindfolded him and kept asking him, “Prophecy! Who is it that struck you?” <sup>65</sup>And they said many other things against him, blaspheming him.

**John 19:1-15** – <sup>1</sup>Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him. <sup>2</sup>And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head and arrayed him in a purple robe. <sup>3</sup>They came up to him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” and struck him with their hands. <sup>4</sup>Pilate went out again and said to them, “See, I am bringing him out to you that you may know that I find no guilt in him.” <sup>5</sup>So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, “Behold the man!” <sup>6</sup>When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, “Crucify him, crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no guilt in him.” <sup>7</sup>The Jews answered him, “We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has made himself the Son of God.” <sup>8</sup>When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid. <sup>9</sup>He entered his headquarters again and said to Jesus, “Where are you from?” But Jesus gave him no answer. <sup>10</sup>So Pilate said to him, “You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?” <sup>11</sup>Jesus answered him, “You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin.” <sup>12</sup>From then on Pilate sought to release him, but the Jews cried out, “If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend. Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar.” <sup>13</sup>So when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Stone Pavement, and in Aramaic Gabbatha. <sup>14</sup>Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover. It was about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews, “Behold your King!” <sup>15</sup>They cried out, “Away with him, away with him, crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your King?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar.”

### Notes:

Having been scourged, Jesus was taken into the courtyard of the palace where as many as 300 or 400 soldiers had gathered. Here they placed a military cloak on Him. They also wove a crown of thorns and put it on His head. At one point, they also blindfolded Him. Then, they hit him over the head with a reed and challenged Him to prophesy who hit Him. Imagine how those soldiers will feel when they stand before their Judge and He tells them that they were one of those who hit him. They also spit on Him and plucked out some of His beard and hit Him in the face. (Slide 7)

Pilate then brought Jesus out again to the crowd. He said, “See, I am bringing him out to you that you may know that I find no guilt in him.” This is the third time that Pilate declared Jesus to be innocent. At this point, Jesus’ face would have been swollen and bloodied by the beating, the slapping, and the crown of thorns. He was still wearing the military robe, which by now had probably begun to stick to his bloodied back. Pilate said to the people, “Behold, the man.” The Chief Priests responded by shouting, “Crucify him!”

Taking Him back inside, Pilate told him, “Don’t you know that I have the authority to release you or to crucify you?” Jesus’ response was, “You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above.”

Pilate took Jesus out one more time to the crowd and said, “Behold your King!” The people replied by shouting, “Away with him, away with him, crucify him!” Pilate’s response was “Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no guilt in him.” This is the fourth time that Pilate declared Jesus to be innocent. (Slide 8)

Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your King?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar.” Keep in mind that these were the very people who despised the Roman occupation and hated having to show homage to Caesar.

Then the soldiers took Him back inside and stripped the robe off Him. This would have had the effect of ripping open the wounds on his back, causing excruciating pain. Finally, they put His own clothes back on Him and led Him away to be crucified.

## **So What?**

We typically think of the actual crucifixion as the painful part of Jesus’ giving His life for us. From the descriptions of the trials that we have just looked at, we see that there was much physical pain in the treatment Jesus received from the Roman soldiers. The worst part of Jesus’ trials, however, was the humiliation that he suffered at the hands of the religious leaders and the Roman soldiers. He was mocked, physically abused, and twice stripped of his clothing.

Here is what the Prophet Isaiah said about our Savior.

Who has believed our report? And to whom is the arm of Jehovah revealed? For He comes up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground; He has no form nor majesty that we should see Him, nor an appearance that we should desire Him. *He is* despised and rejected of men; a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as it were a hiding of faces from Him, He being despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He *was* wounded for our transgressions; *He was* bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace *was* on Him; and with His stripes we ourselves are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, each one to his own way; and Jehovah has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and He was afflicted; yet He opened not His mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before its shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth.

(Isaiah 53:1-7)

Recently, we celebrated Easter and the wondrous news that He is risen! This is, without a doubt, the single most important fact in the history of mankind. Without it, there is no hope for anyone! Let us all hold on tightly to His promises for our future because of His resurrection.

However, as we live out the remainder of our lives, let’s keep in mind what our futures won’t contain because of Him. We won’t be bound in Sheol and we won’t ever be cast into the Lake of Fire! Jesus suffered so that we won’t have to. Even though we deserve it, we won’t suffer eternal torment because - even though He didn’t deserve it, Jesus suffered loneliness, abuse, humiliation, and torture for us.



Jesus Christ completely fulfilled the requirements of the Passover Lamb. On the 10<sup>th</sup> of Nisan He was ushered into the city with shouts of “Hosannah to the Son of David. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.” For the next four days he was observed, he was challenged, he was arrested, accused, and tried in both religious and civil courts of law and at least 4 times He was declared innocent. Even Judas declared that he had betrayed an innocent man.

### **Now What?**

You and I are not innocent, not by a long shot! We deserve what Jesus received and much, much more. But, by the mercy of God, every Christian is already declared as innocent and righteous because of what Jesus suffered.

I ask of you only two things. The first is that you examine yourself in the light of God’s grace and mercy and confirm in your own heart that Jesus is indeed your Savior and your Lord. The second thing that I ask each and every one of you to do is to commit to living out the remainder of your life in humble obedience to Him. Get your focus off yourself. Focus on God and on others. Live each day of your life with the hope of hearing, “Well done, good and faithful servant!”

**Let’s pray.**

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