



The Official Testimony of Jesus Christ

Luke 22:66-71

April 20, 2025

We are in an expizish, expositonal study of the Gospel of Luke, meaning that we go chronologically or, or passage-by-passage through the Gospel of Luke. And we happen to be in Luke 22 today. Luke 22 is a record of the events, days prior to Jesus' resurrection from the dead, which we're celebrating today. So if you have your Bibles, please turn to Luke 22. We're gonna start our reading for this morning in Luke 22 verse 66. It's a very long chapter, but it shows, this chapter shows, and this section in particular shows the Jewish leadership kinda formally wrapping up proceedings in their condemnation of Jesus Christ. Luke 22 verse 66. Follow along as I read.

"And as the day came, the council of the elders of the people assembled, both chief priests and scribes, and they led him away to their Sanhedrin, saying, 'If you are the Christ, tell us.' But he said to them, 'If I tell you, you will not believe, and if I ask a question, you will not answer. But, from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God.' And they all said, 'Are you the Son of God then?' And he said to them, 'You yourselves

say that I am.' Then they said, 'What further need do we have of testimony? We have heard it ourselves from his own mouth.'"

What Luke records there is not the first examination of Christ, not the first tribunal of the Jews, but it's actually the third time that he has stood before them to answer. This is the third examination that took place after he was arrested. And in this examination, which is, it's more formal, it's official, the Jewish leadership is kind of dotting their I's and crossing their T's before they go to Pilate and seek the death penalty. And that's in the very next account, in Luke 23:1 and following. So this is basically the record of a formal meeting, which may sound to some of you like a bit of a bore, a, a record of a formal meeting. Can we, just, just reading the minutes?

But I promise you, it's not only not boring; the testimony that Jesus gives here, and, by the way, this is a testimony before death; you might call it a deathbed confession, this testimony of a man facing death by execution, his testimony turns out to be the ground of all hope, and the basis for eternal life, forgiveness before God, reconciliation to God, the doing away of our eternal punishment because it was poured on Christ, and we being received in Christ. That's what he is telling them. They miss it. They don't understand it. They're predisposed and predetermined not to accept it. That's

what he's saying in his testimony. And for those with eyes to see, and ears to hear, and hearts to understand and believe, this is eternal life. These are the words of life.

Let me give you three points in our outline today, starting with this first point, number one: The suitable institution. The suitable institution. By institution, I'm referring to the institution, the Court of the Sanhedrin. The suitable institution. What we've just read in the text happened early Friday morning, right after sunrise, so right around 6:00 AM and following is when this occurred. Most of the characters in this story have been up all night. Jesus spent the previous night, Thursday night, eating Passover with his disciples. He's in fellowship with them. He's in intense conversation with his twelve disciples. When Judas left the room, that mean, meant him and eleven. He's given them instructions. He's given them warnings. We've kinda seen all that as we've w- worked our way through, through this chapter.

But the religious leaders, while Jesus is meeting with his disciples, they have been planning, scheming, coordinating, all preparing to arrest Jesus, and after that to find a way to legitimize their long-standing desire to kill him. Last 24 hours has been a flurry of activity for the, for these elders and chief priests. They've been

conspiring with one another. They've been conspiring with Judas the betrayer. They've been busy informing Pontius Pilate of their plans to arrest this potential insurrectionist. By the way, he's a Galilean. He's another would-be Messiah, very big, big threat to social order. They're busy securing a cohort of Roman soldiers to accompany them and take them to make the arrest. They have to inform all the members of the Sanhedrin, and all the servants of those members of the Sanhedrin, Sanhedrin's 70 men, so 70 in plan, plus servants. The Sanhedrin, like the Jewish Supreme Court, all the support staff, all their presence, their judgement would soon be required. Their schedule's packed. Lots to do if they're gonna accomplish their aim of killing Jesus before the Sabbath starts.

Now, if all that seems a bit rushed, the timeframe a bit pressed, a bit forced, it's because it was. They smashed through every barrier and squeezed the case past all legality, leaving almost no law or tradition of their own unbent, unbroken, and unviolated. Backing up from this a little bit, we have to understand it was no secret that the Jewish leaders hated Christ. They hated Jesus. He was the one who exposed and condemned their hypocrisy, repeatedly, all through his ministry. He indicted them for their pride, for their greed that drove their lifestyles and their ministries; the lawlessness that lay beneath a, a mask of politeness and socially-acceptable religion. And though he himself, Jesus walked righteously, though he spoke truly,

they hated him for it. They hated him for his righteous life and for his true speech, for his truth telling.

The religious leaders could not find cause to condemn his behavior, how he lived. They couldn't contradict his teaching either, demonstrate any error in it. Quite the contrary, he always was showing it was their teaching that was riddled with error. Their teaching was based on errant interpretations of Scripture, because they just received as doctrines from God, really what was traditions and opinions from men, passed down throughout the generations. And so, unable to condemn any of his actions, his behavior, his speech, since he was holy, since he lived an impeccably sinless life; unable to find any fault in his teaching, debate with him, win a debate, trip him up. He taught as one having authority, not as one of their scribes. He had authority from Heaven. Unable to expose even his miracles, his works of power as tricks of a charlatan, which they hoped to expose, but they couldn't. They couldn't deny his miracles. He performed all his miracles openly, subjected all of his work to public scrutiny, making his work easy to falsify but also easy to verify.

The fact that they rejected him shows the stubbornness of pride, stubbornness of prideful sinners who will not humble themselves, who will not admit their error, who refuse to repent of, not only their

pride and their self-centeredness, but their many sins that follow from that. They will not believe him. They will not fall down in worship. They will not just thank him. Thank him. Thank him for healing people, thank him for raising someone from the dead. Thank you for feeding the 5,000 on one occasion and, plus women and children, 10-, 15-, 20-thousand people. Did that twice. No, the Jewish leaders took a very different approach. Instead, out of envy, jealousy, they tried to discredit him before the people. They maligned him, telling people that Jesus was really in league with Satan, that his miracles were performed by the power of the devil.

Just a month or two before the, what we're reading here, Jesus did a particularly devilish thing. He had the audacity to raise a man named Lazarus from the dead. Many rejoiced as they marveled over this act of mercy and power. We read this in, in John's Gospel. The apostle John records this: After the raising of Lazarus from the dead, it says in verse 44, he called Lazarus out of the tomb. He'd been there four days. They warned him and said "Bodies that have been in the tomb four days, Jesus, you have to know they don't, don't smell right." He said, It's Okay, "cried out with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come forth,' and the man who had died came forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings. His face was wrapped around with a cloth. And Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him and let him go.'"

Remarkable, isn't it, because he's dead in the tomb, bound and he calls, his voice calling out to dead ears, a brain that's dead, ears that can't receive stimuli. What had to happen in order for Lazarus to hear his command and come out of the tomb? He had to be made alive. It's a picture of regeneration. It's a picture of being born again. Anyway, I digress. Many of the Jews who came to Mary and saw what had been done, they believed in Jesus. Of course they would. But some of them, some of them went to the Pharisees and tattled. They told on him, on him, the things which Jesus had done. Jewish leadership saw this miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead in an entirely different light.

John records this, John 11:47 and following, "Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees, they gathered the Sanhedrin together." No small feat by the way, got to send messengers out throughout the city, get all the 70 men, elders, all their servants and all that together. They gather the Sanhedrin together and this is what they're saying. They're saying, what are we doing? For this man is doing many signs. If we let him go on like this, all will believe in him. The Romans are gonna come, take away both our place and our nation. Don't they realize someone who can raise someone from the dead? If he's on your side, you don't need to worry about the Romans.

One of them, Caiaphas, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You," guys, "know nothing at all. Nor do you take into account that it's better for you that one man should die for the people, that the whole nation should not perish." Make him the lamb, the sacrificial lamb, put him forth. Let's sacrifice one and save all. Very pragmatic, but he was saying more than he knew as John tells us, "he did not say this from himself, but being High Priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but in order that he might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad." Pretty remarkable isn't it, that God would use a, an unbelieving, greed filled, corrupt politician-priest, High Priest like Caiaphas, and yet speak through him. What is that but a warning to all these religious leaders? I mean, if God can speak through Balaam's donkey, God's not prevented from speaking through any donkey. So, says in verse 53, "From that day on they planned together, 'Kill him.'" He just raised a man from the dead and your big plan is to kill this life-giving Savior? So these men, as they anticipated the annual Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, "these chief priests and the Pharisees gave orders," according to that chapter, verse 57, "that if anyone knew where Jesus was, he was to report it so that they might seize him. They're on the lookout for him. Be watching.

Couple months prior to these events, they're lookin' out for him. A week before Passover, Jesus shows up. He's not running. He's right on time, right on schedule, entering into Jerusalem, and he's coming with his disciples. And as he came with his disciples, he's thronged by crowds, excited, praising God, saying, "Blessed be God. Hallelujah. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." He comes into Jerusalem riding on a donkey's colt. That may not mean much to us in our day, but in their culture and given their history, that's a symbolic act. That's an act that not only fulfilled prophecy, but it shows that Jesus is entering into the capital city of the Jews in, in really what is a coronation procession. He is the new King Solomon, coming in to usher a time of peace and a new golden age for Israel, if they'll only repent and believe.

Rather than riding into the, Jerusalem, and going straight to the palace, Jesus doesn't do that. He goes straight into the heart, the real heart of Jerusalem, the real heart of Israel. He goes to the Temple. If you are in Luke 22, just flip a couple of pages back to Luke 19. Notice what he did 19, chapter 19, verse 45. You'll see what happened that day. "Jesus entered into the Temple and began to drive out those who were selling, saying to them, 'It is written, 'My house shall be a house of prayer, but you've made it a robber's den.'"

That angered the chief priests and the scribes. They consider that Temple, that Temple complex, that whole environment, they consider that their territory. That's their turf. That's, that's where that's and that's because they personally profited from the lucrative contracts that they made with buyers, sellers, and money changers. They sent up their own booths for Temple-approved sacrifices for any traveler coming in to buy a sacrificial lamb, pigeons, doves, whatever it was. There's a markup though. All the money changing that went on, big markup. And all this money that was flowing through the Temple, as thousands and hundreds of thousands of pilgrims came to three annual feasts a year to Jerusalem, this being one of 'em, they were making money hand over fist. So when he came in and identified exactly what they were, you're not, you're not spiritual leaders, you're not shepherds, you're thieves, you're robbers. You are, you are bilking these people. You're using the pretense of religion to steal. They wanted him dead. They wanted him dead so badly, but they feared the response of the people.

If you're still in Luke 19, look at verse 47. "He was teaching daily in the Temple." He's unafraid. "But the chief priests and the scribes and the leading men among the people were trying to destroy him. But they couldn't find anything that they might do, for all the people hung on every word that he said." So it would seem they're gonna have to wait. They're gonna have to wait maybe until even after the

Passover, after the feast, when the crowds have thinned, when the people have gone home, when the city is less populated, going back to business as usual. Well, then they'll probably just, they'll try to catch him that way. That seemed to be the plan until we find in Luke 22, in the beginning, opportunity came knocking.

Look at Luke 22:1, "Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which is called Passover, was drawing near. And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how they might put him to death, but they were afraid of the people. But Satan entered into Judas, who was called Iscariot, who belonged to the number of the twelve. And he went away," and he came knocking. He came to "discuss with the chief priests and the officers how he might betray him to them. And they were glad, and they agreed to give him money. And so he consented, and began seeking a good opportunity to betray him to them apart from the crowd." Jesus, Judas found that opportunity. Thursday night he's gathered with Jesus and the rest of the disciples to the Upper Room, gathered there to celebrate Passover, gathered there to hear Jesus interpret the meaning, and to teach them, and spend time with them. He eagerly desired, earnestly desired to be with his men. And there Judas found his opportunity, that Thursday night.

The night that the Galilean Jews celebrated Passover, he snuck out of the room, he rendezvoused with the chief priests and their officers, led them first to the Upper Room. When they didn't find Jesus and his disciples there because they had departed for the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus' need to pray, so then he led them to the garden, 'cause he knew that's where he would likely be. That's where he would often be, praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. He led all the officers there to arrest Jesus.

That arrest happened around midnight, maybe a little bit later, but the arresting party brings Jesus back to the house of the High Priest, first stop, to be interrogated and examined by the Jewish leadership: Members of the Sanhedrin, chief priests, scribes, lawyers, legal scholars, and theological scholars. Jewish examination of Jesus happened in basically three stages, or three phases, you might say. The first phase is when Jesus appeared before Annas at the house of the High Priest. Annas is like, he is a High Priest Emeritus, you might say. He's in retirement, but, but not really. He's not doing priestly duties anymore, but he's still in the mix. He still wields very significant power to exert a corrupt influence in the Temple, because he's got business interests to protect. So Jesus is there before Annas. Annas questions him. It's really to no effect, so Annas sends him on. You could read all about that in John 18.

The second phase of examination was before Annas' son-in-law, Caiaphas. Caiaphas, he is the current high priest. We heard from him in, out of John 11 just a bit earlier. He is the one who said it would be more expedient for one man to die for all the people. So it's Caiaphas who does the real examining of Jesus in the early, early morning hours of this Friday. Now that Jesus is in custody, he leads this second phase of examination. It's an unofficial examination. And even though no one is keeping minutes and he really doesn't want a record of any of this, what's about to happen, Caiaphas and his minions, they're on a search and destroy mission. They're seeking some way to condemn him, some justifiable means of, of condemning him to death.

Luke doesn't record the second phase. Matthew and Mark do. Matthew 26, Mark 14, you can find that second phase of examination there, all recorded. And they tell us, Ma, Matthew and Mark tell us that they paraded the Sanhedrin members, paraded a bunch of witnesses into the chamber in the high priest's house to testify against Jesus. No witnesses for the defense were provided, by the way, just for the prosecution. Only the prosecution permitted to bring condemnatory testimony against Jesus. It's a blatant miscarriage of justice from start to finish. The witnesses that they brought in? Probably paid off. All of them were inconsistent, contradicted each other, so much so that Jesus just shut down and refused to answer. He's not gonna

dignify this chaos with an answer. Why should he? They can't get the story straight. Even what they testified about his words was a distortion of what he actually said, and demonstrated an obtuseness and an ignorance of anything he might have meant by what he said. So, very wisely, Jesus remains silent. Unlike these clowns, Jesus is maintaining perfect composure. He conducts himself with a regal and a judicial dignity befitting of who he really is, but what is otherwise absent in this kinda kangaroo court. He's just not gonna dignify any of this with an answer.

Caiaphas eventually becomes frustrated with Jesus' silence showing the ineffectiveness of the witness testimony that he probably bought and paid for. So his money goes down the drain. But he exercises at some point a, a high priestly prerogative to put Jesus under solemn oath. He demands an answer to his next question. He says, "I put you under oath by the living God, that you tell us whether you are the Christ, the Son of God." So here's Jesus, now that the High Priest, in his position, he salutes the rank, even if he cannot respect the person. But he answers. Matthew 26:64, "Jesus said to him, 'You've said it yourself. Nevertheless, I tell you,'" he's not gonna let Caiaphas interpret what Christ means, says, "'I tell you, hereafter you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of Heaven.'" Now there's an answer Caiaphas can work with. He charged Jesus with blasphemy on the spot, tearing his robes, making

a big dramatic production out of it, crying blasphemy, blasphemy. He polls all the others, and they all agreed, all of them saying, "He deserves death."

Jewish Christian scholar Alfred Edersheim had this to say about the way this second phase of the examination went down. He says, "The trial and sentence of Jesus in the palace of Caiaphas would have outraged every principle of Jewish criminal law and procedure. Such cases could only be tried, and capital sentence pronounced, in the regular meeting of the Sanhedrin, not as here in the High Priest's Palace. No process might begin in the night. No process could be taken, could take place on Sabbaths or feast days, or even on the eves of them. And in capital cases there was a very elaborate system of warning and cautioning witnesses." End quote.

Obviously none of that happens here. This is not the regular meeting of the Sanhedrin, but very irregular, irregular in every way. It was not held in the Sanhedrin's chambers, the *Lishkat HaGazit*, the Chamber of Hewn Stones, is what that means; place, chamber built into the North wall of the Temple. It was not held in daylight hours. It was held between probably 1:00-5:00 AM. All this done in secrecy, all out of public view. And so, as Edersheim, Edersheim says, quote, "It may be safely affirmed that any Jewish judges, however prejudiced, would not

have acted as the Sanhedras and Caiaphas did on this occasion." End quote. Hear what he's saying. He's saying, look, even the most corrupt, prejudiced, wouldn't do this. This is a, an outrage in the extreme. As one commentator says, "Therefore, since the, quote, "Sanhedrin could hold no valid meeting before daybreak, what had been irregularly done in the night had to be formally transacted after dawn." End quote.

That is what Luke records, the attempt of Caiaphas and all the Sanhedrists to rectify and legitimate, legitimize what was illegitimate. Caiaphas knows, he understands. He knows he has to formalize this. His team of scribes, legal scholars, theologians, lawyers, they all know this is, this whole thing is about to blow wide open in a very public execution. And so they know they gotta provide some legal cover, some legitimate, legitimization of this kangary, kangaroo court that's just been conducted in the hours before. They gotta do something about this. That's what brings us into the text in Luke 22:66. As the sun, says, as the day came, so the sun comes up, dawn breaks, morning comes. These men know light is gonna shine on their post-midnight examinations. They don't want any of that getting out. And so they bring these proceedings into the proper setting at the proper time, the proper place, which is the Sanhedrin. And the Sanhedrin, as our outline point says, is the most suitable institution to conduct this formal, official examination.

So this is the third phase of examination before the Jews. This is where they're gonna formally examine the accused. Again, remember, all the characters in this story have been up all night. We considered this at our Good Friday service just a couple days ago, studying verses 63-65. You can even let your eyes scan those verses. But Jesus has been, in the hours before this, standing before this examination, he's been beaten repeatedly. I mean, he's been blindfolded, hooded, hit in the head again and again. He's in no shape to stand before a tribunal to be examined, answer charges, give testimony. But that matters not to them. They're not after anything he's got to say except the answers to their questions. So they pummel the accused. They don't want him thinking too clearly. Rob him of sleep. I mean, this is, if we saw any of this on the news, we'd be demanding some kind of a committee investigation. All those people'd be fired, right? Not here.

We read in verse 66, "As the day came, the council of elders of the people assembled, both chief priests and scribes, and they led him away to their Sanhedrin." So they leave the High Priest's house and go to their Sanhedrin. What they had decided earlier, between the hours of 1 and 5:00 AM, in the hours of darkness, lil, literally and figuratively, what they decided earlier must be made official. And they have just the institution for it, to formalize this death penalty: Their Sanhedrin. They've been using institutions like the

Temple and the Sanhedrin to strengthen and reinforce their power and insulate them from scrutiny for years. This is just another really good use of an institution to oppress the people.

So they bring Jesus into their Chamber of Hewn Stones. It's a very large, basilica-shaped hall. You can think of it as a veritable Hall of Justice, not aptly named, and he can stand before this bona fide official Sanhedrin body, ancient Israel's version of our own Supreme Court. 70 men made up the great Sanhedrin, plus the High Priest making a 71st man. He presided over the meeting and, if needed, he would cast the tie-breaking vote. So you can imagine court stenographers and recorders and servants are all gonna ensure the meeting minutes are recorded properly, but also properly sanitized and then made a matter of public permanent record. Now that everyone is gathered, the meeting can commence.

Brings us to a second point, number two: The formal examination. The formal examination. Now, in this formal examination, since everyone had already agreed that Jesus deserves death, no heat, no need to rehash all that. They didn't need to parade in, traipse in a bunch a, a witnesses, embarrass themselves with all the contradictory, inconsistent testimony. All they had to do was just get Jesus on record, admit in this formal setting what he had said just a few hours

earlier in the private examination and informal setting. Just, just say that. Once again, they're not after the truth at all. They're not here seeking understanding. This is no trial in any sense of the word. They're not seeking justice in any true sense. It's just a formality. It just is to give the pretense and appearance of justice. Just check a box of legal propriety so they can take the case to Pilate and seek the death penalty that they want, they want.

So they start in verse 67, and like good lawyers, they ask a question they already know the answer to. They are gonna frame the argument. They're gonna start with a, with a easy softball. He answered this just an hour or two earlier. "If you are the Christ, tell us." That's a conditional sentence, an if-then statement, right? Conditional. And this conditional, there's several kinds of conditional sentences in the Greek language. The kind of condition this is, they determine, they're or they assume, I should say, they assume the truth of the, if statement. So you could legitimately translate this, not "'If' you are the Christ," but "'Since' you're the Christ." We're gonna assume this is true. "Since you're the Christ, just tell us." No big deal. Just say it again. We'll jot that down. Simply a matter of procedure. Then get him to say, "Yeah, I'm the Christ." Hey, meeting adjourned. They're off to see the governor. Off to put him to death.

Why is that? Why would him saying "Yep, I'm the Christ," why would that satisfy? Why would that end the meeting right there so they can move on to the governor? Because Roman governors had no tolerance at, at all, whatsoever, for would-be messiahs. These self-appointed christs popped up here and there. Many of them had come from Galilee, by the way, Jesus' home region. They caused a lot of social, political upheaval in Roman-ruled Jerusalem. These were revolutionaries, insurrectionists. They would love nothing more than to plunge a sword into the neck of a Roman soldier, or any of Herod's people, since he was also in league with the Romans. Had Jesus simply said yes in answer to their question, he'd basically be allowing them to frame the situation in their terms and not his. He'd make this, it would make this about politics rather than about theology, rather than about religion, rather than about truth. So Jesus doesn't fall into their trap. He's not gonna allow his answer to aid them in pursuing their agenda.

And so when he starts speaking, he begins by exposing their false pretenses. Remember, they didn't ask with any interest to verify or falsify his messianic identity. He wants to point that out. He said to them, "I tell you, if I tell you, you will not believe. And if I ask a question, you will not answer." He's using a diff, those are also conditional statements, If-then statements; he's using a different form the Greek conditional which basically says, "If I tell you," and

look, there's no, I'm not saying I'm going to. That's not yet determined whether I'm gonna tell you. "If I tell you, you will not believe." If I ask a question, which I'm, I don't know if I'm goin' to, in this setting, you're not even gonna answer, though.

In other words, he's saying, he's just telling 'em straight out, your minds are already made up. You've chosen to believe I'm a false Christ. You think I'm a mere pretender. That's your line, that's your view, that's your position. No matter what the evidence says, you will not consider the facts. You won't entertain anything but your own predetermined viewpoint. So by answering that way, by starting that way, Jesus first exposes the injustice of what's going on here. They, they're making no accusations, by the way. They don't call any witnesses. They're simply baiting him, getting him to incriminate himself, which is another miscarriage of justice.

The secondly, Jesus is doing this, saying this, because he wants to penetrate deeper. He wants to demonstrate, show the animus of this court, this supposedly, this august body of supposedly honorable judges, Israel's very Supreme Court, is knowingly, consciously prejudiced against the accused. This is no fair trial. So he says, "If I tell you, you will not believe." And that's way stronger, actually, in the Greek. This is the strongest possible form of negation in the

Greek language, ou me, "You will by no means believe." I'm emphatically denying that anything I say is gonna lead to your faith. You're not gonna believe me. You're gonna, you're gonna trust me. Same thing when he says, "If I ask a question, you will ou me answer. You will by no means answer." You're not here to dialogue. You're not here to hear from me. They're not seeking understanding. They're on a completely different agenda. No information he gives 'em, no, no question that he asked, no honest attempt to engage them, nothing is gonna succeed, because they are willfully opposed to him. Their minds are sealed shut.

There are many today, aren't there, who are just like these religious leaders. They are willfully opposed to Christ, to Christianity, to God, to the morality and the righteousness that he proclaims. They're willfully shut against it. They don't listen. They don't want to listen. Why? Because they're morally committed to their sin. They have already chosen their idol. They've already chosen their way. They've already chosen their belief system, and they refuse to entertain anything else that will upset their apple cart. These, there were, many today refuse to consider who Jesus really is, what he's really done, what he said, what he taught. They've, they've made up their minds about Christ, about Christianity, about Christians. They refuse to take in and consider any evidence with an open mind. Instead,

they've just judged Christians to be stupid sheep. Sheep we are; not stupid, though.

They judge Christianity itself to be oppressive, harmful, a menace to society. That's what it's turning into today. That's the narrative. It's not a matter of information, either. It's a matter of the will. It's a matter of wanting to live how they want to live, think what they want to think, do what they want to do, feel how they want to feel, with nobody challenging them, no one allowed to say otherwise. In fact, not only that, not only do you have to tolerate their feelings, and who they think they are and all that; you have to affirm it, you have to go even further and celebrate it. They want to be accountable to no one but themselves and themselves alone. That's these men too. This is nothing new, what we're seeing in our culture, nothing new.

And so Jesus is not gonna let them remain comfortable with that. He's not, he's not done, by the way, responding to their injunction, "If you're the Christ, tell us." He's gonna respond. He's gonna respond in the affirmative. But when he responds, he's gonna do so on his own terms. And he's gonna do so in a way that is not gonna allow their conscience to rest with any peace at all. He said to them, "If I tell you, you will not believe, and if I ask, you will not answer. But from

now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God." Basically, he's repeating what he said hours before in the second phase of the examination. "From now on, though," he says, "From this point forward, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God."

See what he did there? He responded to their command, telling them that he indeed is the Christ, but he will not let them fill in the term Christ with their own meaning. They're not, not, he's not gonna let them misrize, rih, misrepresent him as some political revolutionary, some insurrectionist. That's not him. What he does here in his answer is he combines the picture in Daniel Chapter 7 about the Son of Man standing before the Ancient of Days, and he joins that to the picture in Psalm 110 about Christ sitting at the right hand of God; about Him being the king, and the judge, and even a priest after the order of Melchizedek. Amazing Psalm.

And so, by combining these two pictures in his answer, and, which alludes very clearly, all these men are Bible scholars, they know exactly what he's saying. They know exactly what he's alluding to. And so what he does in his answer is construes his role as the Christ in a way that transcends all their petty politics, that confronts all their lies, and warns their conscience. He puts 'em on notice. You think

you're judging me? I'm the Son of Man. And I will return to judge you. Whatever this, the court recorders do to try to sanitize this part of the transcript that's gonna go into the official permanent record of minutes, we have the transcript, don't we? Can't be scrubbed from here. Can't be sanitized from God's omniscient view, his gaze, his record.

When we go back to Daniel Chapter 7, we read this in verse 13 and 14, What Daniel says, he says, "I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of Heaven, one like a Son of Man was coming, and he came up to the Ancient of Days," that's a picture of God on his throne, "he came near before him. And to him," to the Son of Man "was given dominion, glory, and a Kingdom that all peoples, nations and men of every language might serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not be taken away, and his Kingdom is one which will not be destroyed." The one that Daniel saw in the night visions, that's Jesus. He's being shown a picture of who Jesus really is. This is the one who's standing here being examined by the Sanhedrin. They clearly have no idea who they're dealing with.

And in Psalm 110, David writes, first verse, "The Lord says to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies as a footstool for your feet.'" That's the direct allusion. David continues in that

same Psalm, saying, "Yahweh will stretch forth your strong scepter from Zion, saying, 'Have dominion in the midst of your enemies.'"

Another verse says, "Yahweh is at your right hand, he will crush kings in the day of his wrath, and render justice among the nations."

Interesting. He's seated at Yahweh's right hand, and then, now, Yahweh is portrayed at his right hand, crushing kings in the day of his wrath, rendering justice among the nations. Again, these guys have no idea who they're dealing with.

This Jesus is no mere man. He's clearly no would-be false Messiah. He's not there to dabble in their regional politics. He's not a pretender. He's in a completely different league, on a totally other plane. Transcends all this. And he's putting them on notice. The men in the Sanhedrin think they're the judges. They think Pontius Pilate, he's the sheriff in town. He exercises the real power, power over life and death. They didn't listen to what Jesus said in Luke chapter 12, verses 4-5, "Don't be afraid of those who kill the body, after that have nothing more they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear. Fear the one who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into Hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him."

They're not listening. Blinded by prejudice and hatred, they're so blinded by greed, trying to hold on to all their money, trying to

watch over and protect all their petty fiefdoms, trying to protect all their earthly interests; so blind by that stuff and all that pride, they just can't see him. They can't see he's the judge, not them. They can't see that he stands before them, bound in custody, and yet it's gonna be they who are bound, standing before him, forced to bow by his scepter, his rod of iron.

"Everything's changing," Jesus said, start of verse 69. "From now on." It's a new day. Time of his death is upon them. They unwittingly will play their part. They will do the devil's work, sending him to the Cross. But at this moment, at the hinge point of history, at the watershed moment after which nothing will ever be the same again, God will act to raise Jesus from the dead, accept this sacrifice for sins, bring him to sit at His own right hand of divine authority and divine power, exactly as the writer to the Hebrews says, Hebrews 1:3, "When he had made purification of sins, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high." Same thing Jesus is saying. "But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God." Time for you to repent of your sins and believe.

As if to illustrate how Jesus started his answer, "If I tell you, you will by no means believe, and if I ask a question, you will by no means answer," the Sanhedrin responds in kind. They're not really

listening to all that he said, but they did perk up at the response. Notice verse 70. "And they all said, 'Are you the Son of God, then?' Now, in a formal session of the Sanhedrin body, the questioning was conducted by a single spokesman. This is how a council of 70 men and many other people milling about, this is how they can maintain, maintain order, decorum, by having a spokesman act as the official inquisitor to pose questions to the accused. Don't want everybody callin' out and yellin' and shouting. Got one guy who's gonna be in charge of the proceedings. But notice in verse 70 the emphasis on all. "They all said." Luke's painting a picture for us, that whatever Jesus said got 'em all perked up and paying attention. They all had something to say to that. All of them started talking. All of 'em wanted to pose this follow up question to Jesus, and they all had the same thing on their minds.

It's very clear to them here that Jesus didn't consider himself to be a mere man, but more than a man. Their view of the Messiah was faulty. They didn't see the Messiah, the Christ, which means, Anointed one, they didn't see that as a, a claim of deity. They just saw it as being God's Chosen One. Still a man, though. Nothin', nothin' else to really regard there. Good leader, military force, powerful, political. They think he's just saying he's a man. But now they're detecting, in his answer they're detecting, and rightly so, that Jesus holds a very different view of the Messiah, a very different view than they do

about the nature of Christ, that he's not only God's chosen man, there's something else going on in his nature. On what basis are they seeing this? On what basis are they discerning something else in his speech? Darrell Bock says that, in their view, quote, "One could stand before God, but one does not sit with him." Mmmm. "You'll see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of God." In their view, Jesus has just profaned the Shekinah, the glory of God, claiming to be able to sit at God's right hand.

They're not about to let this opportunity pass them by. Jesus perhaps may have just cooked his own goose, goin' way too far here, condemning himself by putting himself on par with God. That's blasphemy, pure and simple in their mind. And if that's the case, they have the perfect angle to appeal to Pilate. Jesus threatens political order and social stability because he's a would-be Messiah. Well, now they've got an added bonus here, 'cause now they can have not only favor with Pilate and get the death penalty, but now they can have favor with the people, the people whom they feared, the people who think Jesus is just the greatest thing ever. They can dissipate that delusion right away. This Jesus, a mere man, thinks he's equal with God. I mean, even the am ha'aretz, "the people of the lands," it's kind of a despising term that they had for the people; they're unlearned, ignorant, not studied, not theologically-minded; even they know, they're gonna know

what's wrong with this claim to be equal with God. Who does this Jesus think he is? So they all start asking, "Are you the Son of God then?"

And one more thing to just notice here. We do detect a bit of scorn in this. They, it's like they can't stifle their scoffing. This guffaw is kind of escaping. Hah, really? You're actually claiming to be the Son of God, then? That's your, that's your position? Again, imagine the scene, remembering what Jesus had just gone through the previous couple hours, before being brought into this Chamber of Hewn Stones to stand in this august assembly, the Great Sanhedrin. While all these Sanhedrin members are gettin' showers and dressing in their finest robes, Jesus is being blindfolded and hooded and turned into a human pinata, a plaything for bored officers who are holding him in custody. He's been severely beaten, insulted by being spit upon, and slapped in the face, and then pummeled with fists. So as he stands before them in this chamber, they all dressed to the nines, he is, got dried spit over him, all over him, dried blood caked on his face. He does not look good. Sanhedrin look down on this man with scorn. And they say, So, ha ha, well lemme, lemme get this straight. You think you're the Son of God, then? Really?

We all oughtta take a lesson from this. They ought not to judge by what their eyes see, but by what he says, by the claims that he makes

about himself that ought to have full consideration, that ought to be examined, scrutinized according to the evidence of his life, his miracles, his teaching, his character. They don't do that, though, just as Isaiah said, which we read earlier in our service: "He has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon him, or appearance that we should be attracted to him. In fact, his appearance was marred more than any man, his form more than the sons of men." That's only gonna get worse as the day goes on, right? He's still got to go before Pilate and Herod, and be beaten, mocked by their soldiers and, and then Pilate's soldiers again, crown of thorns on his head. And it's gonna get worse. He's gonna be puffy, and swollen, and beaten, and cut, and bruised, and he's been scourged so the flesh of his back is torn off of him. He is in a bad way. "He was despised and forsaken of men." "Like one from whom men hide their face, he's despised. We didn't esteem him." So you think you're the Son of God, do you?"

And he answers them in a quiet, dignified but firm manner at the end of verse 70, "You yourselves say that I am." Don't devalue the way he answered, as if he'd just said, your words, not mine. It's not really what he's saying. May sound like he's demurring a bit here, as some commentators suggest, he's kinda downplaying the *dee*, the claim of deity, softening it a bit. He's not, not at all. It's just a Greek idiom, a polite way of saying, yes, I am."

That's exactly how they take him, as we see in our last point, number three: The official position. The official position. This is what's goin' down in the minutes. This is the record. Come to verse 71, we find the Sanhedrin satisfied in their official position. "Then they said, 'What further need do we have of testimony? For we have heard it ourselves from his own mouth.'" What did they hear from his own mouth? What he said is, I'm the Christ, the Son of Man, the Son of God, with all the biblical allusions to back it up and interpret it and explain it. What they heard him say is, I'm a blasphemer and a menace to society. Take me away and crucify me. It's what he said, and then there's what they heard through their unbelieving hearts and their unbelieving ears. Unbelieving hearts have unbelieving eyes and unbelieving ears. And so whatever evidence is put before them, it runs through the grid of their own unbelief, and they warp it, and pervert it, and twist it, and turn it into a cause to counter-accuse. I know you've experienced that in your life as a Christian, as I have. It's exactly what they're doing here.

And so we, as we see in the next scene, Luke 23:1, these men scurry off to the governor, they pursue their agenda. Says, "Their whole assembly arose and brought him before Pilate, and began to accuse him." It's the height of irony, isn't it, that the Sanhedrin sees itself as Israel's Supreme Court, which it was in name, but that they would consider that they're competent to come to right decisions and

make just judgments. There is not a shred of reflection about any of the antics that took place at the High Priest's house in the hours of darkness. Blatant disregard for any proper order, for dignity, decorum of the court, let alone for truth and justice. None of that's there, and they don't reflect on it at all. Just keep passin' on. Excuse any, you know, improprieties.

What's worse, though, and what's eternally consequential, they just stood face to face with their Messiah, the King that God had promised to come and love them, rule them, lead them, suffer and die for them. They just stood face to face with the exalted Son of Man, the divine Son of God, but they couldn't see him for who he is, because they would not see him for who he is. It's not that the evidence wasn't there, it's that they could not and would not see it. Just as Jesus said, "If I tell you, you will by no means believe." Not as though they lacked evidence, they just refused to consider the evidence, refused to listen, refused to hear him, refused to look at his life, examine his character, listen to his teaching, humble themselves before God, repent of their sins. They refused.

Friends, I hope and pray that that's not you, that you prove to be very unlike these foolish, unjust judges. Those men came to an unjust judgement. And one day, crucified Christ, Jesus of Nazareth, is gonna

judge them. He's gonna bring them before his tribunal and examine them, charging them for their crimes, and they're gonna have to answer to him. These men made their choice. They crucified Jesus of Nazareth, and they made the biggest blunder, committed the greatest sin in human history. Don't let that be you. I'd encourage you not to take the official position. These unjust judges of the Jewish Sanhedrin, prejudiced against Jesus because he had exposed their corruption, because he threatened their power, because he put their heart, their wicked hearts on display. They accused him, they slandered him, they maligned him.

I'd recommend strongly, plead with you not to take their view of him. Rather, allow him to expose your sin and your corruption, that he might heal it. That's why he exposes it. Um, not to embarrass you. I mean, the shame for our sin's already there, isn't it? We're already embarrassed over all that we've done. There's so much in our minds and memories about what we know we've thought, and said, and spoken, and done, and we don't want that stuff gettin' out. We're like these Sanhedrists who want to hide what happened in the earlier hours as the light shines. We all feel that impulse.

Don't take this approach. I'd encourage you not to follow the majority opinion, not to go with the flow, not to mix with the mob. Instead,

consider the minority report. Take the heavenly view, the heavenly position which was made known when Jesus rose from the dead nearly 2000 years ago. This Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, the Christ of God, the anointed One, the approved, chosen King of Israel, the King of the world. He's both Son of Man and Son of God; truly human, truly divine. He had to be man, truly human, to take our sins to the Cross and die the death that we deserved. He had to be man to represent us, to be our fitting representative, like representing like.

Again, as Isaiah said, "He's, he was pierced through for our transgressions. He's crushed for our iniquities, the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we're healed." He had to be man to be able to be our perfect federal head, our representative before God; to receive not only the imputation, the reckoning of our sin to himself, but also to receive the punishment for that sin, so that all sins, in God's justice, all sins would be thoroughly punished to the uttermost and they were, in Christ.

But he also had to be God, truly God, the Son of God, so that he could pay, being an infinite person, he could pay an infinite penalty; to absorb the just, holy wrath of God due to us for our sins. As the Son of God, he could absorb that; an infinite person absorbing an infinite penalty. We know his claims to be the Messiah, Son of Man, Son of God,

all of them validated in his resurrection from the grave, in his triumph over death. If he didn't rise from the grave, why did no one produce the body and be done with all this nonsense, superstition? But if he did rise from the grave and by the way, that tomb is still empty, well then, we need to repent and believe.

You want proof? Turn ahead a page or two to Luke 23 and verse 44, and let me tell you the true official position that you should take. By this time, in Luke 23:44, Jesus has been put up on the cross. He's been nailed to the cross. He's hanging there between two criminals, one of whom actually repented. They started out scorning him like the rest, and one turned and repented. It says in verse 44, "It was about, it was now about the sixth hour when darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour, because the sun was obscured. The veil of the sanctuary was torn in two," basically God giving his testimony, "it was torn in two by, from top to bottom," ripped from Heaven to Earth, opening up the way into the Holy of Holies through the death of Christ. God making his, his, his dwelling with man in Christ; that's what that's picturing. There's Jesus, verse 46, he's crying out with a loud voice, showing he's still got physical power and strength. He is not dying as a, as, he's giving up his life voluntarily, is what you're supposed to see here. "He cries out with a loud voice, says, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.' And having said this, he breathed his last." He made the choice.

"Now when the centurion saw what had happened, he began praising God, saying, 'Certainly this man was righteous.' And all the crowds who came together for this spectacle, when they observed what had happened, were returning, beating their chests. All his acquaintances, the women who accompanied him from Galilee, were standing at a distance, watching these things. And behold, a man named Joseph, who was a council member," it's referring to a Sanhedrin, "a good and righteous man," he had not consented to their counsel and action." There's our man. He's holding to the minority report. He's not accepting the official position of the Sanhedrin. He's a man from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, and he's waiting for the Kingdom of God. Oh, that's our man right there. "This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. He took it down, wrapped it in a," lithen, "linen cloth, and laid him in a tomb cut into the rock, where no one had ever been lain," fulfilling the prophecy in Isaiah 53, "He was buried with a rich man in his death".

"It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was about to begin. Now the women who had come with him from Galilee followed and beheld the tomb and how his body was laid. And after they returned, they prepared spices and perfumes, and on the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment. Now on the first day of the week, Sunday, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, bringing the spices which they had prepared,

and they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. But when they entered, they didn't find the body of the Lord Jesus. And it happened that while," they're perplexed, "they were perplexed about this, behold, two men suddenly stood near them in dazzling clothing. And when the women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, 'Why are you seeking the living one among the dead? He's not here, but he has risen. Remember how he spoke to you while he was still with you in Galilee, saying, "The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified, and the third day rise again.'" And they remembered his words."

Friends, I'm here to say to you today, without any fear of contradiction, he is risen. He's risen indeed. Remember his words. Examine what he said. See how he explained himself. Look at his life, his character, his power, his teaching, his testimony. Repent of any sin, and believe. Bow with me in prayer.

Our Father, we're so grateful for this testimony in the Gospel of Luke. And when I say the testimony of the Gospel of Luke, I mean what's written here, but also what it records about the testimony of Christ about himself. We stand amazed as we get a, an ability to kinda sneak into that chamber and listen in on this, this council, their proceedings, what was said, what, how Jesus conducted himself. We see

GRACE CHURCH



so clearly the separation between light and darkness, truth and error, righteousness and unrighteousness. Oh God, we thank you for those of us who have been recipients of your saving grace, your regenerating grace that the Holy Spirit has wrought upon us, causing us to be born again; giving us eyes to see, ears to hear, hearts to understand and believe and put our faith in Him. We who've received that, we have been transferred out of the kingdom of darkness and brought into the Kingdom of your beloved son.

We pray that if there are any here today who do not yet know you, who still remain in darkness, let them not remain there one minute longer. Please deploy your Spirit. Send him to regenerate them too, that they can join us, having their sins forgiven, covered with the righteousness of Christ, to take this minority report and the official report from Heaven itself, the testimony of the Messiah, Christ, Son of Man, Son of God, whom you affirmed and confirmed by raising him from the dead.

Thank you for your testimony, Father. Thank you for the Holy Spirit who teaches us and illuminates us to all truth. And we thank you, Lord Jesus, for dying for us, for hanging on that cross and bearing the punishment that we should have borne, that we might be forgiven, and we might be reconciled to your father and ours. We thank you that we



now, father, are in your family, adopted, given your name, and we bear your image. We just ask that you would save, be pleased to save many more through this beautiful testimony of Christ. It's in Jesus' name we pray, Amen.