

Fact Sheet for **“Before the Sanhedrin”**
Matthew 26:57, 59-68

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The coronavirus known as Covid-19 has dramatically changed our world in the last couple of months. Infection by this virus looms over us. Wall Street has lost about a third of its value. Schools are closed. Restaurants are take-out only. It's tough to find paper goods at the grocery stores. Several churches, like ours, are streaming their Sunday services online. And... there's more to come. Our Governor is likely to announce a shelter-in-place directive early this week. What is attached to that directive will force all of us to adjust even further.

But there is no need to panic, to fear. God is still God. He still answers prayer. He still watches out for his people. He's still there for you. He will take care of you. Trust him! This doesn't mean that we will not face threatening and challenging times... we will! But always remember that God never loses control of a single detail.

We're approaching the Easter season. Jesus has forewarned his disciples on multiple occasions that he would be killed, only to rise again. But they still were caught by their fears. Judas had betrayed Jesus. Peter had denied him. Jesus was about to be sentenced to death. Their world was coming apart at the seams... but God was in absolute control of the details. The Gospel, the good news of salvation, was unfolding. Take a fresh look this morning at Jesus' trial before the Sanhedrin. Imagine yourself there in the courtyard with John and Peter. What fears would you be experiencing as you saw Jesus, the one you knew to be the Messiah, being sentenced to death? Your world was coming apart!

ESV 57 Then those who had seized Jesus led him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders had gathered.

Caiaphas was the sitting High Priest, but the former High Priest was in the wings... and still respected.

ESV John 18:12-14 So the band of soldiers and their captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound him. ¹³ First they led him to **Annas**, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. ¹⁴ It was Caiaphas who had advised the Jews that it would be expedient that one man should die for the people.¹

Read John 18:19-24.

59 Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking false testimony against Jesus that they might put him to death, ^{60a} **but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward.**

Verdict first... trial later!

^{60b} At last two came forward ⁶¹ and said, "This man said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days.'"

First, Jesus never said this. Second, they were looking for two corroborating witnesses to fulfill the demands of the Law.²

⁶² And the high priest stood up and said, "Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?" ^{63a} But Jesus remained silent.

¹ See John 11:47-53.

² Deuteronomy 19:15.

Read Mark 14:55-61a.

^{63b} **And the high priest said to him, "I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God."**

Read Mark 14:61b.

Listen to how Jesus responded.

⁶⁴ **Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven."**

Read Luke 22:66b-70.

^{ESV} **Psalm 110:1** *A Psalm of David.*

The LORD (*YHWH – the Father*) says to my Lord (*Adonai – Messiah*):

"Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool."

^{ESV} **Daniel 7:13** "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him.

⁶⁴ **Jesus said to him, "You (sing.) have said so. But I tell you (pl.), from now on you (pl.) will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven."**

There may be a look into the prophetic future here. Read Acts 1:9-11 then Revelation 1:7. Those who were about to condemn Jesus to death would one day see him coming on the clouds, as the Messiah they killed.

⁶⁵ **Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has uttered blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy. ⁶⁶ What is your judgment?" They answered, "He deserves death." ⁶⁷ Then they spit in his face and struck him. And some slapped him, ⁶⁸ saying, "Prophecy to us, you Christ! Who is it that struck you?"**

Now see their interaction with Pilate (Matthew 27:1-2; John 18:28; Luke 23:2).

^{ESV} **John 18:31-32** 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." ³² This was to fulfill the word that Jesus had spoken to show by what kind of death he was going to die. ³

But they had another way to put Jesus to death without Pilate (Acts 6:15; 7:55-58). So why did they take Jesus to Pilate? They wanted not just to kill Jesus, they wanted to crucify him (Mark 15:12-14)!

Was God still in control of every detail? Absolutely! Did the disciples see it yet? No! But these events were to result in the good news of the Gospel!

I want to leave you with two questions this morning.

1. How will you respond to the restrictions due to the coronavirus (Covid-19)?

In faith... or in fear?

2. Will you look for opportunities to share the good news of the Gospel during this time?

It's up to you.

³ John 3:14; 8:28; 12:32-33.