

Scandalous Part 1

Mistrial & Murder

John 18

Memory Verses: 1 Peter 3:18

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

When people hear or talk about scandals... they might be talking about the greatest scandals of all time; Watergate. Now for those of you who are my age or younger... Watergate may have become less familiar...but most Americans can recall that in 1972 men operating on behalf of President Richard Nixon broke into the office of the Democratic National Committee at the Watergate building in Washington DC and were caught stealing documents and trying to wiretap phones. All of this was in an attempt for the President to have a leg up on the competition when it came to his re-election. Although President Nixon tried to obstruct justice and bribe his co-conspirators, the attempted coverup ended with his resignation and his Attorney General and Chief of Staff serving a year and a half in prison. Richard Nixon or Tricky Dick as some came to know him... Is still the only person to ever resign from the office of the President of the United States.

Scandals can come in many shapes and sizes. From murders to conspiracy theories. From mysterious appearances to unexplainable phenomena. From coverups to missing people. Whether it be who really killed JFK, what happened to Jimmy Hoffa, or what is area 51... there are some scandalous things happening in this world. But if you want to hear about some of the most scandalous, most nefarious, and most extraordinary scandals of all time you don't have to look to the grocery aisle tabloids... you just need to open up your Bibles.

So, go ahead and open up your Bibles, and over the next four weeks, over the Easter holiday season, we are going to be looking at some of the most scandalous events that surround the Easter story.

The first one we are going to tackle this morning is the mistrial and murder of Jesus Christ. And why is it important for us to study this scandal? Because if there was a conspiracy to kill Jesus, and Jesus himself was completely innocent of all wrong doing... then the prophecies concerning the Christ are true and sufficient as he boldly traded his sinless life to pay for the sins of you and I. Let me make this abundantly clear... in order for your sins to be paid for, a sinless sacrifice had to be made and paid on your behalf. If Jesus was in the wrong... even if it appeared that Jesus could've been sinful in any conceivable way... then he would not have been an acceptable sacrifice. He had to be unblemished... and they had to have conspired against and killed an

innocent man. So did they?

This morning we are going to look at the trial of Jesus Christ and see his innocence. This morning we are going to see that they conspired to kill him, convict him in a kangaroo court, and then murder him in cold blood.

Jesus; the most innocent man of all time, murdered in cold blood, so murderers like us could be made innocent

So go ahead and turn in your Bibles to the book of **John chapter 18** and let's begin reading in verse 12-14.

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first thing we see here is that... **Jesus Was Set Up Because He Threatened the Religious Establishment.** Look at **verse 14.** Jesus was arrested not because he had done something wrong but because he was stealing the thunder of the religious elite. Look back at **Jn 11:45-53** where Caiaphas begins his plans to kill Jesus. It all started when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead and at that point the Pharisees recognize that Jesus' following could grow large enough to grab the attention of the Romans. In order to keep what little power they had left they had to kill Jesus who was leading this movement. Isn't it interesting here that Caiaphas mentions that it's better to kill Jesus than have the whole nation suffer. He declares that Jesus will die so that we can live; exactly what Jesus was sent to do; die to save the world.

After Jesus is arrested he is first taken to Annas. Look with me in **vs19-24.** Jesus was asked about his teachings by the former high priest and Jesus responded by saying, "you know my teachings," and if you don't you can ask anyone who has heard me. I haven't spoken in secret but in the open so all could hear. Why did you have to arrest me to ask me about my teaching?" In response to Jesus' answer and subsequent question he is hit. Here begins a series of many physical beatings Jesus would have to endure without any evidence of having done anything wrong.

After Annas, Jesus is sent to Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin where an impromptu court hearing takes place. Turn over to **Matthew 26:57-68.** Here the setup deepens as they seek false testimony against him. Of course they can find none. They however do find someone who recalls one of Jesus' teachings when he said he could tear down the temple and rebuild it in three days. This of course was a metaphor and foreshadowing to his own death and resurrection. Could this truly be seen as a threat to the temple? Of course not. Having no proof of wrong doing they ask him the pivotal question... "are you the Christ?" Jesus, not able to lie, answers... "you are correct." It is this confession that they deem worthy of death. They call it blasphemy. Blasphemy is any sin that can be considered a direct mockery of God. Calling one the Christ, the Son of God, or God himself was in deed Blasphemy – if in fact one was lying. Jesus was not lying. He was the Christ... but they would not believe him. So, they sentenced him to death

and proceeded to beat him and mock him again.

This case was a mistrial for many different reasons. A few we've already gone over. They deliberately conspired against Jesus because of their own bias and threat to their own self interests. And, they sought false testimony to frame him. But more egregious is the blatant disregarded for their own laws. According to Jewish law no trial was to be held during feast time. According to Jewish law each member of the court was to vote individually to convict or acquit, but Jesus was convicted by acclamation. If the death penalty was given, a night must pass before the sentence was carried out; however, only a few hours passed before Jesus was placed on the Cross. Also, the Jews had no authority to execute anyone. According to Jewish law no trial was to be held at night, but this trial was held before dawn. According to Jewish law the accused was to be given counsel or representation, but Jesus had none. And lastly, according to Jewish law the accused was not to be asked self-incriminating questions, but Jesus was asked directly if He was the Christ. The whole trial was a sham. **The whole Jewish religious system that was meant to promote the love of God was used to kill God's Son. Jesus; the most innocent man of all time, murdered in cold blood, so murderers like us could be made innocent.**

The next thing that we need to take note of is that... **Jesus Was Proclaimed Innocent By Pilate Because He Could Find No Fault In Him.** After the false mistrial of Jesus at the hands of the Jews, they delivered to the Roman Governor; Pilate. Turn back over to **John 18:28-38**. You can see here, the Jews had to take him to the Romans because they didn't have authority from the Roman Government to carry out the death sentence. They needed the Romans to do it for them. Also notice that they couldn't even enter the Governor's house. To enter a Gentile's house would defile them, but they didn't have any problem going to have them kill Jesus did they? What hypocrites. Side note... **one of the biggest reasons people don't trust religion is because religion is often seen as hypocritical.**

Move on to **vs29** where they can't even give Pilate an accurate description of the accusations. They just want him killed. So in **vs33** Pilate begins to question Jesus. Pilate asks Jesus, "are you the King of the Jews?" Once again Jesus affirms that he is. After examining Jesus Pilate in **vs38** proclaims that he's innocent of all wrongdoing. I want you to understand this. The highest official in the region has thoroughly examined the case and found Jesus not only not guilty of blasphemy, but not guilty of anything at all. But of course this is not okay to the Jews who want him killed. They start making a big ruckus and so in **Luke 23:6-12** Pilate sends Jesus to Herod to take care of it. We know that Herod

was just a political pawn of the Romans and he would never make a decision without the approval of Pilate. He can't find any wrong in Jesus either. Instead he wants Jesus to show him a miracle. When that doesn't happen Herod mocks Jesus by putting royal clothes on him and sends him back to Pilate.

Look at **Luke 23:13-16**. Back at the Governor's home, Pilate once again proclaims Jesus' innocence. Herod couldn't find any fault in him and now Pilate has proclaimed his innocence twice. But the Jews are unrelenting so in order to appease the crowd Pilate has Jesus flogged. Now flogging is a big deal because it often was a death sentence. Not many people survived this type of torture. It consisted of being whipped 39 times with a whip called a cat of 9 tails. It was a whip with 9 strands of leather on it with bits of bone and glass attached to the strips. Every lash was meant to dig into the skin and muscles and rip as much flesh off the body as possible. By the end almost all of the flesh was torn off the back of the one being beaten.

I don't want you to miss this. Even though Pilate thought Jesus was innocent, even though he had done everything he could to release him, he still gave into the peer pressure of the crowd to have this man's body completely destroyed. This is another side note... **the crowd can be very persuasive and still very wrong.** Jesus was beaten and tortured because of peer pressure and not because of any wrong he had done. **Jesus; the most innocent man of all time, murdered in cold blood, so murderers like us could be made innocent.**

Lastly, we know that... **Jesus Was Murdered In Cold Blood And By His Own Will.** Stay with me. Look again at **Luke 23:18-19**. Pilate in one last ditch effort to free Jesus gives them a choice of prisoner release. He says, I will release to you Jesus or I can release to you Barabbas. Barabbas was the leader of a rebellious riotous group who robbed and murdered. Pilate thought of course they would choose Jesus over this terrorist. But he underestimated their hatred for Jesus. They yelled, give us Barabbas. Give us the murderer. They wanted Jesus dead. The innocent given for the murderous. The righteous given for the unrighteous. Get this... **the fact that Barabbas was released and Jesus crucified is an astounding illustration of how Jesus took our place.**

The story ends in **Luke 23:20-25** where Jesus is finally given over to be crucified. Pilate once again proclaims for the third time the innocence of Jesus and offers to beat him some more, but they won't have it so he relents and turns him over to be crucified. After looking at all of this is there any doubt that... **The trials of Jesus represent the ultimate mockery of justice.**

But I want you to understand something. Although Jesus was murdered by the people he came to save.... **1 Peter 3:18** tells that that was

the plan all along. Remember, Christ had to die. It was his mission and he laid down his life of his own will. Yes Christ was conspired against, set up, falsely convicted, and murdered... but if it hadn't happened... you couldn't be saved. Look at **Isaiah 53:5**. It is by his stripes we are healed. Or what about **Colossians 2:14** where it says that Jesus nailed our debt to the cross. Jesus could have had legions of angels come and fight to have him taken off the cross... but he didn't. He died cause that was the payment for our sins. **Jesus; the most innocent man of all time, murdered in cold blood, so murderers like us could be made innocent**

Application (Resolution, You)

I want you to understand something this morning. We are the murderers Jesus came to save. We are Barabbas. We are the ones who were released when Jesus was put on the cross. We are the ones who's sins he died for. We are responsible for his death, and in a way we are his murderers.

But the trial is still in session... and you can still be set free from the guilt of his murder and the guilt of any sin you've ever committed. The Bible says clearly in **John 3:16** that God loved the world so much that he sent his one and only Son that whoever would believe in him would not perish under the penalty of sin but have everlasting life. If you would only believe in Him. In his death and resurrection and surrender your life to him you can be saved by the blood of this innocent man. **Jesus; the most innocent man of all time, murdered in cold blood, so murderers like us could be made innocent**

Conclusion

As we close this morning I want you to take a look at this video. After which we will sing a closing song as you respond to the offer of salvation in Christ this morning. **Jesus Is Loving Barabbas Video**