

Matthew 26.57-75

The Folly of Fair

Some of INTERESTING Moments in HISTORY > Dramatic TRIALS

Socrates before the leaders of Athens

Charles I before the English Parliament

Nazi war criminals in Nuremberg

Jiang Qing – Mao's Zedong's Third Wife, Leader of Gang of Four

Slobodan Milosevic, President of Serbia tried at The Hague

OJ Simpson in Los Angeles

No Trial in History so Challenged the Human Race or so Charged our Emotions

Jesus of Nazareth by Jewish & Roman Authorities in Palestine early in 1<sup>st</sup> C

The trial of the Nazarene was before the high tribunals of both heaven and earth; before the Great Sanhedrin, whose judges were the master-spirits of a divinely commissioned race; before the court of the Roman Empire that controlled the legal and political rights of men throughout the known world. Walter Chandler

The BUZZ Surrounding those Trials – TWEETS from Ancient Times...

Was it FAIR!?! – Did DEFENDANT get FAIR TRIAL – What about Victims?

Our Sense of JUSTICE Cries Out when we get WHIFF of any UNFAIRNESS!

### 1. A Man who Never got a Fair Deal

Prosecutors – Judges – Executors gathered Against Him > ALL SAME PEOPLE

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

Also Ones who BRIBED his CLOSE ASSOCIATE to get him ARRESTED

Caiaphas Son-in-Law of Annas the Rightful High Priest > Appointed by Romans

SANHEDRIN > Ruling Religious Court of Israel, 71 Members

Normally met in TEMPLE Assembly Hall / 23 Members QUORUM  
 SECRET NIGHT Meeting, No ADVANCE Notice – High Priest’s home  
 Trials FORBIDDEN on SABBATH and FEAST Days > But this was URGENT!

#### a. Mockery of Justice - Verdict Determined

JUDGE of ALL had already given NEWS RELEASE before entered City...

As Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside, and on the way he said to them, “See, we are going up to Jerusalem. And the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death...”  
 Matthew 20.17,18

Matthew EXPOSED their SECRET PLOT in the Last Chapter...

Jesus said to his disciples, “You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified.” Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, and plotted together in order to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. But they said, “Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people.”  
 Matthew 26.2-5

In our Text this Morning we Read...

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

Sanhedrin Clearly Unprepared > Planned to Enjoy DAYS OFF for HOLY Days  
 BOOKED Best Seats in TOP Places to be Seen by Crowds during their RITUAL  
 Now Forced to Acted Suddenly – Middle of Night - when Judas Gave Up Jesus  
 BOTHERED by EXECUTING the ONE their Religious Festival was all ABOUT  
 Biggest Problem LAME Witnesses, Hard to Find Good Ones in Middle of Night

vs. 60,61 At last two came forward and said, “This man said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days.’”

This is the BEST ATTACK they Can ASSEMBLE?

Maybe could say He is SORCERER > Temple TRICKS by Black Magic

Maybe charge Him with SACRILEGE > Temple is most holy place in Israel

High Priest could NOT Legally force Jesus to CONVICT Himself

v. 62 And the high priest stood up and said, “Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?”

Caiaphas must have been frustrated and seething with anger.

High Priest was Forbidden to Intervene in Capital Trial, could Only cast his vote

But the situation was slipping from his Grasp > Stroke of Genius...Illegal...but..

Caiaphas turned to Prisoner & Demanded on Basis of Most Solemn Oath Israel

v. 63 But Jesus remained silent. 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.”

This was brilliant for two reasons.

First, the Wording of the Challenge was Precise

Claiming you are MESSIAH – One Anointed by Spirit – NOT Punishable

Needs to be Established By their Life, Action, and Ministry > Expected Messiah!

Question: Are you Son of God? AND Messiah > Set Jesus up to BLASPHEME

Second, Caiaphas RIGHTLY Calculated this would make Jesus TALK

Almost DARES Him with an OATH > Put Up or Shut Up you Nazarene!

b. Meekness and Majesty of Jesus - Victim Dishonored

v. 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.”

Jesus does MORE than just NIBBLE at Caiaphas’ BAIT

Jesus Swallows HOOK, LINE, SINKER: I am Messiah, Son of God, Truly God!

“You have said so!” RIGHT Words, but you have NO IDEA what they MEAN!  
 Most Transcendent view of God’s Kingly Glory in Scripture? That would be Me!  
 Son of Man on Clouds of Glory to Ancient of Days > Eternal Kingdom, Praise  
 1<sup>st</sup> C Jews various Expectations – Servant/Messiah, Son of Man, Davidic King  
 Jesus > ALL Promises and Hopes of Scriptures are FULFILLED in Me Alone!

vs. 65,66 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. What is your judgment?” They answered, “He deserves death.”

A fair and just Jewish court would have been more likely to have pronounced him insane; how could this arrested upstart teacher from Galilee think that he would come from the clouds of heaven?  
 Craig S. Keener

Religious MASK Removed > HONORABLE Men become MOB of HYENAS  
 LYNCH Mob not Looking for Truth / GOAL was HUMILIATION & MURDER

vs. 67,68 Then they spit in his face and struck him. And some slapped him, saying, “Prophecy to us, you Christ! Who is it that struck you?”

UNJUST and ILLEGAL Taunting of as yet UNCONVICTED Man

Probably BLINDFOLDED as they BEAT Him and dared Him to SEE Them

Sanhedrin should have Examined Truth or Falsity of the Claim

Man of Peace – Respected them and Nation – Widely Popular and Respected

Even some their OWN MEMBERS (probably Not Informed mtg) Acknowledge

Scribes were masters of OT > Charged to Defend People of Israel, incl HIM!

1. According to Scripture, the Messiah was to have been born in Bethlehem, and Jesus was born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; Luke 2:1–7).

2. The Messiah was to be virgin born, and Jesus was born of Mary, who was a virgin at the time (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:24, 25).
3. The Messiah was to be of David's line, and Jesus was descended from King David (2 Samuel 7:12, 16; Matthew 1:1–16).
4. The Messiah was to be preceded by a figure like Elijah, and John the Baptist filled that role (Malachi 3:1; 4:5; Matthew 17:12–13).
5. The Messiah was to do many great works, and Jesus had performed the works that had been prophesied (Isaiah 61:1–2; Matthew 11:1–6).
6. Messiah was to make a public entry into Jerusalem riding on a donkey, and Jesus had done this just a few days before (Zechariah 9:9; Matthew 21:1–11).
7. The Messiah was to be betrayed by a close friend, and Jesus was so betrayed (Psalm 41:9; Matthew 26:14–15; 27:3–8).
8. Messiah was to be despised and rejected by his people and to be familiar with suffering, and Jesus was (Isaiah 53:2–3, Matthew 20:18, John 11:50).

What Jesus claim to be God's Son? Should have investigated in light Scripture.

1. There are references in the Old Testament to precisely the kind of unique Son of God Jesus claimed to be (Psalm 2:7; Isaiah 9:6).
2. The Old Testament speaks of God becoming flesh (Isaiah 7:14).
3. There are Old Testament passages in which Jehovah is said to have appeared among men (Genesis 16:13; 18:13, 17, 26; Daniel 3:25).

Sanhedrin Never Considered Possibility > Jesus just Might have Spoken TRUTH

NOTHING FAIR about Life of Jesus ---

Teenage Mother Scandalized – Unmarried, Pregnant – Earthly Father Suspected  
 Born 100 kms from Family & Friends, shared Baby Room w/ Barnyard Animals  
 Ran to Egypt just avoiding Herod's Sword that Killed Baby Boys of Bethlehem  
 Grew Up Social Hillbilly by being BRANDED a NAZARENE

Ministry of Mercy & Kindness > Received lots of Misunderstanding & Criticism

Man who Never Sinned – Condemned by 2 KANGAROO Courts  
 Most Loving Man – Tortured unto Death upon Tree

Religious Ldrs not much Different from Millions of Careless People Today

Christ is Proclaimed as God's unique Son > Millions Reject His Claim

Have you considered Christ's claims? Have you pondered his defense?

Jesus NO LONGER On Trial > RECEIVED True JUSTICE of Resurrection

YOU and I will be One's before His BAR of Justice One Day – READY?

## 2. A Man who Never wanted a Fair Deal

### a. Mercy not Justice

Jesus is NOT FAIR to Peter, He does NOT give Peter what He DESERVES

And Peter is ETERNALLY Grateful to NOT get DIVINE JUSTICE

### 1) The Best Man

v. 58 And Peter was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest, and going inside he sat with the guards to see the end.

Some of Us – BOO and HISS when hear about Peter – DENIES Jesus, FAILS!

Jesus CHEERS Peter – Chief Among His Chosen Apostles – MAN among Men

Emphasis on word FOLLOWED > Jesus taken by ARMED MEN

DISTANCE was Probably the ONLY way Peter could have Followed then

Was he CURIOUS? SURELY! But he was to SOME DEGREE COMMITTED!

Peter TRESPASSING High Priest property > Risky Galilean fisherman

Jesus MOCK TRIAL was perhaps on Open BALCONY Above > Peter SAW

WEEKS before Jesus GAVE Unique Commendation to Chief Apostle PETER

Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”  
Matthew 16.17,18

Peter ALONE got RIGHT Answer – least Only One to Open Mouth & SAY...

Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Matthew 16.16

1. *Peter had tried to defend his Master in the garden.*

Act of Flesh > Mistaken > Jesus could have called Hit Men from Heaven!

But Peter WAS Brave and Courageous > More than YOU or I might have Been

2. *Peter clearly loved Jesus.*

He had LEFT his Nets and Followed Jesus > TWICE! Was STILL Following  
Jesus PRAYED all Night before Choosing Men > and he Chose Peter FIRST

vs. 69,70 Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came up to him and said, “You also were with Jesus the Galilean.” But he denied it before them all, saying, “I do not know what you mean.”

Many people were milling around, and many things must have been said.

Peter RECOGNIZED because DID NOT BELONG There

Servant Girl of HP would have BEEN in Temple > Seen J. & Disciples

"You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus," she said.

Maybe Peter tried to be STEALTH MISSIONARY > Secret Assignment

Thought he could GO DARK and still WALK in the LIGHT

Don't Need to carry Huge Family with Gold-Edged Pages Everywhere

When you're asked FLAT OUT are You Following Jesus – Only 1 Right Answer

## 2) The Worst Man – because he was a SINFUL Man like Me and You!

Jesus is Questioned by High Priests who made themselves his Mortal Enemies

Peter is Questioned by high priest's Servants making Friendly Chatter

Both SWEAR their Truthfulness by Oaths to God, 1 takes Lord's Name VAIN

vs. 71-74 And when he went out to the entrance, another servant girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." And again he denied it with an oath: "I do not know the man." After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Certainly you too are one of them, for your accent betrays you." Then he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, "I do not know the man."

Jesus stands for His People > Condemned to Death on THEIR BEHALF

Peter stands for his PROTECTION > bringing self into GREATER DANGER

CURSES NOT VULGAR > Solemn VOW against HIMSELF

"The juxtaposition of these two stories forms powerful proof that no one other than Jesus, not even Peter, could do the work of the Lord's Suffering Servant.... Jesus alone could be faithful; and he won the victory." Herman Ridderbos

Jesus DECLARED who HE was > Peter DENIED who he was

This was Peter! Yet he FELL with so Little Difficulty! What Hope do WE have?

Steps of Peter's Fall >

1. *Peter did not believe Jesus' warning.* Even worse, Contradicted Jesus Openly

Jesus declared, "This very night you will all fall away on account of me" 26.31

Peter boasted, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you" 26.35

Peter telling Jesus that He was Mistaken > Jesus! U R FLAT OUT WRONG!

2. *Peter looked down on the other disciples.*

No telling HOW these Other Guys will FAIL > But NOT ME!

Peter: “Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will” 26.33

I am MOST Courageous, Most CLEVER, Most COMMITTED

3. *Peter failed to pray.*

Jesus: “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation” 26.41

Peter Fell Asleep in Gethsemane > Not Strengthened in Prayer as Jesus Was

4. *Peter thought he could be safe alone in bad company.*

Caiphas’ Courtyard was HOSTILE Territory > Peter NOT have Prayer Buddy

Jesus sent Workers into the Darkness – 2 x 2 – Stand ALONE, FALL Alone

5. *Peter did not understand how much he needed the Cross.*

Peter got RIGHT Answer about WHO Jesus IS – Wrong Answer What came Do

From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.” But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”

Matthew 16.21-23

No Cross, No Christianity // No Suffering of Jesus, No Salvation from Jesus

Peter needed to Echo the Prayer of His Obedient Lord, “Your Will be Done”

Even when that Will was a Bloody Cross

Peter FORFEITED every Claim he had to the Family of Faith in Jesus

b. Mercy through Justice

1) Pardon from Jesus > Hero of Bible NOT Peter, Paul > PRAISE to Jesus

This is the last story in Matthew about Peter. Peter is Not Mentioned Again

Last thing we read about Peter...

vs. 74,75 And immediately the rooster crowed. And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.

Story in all 4 Gospels: LUKE adds EVEN MORE PAINFUL Detail -

...while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Luke 22.60

**BITTER** Tears of knowing that he **BETRAYED** One who Loved him the **MOST**

"Having a word from the Lord" does not of itself necessarily mean a man must be a great saint...men who have spoken a true word from God may be seriously defective and deficient in character...gifts are not graces. James Philip

Story of BIBLE is even **BEST** of Men is **WORST** of Men in Sight of Holy God  
Gospel is Not **TRY HARDER** Next Time > That would Not be **GOOD** News  
**MERCY** that Cock Crowd > Peter would have **DENIED** Jesus 100 More Times

Gifts neither break nor humble, grace does both. Samuel Rutherford

Thank God was **NOT FAIR** to Peter – did **NOT** give **RAW JUSTICE** to Peter  
Jesus: "...whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven"  
Matthew 10.33

**FAIR** means **FLAMES** – Betrayer would be **BANISHED** - Denier **DAMNED**

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much

more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.  
Romans 5.6-11

Jesus endured WRATH of God against His People > Their Just Penalty Received  
FORGIVENESS is not FREE > PAID for with Incalculable Price of Jesus Blood

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is **faithful and just** to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.  
1 John 1.8,9

Our FORGIVENESS is JUST because God's JUSTICE Satisfied by His CROSS

His love for us is not based on our qualification or preparation... God accepts us despite the way we are. He receives us only in Christ and for Christ's sake. Nor does he mean to leave us the way he found us, but to transform us into the likeness of his Son.  
Sinclair Ferguson

## 2) Prayer of Jesus

Know Story of Peter's Denial of Jesus is True > Damaging Story to Church

If FABRICATE a Gospel > Never Include Embarrassing Tale

H.S. who INSPIRED this Word of God placed Story in ALL FOUR Gospels

Luke adds Wonderful PROMISE to Peter, Jesus Prays for him...

Jesus: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."  
Luke 22.31

Judas CRIME Not Much Worse – Maybe Not as Bad – As Peter's DENIAL

Why Peter Did Not Fall Away > Why Peter NOT go Out and Hang Himself?

WORD of God applied by SPIRIT of God brings REPENTANCE from God

Because Jesus prayed, Peter was Converted, Repented, and RESTORED

At Pentecost this same Peter who Denied his Lord > Ready to DIE for Him

Preached First Great Sermon of the Christian Era > 3000 People Believed

If Christ did that with Peter, there is hope for all of us.

Peter was a Believer whose Fall was Temporary

Baptized Jan 1973 – age 17 – Guest Preacher that Night Dr. Geoffrey Bromiley

Professor of Church History at Fuller Seminary – Legendary Translator

Wife Isobel, from Scotland, wrote my Name in Prayer Diary

Eventually Supported us in Mission Work “Prayed every Day since Baptized”

Geoffrey died 2009 – Isobel died last year, in her 90’s – Prayed for me 42 yrs!

And I am STILL a MESS!

I had MY ISOBEL for Many Years – She Now serves in Heavenly Courts

Do you Know that Jesus PRAYS for YOU & Me? Every Day of Your Life!

Jesus is the guarantor of a better covenant. The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. Hebrews 7.22-26

Praise Him! We have a PRIEST FOREVER who PRAYS FOREVER for US!

His LIVING PRESENCE and POWER bring PEACE into every Situation of Life

TERRIBLE Situation in ORLANDO, FL

About time we FINISHED Worship last Sunday – Man began KILLING Spree

He MEANT it for EVIL – Even this NOT Outside Sovereign Plan of our JESUS

Reporter: “Do you find yourself, like the rest of us, asking why this happened?”

I have rarely been overcome by grief the way that I have in the last couple of days...I don't ask the *why* question because I know that there are things that I won't have the answer to...I'm just quiet because I don't have an answer. I am working on the things I do have an answer to, which is what can the church do. *How can I be like Jesus? How can I lead my church to be like Jesus? How can I not worry about the backlash of being an evangelical pastor praying with and for gay people and their families?* For the *why* question, I'm silent and I'm reverent to God's sovereignty, but for the *how* question, I ask the Holy Spirit to lead me.

Gabriel Salguero, a pastor at Iglesia El Calvario

“Grieving Together: How Orlando's Hispanic Evangelicals Are Reaching Out,”

Christianity Today, June 15, 2016

Matthew 26.57 Then those who had seized Jesus led him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders had gathered. 58 And Peter was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest, and going inside he sat with the guards to see the end. 59 Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking false testimony against Jesus that they might put him to death, 60 but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. 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.'" 62 And the high priest stood up and said, "Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?" 63 But Jesus remained silent. 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." 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." 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?" 69 Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came up to him and said, "You also were with Jesus the Galilean." 70 But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you mean." 71 And when he went out to the entrance, another servant girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." 72 And again he denied it with an oath: "I do not know the man." 73 After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Certainly you too are one of them, for your accent betrays you." 74 Then he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, "I do not know the man." And immediately the rooster crowed. 75 And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.

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