

## God on Trial, Matthew 26:57-27:56

*The ancient man approached God (or even the gods) as the accused person approaches his judge. For the modern man the roles are reversed. He is the judge: God is in the dock. He is quite a kindly judge: if God should have a reasonable defence (Eng. Sp.) for being the god who permits war, poverty, and disease, he is ready to listen to it. The trial may even end in God's acquittal. But the important thing is that Man is on the Bench and God in the Dock.*

C.S. Lewis, *God in the Dock*, 1948

### After the Arrest

- Jesus hauled before Caiaphas and the scribes and elders, v.57-68
  - In the middle of the night, against Jewish law. \_\_\_\_\_
  - False witnesses. \_\_\_\_\_
  - The high priest's goad, "Why don't you answer?" *Are you the Messiah, the Son of God?* Jesus' answer: \_\_\_\_\_
  - The abuse begins. \_\_\_\_\_
- Peter's denials, v.69-75
  - As prophesied. \_\_\_\_\_
- Judas remorse and suicide, 27:1-10
  - He expressed some sense of surprise and guilt. \_\_\_\_\_
  - The rejection of the "blood money." \_\_\_\_\_
- Jesus now taken to Pilate, 27:11-26
  - Pilate is discomfited and confused. \_\_\_\_\_
  - He tries to placate the Jews with Barabbas. \_\_\_\_\_
  - V.18: his perception of Jewish "envy." \_\_\_\_\_
  - After a failed negotiation, he realized that the Jews would settle for nothing less than Jesus' crucifixion. \_\_\_\_\_

*What an amazing insight into our nature: we are not only fallen creatures, but continue to recapitulate the fall in our ongoing rejection of authentic righteousness and of God himself. There was no valid excuse for the murderous behavior of the Jewish religious leadership, yet they would uphold their self-developed framework for their theology as excuse enough.*

### Mocking, torture, and the Via Dolorosa (the way of grief)

- More abuse by the Roman soldiers. \_\_\_\_\_
  - A scarlet robe and a crown of thorns, in mocking derision of his kingship. (The robe provided by Herod, Luke 23:11)
  - Further beatings and humiliation. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Forcing Simon of Cyrene to help carry the cross. \_\_\_\_\_
- The crucifixion
  - More abuse: by the soldiers, the Jewish elders, and the two thieves. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Taunting: *you who are going to destroy the temple . . . save yourself! He trusts in God . . . let Him deliver him.* \_\_\_\_\_
  - Jesus last words, *Why have you forsaken me?* His final despairing moment. \_\_\_\_\_
  - At his moment of death – signs and wonders: the temple veil torn from top to bottom, a great earthquake, and the dead in tombs brought back to life at the sheer power of the moment. \_\_\_\_\_
- The Roman guards at the cross finally had to say "Truly this was a (the) Son of God. \_\_\_\_\_"

*Here we have a paradox that, because of the familiarity of the story, is simply overlooked: that the Son of God, literally God incarnate, suffered the humiliation of the Sanhedrin's kangaroo court, beatings, the public humiliation of being paraded naked and beaten, and the laughing, mocking derision of those who witnessed his death, and all for what? To "save" those very people who treated him so? We should, as if reading the story for the first time, be appalled . . . yet somehow fall to our knees in awe at the sheer power of One capable of this level of compassion.*

*Today the atheists, agnostics, doubters, and scoffers agree that if there is a God he'll have to answer for a lot. "After all, who does he think he is allowing so much pain and suffering in the lives of those he supposedly loves." Yet when we look at the history of the human race, how can we honestly call anyone else the devil or Satan, when we do his work so well? Thank God that we are even here to consider this: **That the Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief so that He would render Himself a guilt offering ...(for our sin.) Isaiah 53:10***