

THE KANGAROO COURTS OF KANGAROO COURTS

We continue in our series of John working through the last week of Jesus. Pastor Eldon left off with Chapter 13, the foot washing and the Last Supper.

The next five chapters show Jesus at his best;
teaching, preaching, and praying to and with his disciples.
We'll look at those chapters after Easter.

Today we want to look at Chapter 18 in John,
where the hate and hostility towards Jesus
becomes even more intense and more violent.

Then we'll slip into chapter 19 and borrow a bit from Matthew and Luke.
Chapter 18 begins in the garden of Gethsemane on the Mt. of Olives.

In the garden his disciples slept, Jesus prayed.
In the garden his disciples slept, Jesus sweat blood,
"Father let this cup pass from me. "
In the garden his disciples slept, Jesus submitted,
"Father, not my will but thine be done."

In the garden his disciple Judas betrayed Jesus,
betrayed Jesus with a kiss.
In the garden his disciple Peter cut a soldier's ear off,
Jesus put the ear back on the soldier,
In the garden Jesus was arrested, from the garden his disciples fled.

All that happened sometime after midnight.
The next thing we know most about is that Jesus ends up on a cross.

There are a few other things
that happened in this time frame from midnight to 9:00 AM,
from Gethsemane to Golgotha.

We know of Peter's denial,
of Pilate washing his hands,
of Jesus being whipped,
of the crowd crying "crucify him, crucify him."

We don't, or at least I didn't know before these last two weeks
too much about the trials of Jesus.
Jesus endured six trials in this time frame?

It's incredible what Jesus went through
in courtrooms of some of Israel's wisest.

It was the kangaroo court of kangaroo courts.

A kangaroo court, so named for the Australians who were denied due process in the California courts during the gold rush of 1849.

They lost their cases and claims because the trials were rigged.

The trials Jesus endured were “rigged” as well.

He was tired, actually exhausted, drained, dehydrated and discouraged.

He was eye-ball to eye-ball with an evil judge, a biased and blind jury, and a bunch of false witnesses.

There was plenty of noise, plenty of pushing and shoving, and plenty of slapping and hitting.

There was no friend to be found and the room was full of the demonic fury of foul mouthed foes.

[It was the kangaroo courts of kangaroo courts.](#)

Let’s see what we can learn from some of them today.

First we need to know something about the Jewish judicial system.

Some of these principals will sound familiar.

There was a great effort (suppose to be a great effort) to insure the rights of the defendant.

There was the right to a public trial, the right to hear witnesses,

the right to have a someone speak in your defense,

and the right to not incriminate yourself (you could plead the 5th).

If you confessed, there still had to be two witnesses that validated your testimony.

There was to be no trials at night.

Slaves, an irresponsible child, someone mentally ill,

a criminal, or person with a bad reputation

was not allowed to be a witness.

The witness could not be a women because if the accused is found guilty,

they didn’t think a woman had the courage to deliver the first blow.

To deter false witnesses, if the accused were acquitted,

then the witnesses had to take the punishment intended for the one convicted.

To oversee this system of justice, Deuteronomy 16.18-20 provides some basic instructions

“Appoint judges and officials for each of your tribes in every town the LORD your God is giving you, and they shall judge the people fairly.

¹⁹ Do not pervert justice or show partiality.

Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous.

²⁰ Follow justice and justice alone, so that you may live and possess the land the LORD your God is giving you.”

Judges were to be appointed to the local and great Sanhedrins.

The judges were to be selected because of their wisdom and good character.

But guess what?

At the time of Jesus, seats on the great Sanhedrin

were given out for political favors or sold to the highest bidder.

We talked before about the great Sanhedrin in Jerusalem being made up of Pharisees and Sadducees.

At the time of Jesus, those two were rival political parties. They had different platforms and different beliefs. Members were from different social and economic classes.

And they hated each other with a passion, but, they hated Jesus even more.

THE FIRST TRIAL

We pick up the story in the garden, John 18.12

¹²Then the detachment of soldiers (a detachment can be 200 men)

with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus.

They bound him ¹³and brought him first to Annas,

who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year.

¹⁴Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews

that it would be good if one man died for the people.

They brought him to Annas.

Annas was like the God-Father of the Sandhedrin.

His term as high priest was twenty years earlier,

but he had been a little more than influential

in selecting the high priests for the last twenty years.

His five sons and now Caiaphas, his son-in-law, were the high priests.

Annas and his family had become very, very, very wealthy, because they were very, very, very, corrupt.

Not only did they sell the seats of the Sanhedrin, but they got kick backs from the money changers, and those that sold the animals for sacrifice.

You see Roman coins were used throughout the world but when coming to the temple people had to use Jewish money.

Boss Annas controlled the tellers, set exorbitant exchange rates, and took his cut.

The animals brought to the temple for sacrifice could have no blemish. Guess who controlled the inspectors that rejected the people's animals, and who controlled the merchants that provided the "perfect animals," and who got a percent for every "perfect animal" sold for sacrifice?

Historian Josephus tells us that doves cost 20x more in the temple than on the streets.

So, knowing all that, then it shouldn't surprise us that Jesus got angry, turned over the money tables in the temple, drove out the animals, and screamed, "***You have made my Father's house a den of thieves.***"

The first trial with Annas was at night (that was illegal), in private (that's illegal), there were no witnesses, (that was illegal) there were no charges, (that was illegal) there was no defense attorney, (that was illegal)

Annas tried to get Jesus to implicate himself, (that was illegal) and there was violence. (that was illegal)

This has to be the kangaroo courts of kangaroo courts.

Verse 19 simply says, ***“Meanwhile, the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching.”***

Jesus’ response insults Annas, verses 20 and following,

“I have spoken openly to the world,” Jesus replied.

“I always taught in synagogues or at the temple, where all the Jews come together.

I said nothing in secret.

²¹Why question me? Ask those who heard me.

Surely they know what I said.”

²²When Jesus said this, one of the officials nearby struck him in the face.

“Is this the way you answer the high priest?” he demanded.

This gives us an idea that this whole thing is going to get way out of control.

²³“If I said something wrong,” Jesus replied, “testify as to what is wrong.

But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?”

(Jesus is exposing Annas’ motive and appealing for some justice)

Annas was basically baiting Jesus.

He needed something concrete to charge Jesus with, and to buy time for Caiaphas to convene the Sanhedrin.

Caiaphas is finally ready.

THE SECOND TRIAL, Verse 24,

“Then Annas sent him, still bound, to Caiaphas the high priest.”

From there we pick up the story in Matthew 26.59 and following,

“The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin

were looking for false evidence against Jesus

so that they could put him to death.

But they did not find any, even though many false witnesses came forward.”

Then in verse 63b Caiaphas says to Jesus,

“I charge you under oath by the living God!

Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.”

Caiaphas is trying to get Jesus to incriminate himself. (that’s illegal)

And Jesus doesn’t plead the 5th, ***“Yes it is as you say.”***

And these guys go berserk, verse 65 and following,

“Then the high priest tore his clothes and said,

‘He has spoken blasphemy. What do you think?’

(By the way for the high priest to tear his garments is an abomination to God.)

*'He is worthy of death,' they answered.
Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists.
Others slapped him and said, 'Prophecy to us, Christ, who hit you.'"*

There are more false charges, the high priest tearing his robe,
the trial is at night, and there is violence.
Certainly not appropriate, not professional, and not legal.

What amazes me is that these men with such a high, noble,
and distinguished calling in this very sacred and holy place,
behave like loud mouth drunks in a bar room brawl.

But I forgot, [this is the Kangaroo Courts of Kangaroo Courts.](#)

Someone figures out that since it's night, and it's illegal to have a trial at night,
it might be a good idea to make it legal.

So, they call for a formal meeting of the Sanhedrin at dawn.

Luke in chapter 22.63-65 tell us that while Jesus is waiting for that trial,
he is blindfolded, beaten, and abused .

THE THIRD TRIAL

Luke 22.66-67a

*"At daybreak (probably about 6:00 AM) the council of elders of the people,
both the chief priests and teachers of the law met together,
and Jesus was led before them.
'If you are the Christ, tell us.'*

Then in verse 70 they asked, *"Are you then the Son of God?"
He replied, 'You are right in saying that I am.'
Then they said, 'Why do we need any more testimony?
We have heard it from his own lips.'"*

Jesus had "incriminated" himself.

Opps, they forgot they needed to take a vote.

Oh well, not to worry, after all this is [the Kangaroo Courts of Kangaroo Courts.](#)

Then Luke 23.1 says, *"the whole assembly rose and led him off to Pilate.
John 18.28 says, "Then the Jews led Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman
governor."*

Oh, one more thing. If the verdict is guilty and if the punishment is death,
then the members of the Sanhedrin are suppose to take a day off,
fast and pray, discern the truth, then come back and revote. They don't do that!

But remember, [this is the Kangaroo Courts of Kangaroo Courts.](#)

So, they take Jesus to Pilate, for THE FOURTH TRIAL.

In the Jewish court Jesus claimed to be God, he was charged with blasphemy.

The Romans could have cared less about that.

So the Jews changed the charge to treason, saying Jesus claimed to be King.

If Jesus is King, then Jesus is challenging Caesar's authority.

Pragmatic Pilot struggles with what to do.

Don't mistake his hesitancy as concern or compassion for Jesus.

Pilate is a seasoned, savage, and unscrupulous soldier.

He is concerned about keeping his position.

To keep his position, he must keep the peace.

That is easier said than done.

The Jewish leaders will get upset if he let's Jesus go.

But if he executes Jesus, the people might revolt.

It is not a win/win for Pilate.

Pilate in an attempt to dodge the bullet or swerve from the sword, sends Jesus to King Herod.

This would be Jesus' FIFTH TRIAL.

I'm surprised King Herod is out of bed.

Maybe he didn't go to bed.

His daily schedule is full of wine, women, and song.

But he was bored with all that.

He wanted Jesus to entertain him with a miracle.

But Jesus stays silent and doesn't perform for Herod..

Herod mocks Jesus, makes some crude comments,

and sends him on his way back to Pilate, for the, SIXTH TRIAL.

As we peek into the first few verses of Chapter 19,

we read Pilot has rendered his not guilty verdict again.

Our Jewish friends are very unhappy about this.

Pilot tries compromise, he'll have Jesus whipped. That's a start, but not enough.

Pilot offers a choice, Barabbas (a hardened criminal, a terrorist)

or Jesus, King of the Jews

Pilot wants to free Jesus, they want to free Barabbas.

OK, what to do with Jesus?

In John 19.15-16, the crowd cries for his blood, *"Crucify Him, Crucify Him!"*

Pilot pleads, *"Shall I crucify your King?"*

They scream, *"We have no King but Caesar!"*

Did you catch that, the paradox of paradoxes.

Jewish people that hate the Romans, hate Roman occupation and rule ,
are screaming, "we have no King but Caesar."

Jewish people had no King but God.
They would not in normal circumstances ever bow to Caesar.

And here they are publically , passionately proclaiming that they,
"Have no king but Caesar."

They hate the Romans, but I guess they hated Jesus even more.

Let us pray.