"THE INNOCENT WAS CONDEMNED FOR THE GUILTY"

Matthew 27:1-26

3/24/2019

INTRODUCTION:

***Jesus Christ was condemned to death, although He was innocent, to die for the guilty.**

Five indications of Christ's innocence:

I. The <u>REGRET</u> of Judas (v. 3-10)

II. The <u>SILENCE</u> of Jesus (v. 11-14)

III. The <u>ENVY</u> of the Jews (v. 15-18)

IV. The <u>DREAM</u> of Pilate's Wife (v. 19)

V. The <u>WASHING</u> of Pilate's Hands (v. 20-25)

CONCLUSION: Verse 26 -- The release of sinful Barabbas in the place of innocent Jesus illustrates the substitutionary sacrifice which Christ made on behalf of all sinners.

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III. The _____ of the Jews (v. 15-18)

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The Martin Scorzese film "The Last Temptation of Christ" was total blasphemy, picturing Jesus as having a lustful heart toward Mary Magdalene and longing to marry her and have children by her.

Christ's sinlessness:

He was called The *"Holy Child"* (Lk. 1:35)

He entered the Temple often, but never had to offer a sacrifice for Himself (Heb. 7:27)

Jn. 8:29, 46 - *"I do always those things that please Him. . . Which of you convinceth Me of sin?"*

II Cor. 5:21 - *"Who knew no sin"*

I Pet. 1:19 - *"a Lamb without blemish and without spot"*

I Pet. 2:22 - *"Who did no sin"*

Heb. 4:15 - *"was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin"*

Heb. 7:26 - *"Who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners"*

I Jn. 3:5 - *"in Him is no sin"*

Christ was acknowledged as innocent eleven times during His trials and crucifixion (Mt. 27:4, 19, 24, 54; Lk. 23:14, 22, 41; Jn. 18:38, 19:46).

Psalm 94:21 - *"They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood."*

In Mt. 27:1-26, Matthew systematically proves the innocence of Jesus Christ.

V. 1

"When morning was come" - the unjust arrest, trials, mockery and beatings Christ endured took all night. Now, the sun is coming up, the rooster has crowed (26:75), and the mob of blood-thirsty Sanhedrin come to a decision as to how they would rid themselves of the righteous Jesus.

V. 2

The reason the Jewish leaders brought Jesus to Pilate was to seek the death penalty.

"The Sanhedrin could condemn a man to death, but the Roman government had to approve and execute the sentence" (Ryrie note)

Pilate said, *"Take ye Him, and judge Him according to your law; the Jews, therefore, said unto Him, It is not lawful* [according to Roman law] *for us to put any man to death."* (Jn. 18:31).

From God's standpoint, however, Jesus' being brought to Pilate was to fulfill the words of Jesus, who predicted that He would be crucified (Jn. 18:32; cp. Mt. 20:190.

***Jesus Christ was condemned to death, although He was innocent, to die for the guilty.**

Five indications of Christ's innocence:

I. The <u>REGRET</u> of Judas (v. 3-10)

V. 3

"When he [Judas] ***saw that He*** [Jesus] ***was condemned" -*** Judas actually did not want Jesus to be condemned. This outcome was not what Judas had in mind. He never really expected Jesus to be condemned and sentenced to death.

Judas, motivated by self-seeking motives, through that his betrayal would be the catalyst to incite Jesus to assert His Messiahship, rebel against the system, usurp the government, set up His Kingdom, and give the Twelve an exalted position judging the 12 tribes of Israel (Mt. 19:28 - *"And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.")* This promise was Judas' motive.

Judas obviously did not want Jesus to think less of him, which is why when he betrayed Jesus he did so with a kiss.

For Judas there was more to the betrayal than the motive for money. Most likely Judas thought that by betraying Christ he would force Jesus' hand and provoke Him to defend Himself, rebel against Rome and set up a new political government with Judas as treasurer or some other high position.

Judas is like all people who attempt to force the will of God. They do something they know is wrong because they selfishly want something to suit them or their timetable, even though it is clearly against God's Word.

"Repented himself" - The word translated "repented" is not the normal word for repentance, which means a "change of mind" (*metanoeo)*, but is *metamelomai*, which means to have a "change of interest or concern." It means to regret, to wish it were undone.

Judas was called *"the son of perdition"* (Jn. 17:12) because he would (as his title means) be destroyed.

Judas returned the money in an attempt to undo what he had done.

Sometimes, what we do can never be undone. It can be genuinely repented of and forgiven, but its scars may remain a lifetime. The effect of the wrong we did against someone may be reaped in the lives of others.

V. 4

Judas is going to the wrong place with those words, *"I have sinned."* No human high priest (v. 3) can do a thing to remove your sin.

Judas should have gone to God with his confession of guilt, but his heart was too hardened and his doom was settled.

Such regret or confirmation of Christ's innocence meant absolutely nothing to those who wanted Christ's blood.

"What is that to us? See thou to that" - That is no concern to us! That's your problem, not ours!

"Innocent blood" - The blood of Christ did not deserve to be shed. He should not have been punished for any transgression of His own. He was innocent of the charges laid against Him. Other than the eleven, no one could attest to the sinlessness of Christ like Judas could.

V. 5

"He cast down the pieces of silver" - That which he had loved and lived for now became an abhorrent thing to be discarded and rid of. That silver was a perpetual reminder of his betrayal. When he looked at the 30 pieces, all he could think about was *"innocent blood"*!

I can imagine that Judas, in hell now, is still tormented by his betrayal, still trying to get rid of that bag of silver. The memory lingers on (Lk. 16:25).

Throughout eternity, people engulfed in darkness and lostness will be trying to rid themselves of whatever it was that kept them from a saving knowledge of Christ.

The boozer will forever attempt to rid himself of the liquor that so often intoxicated him and made him oblivious to his need for Christ. The same goes for the adulterer, drug user, thief, liar, etc.

But the haunting thought will remain! Oh the regret of those who reject the innocent Son of God!

"Hanged himself" - For Judas, the only way of escape was suicide. In an attempt to rid himself of the deep regret, torment, and unrest, he ended his life. . . only to find that this really did not end his misery. It goes on!

V. 6

What inconsistency! What duplicity! What hypocrisy!

These "chief priests" refused to put the silver "blood money" into the Temple treasury because they were concerned not to defile or pollute it, and yet they could without conscience condemn an innocent man!

They worry about keeping the Law at one point and yet totally violate the Law at another point. (the Law condemned *"false witness"* [Exod. 20:16] yet they hired them [Mt. 26:59]; the Law condemned the execution of *"innocent blood"* [Dt. 19:10] yet they could care less.

Many today have a "pick and choose" theology where they pick to obey what they want to obey and completely ignore the rest.

V. 9

"Spoken by Jeremy" - "These words are found in Zech. 11:12-13 with allusions to Jer. 18:1-4, 19:1-3. They are ascribed to Jeremiah since, in Jesus' day, the books of the prophets were headed by Jeremiah, not Isaiah as now, and the quotation is identified by the name of the first book of the group, rather than by the name of the specific book within the group" (Ryrie note)

"The price of Him that was valued" - The innocent Lord Jesus was betrayed for silver, that He according to God's sovereign plan might save us from perishing.

Another young man was sold for silver (20 pieces, the price of a slave back then), who also according to God's plan ended up saving his brethren and people from perishing --- His name was Joseph (Gen. 37:28).

II. The <u>SILENCE</u> of Jesus (v. 11-14)

V. 11

"Thou sayest" - You said it! It is as you said.

Although Jesus as the Messiah was the ***"King of the Jews,"*** He was more than that: He is *"King of kings and Lord of lords!"* (Rev. 19:16)

However, His Kingdom was not the wicked, evil society (the *kosmos*) of the days of the Roman Empire. But His Kingdom is yet to come (Mt. 6:10).

John 18:36 - *"Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."*

V. 12

"The chief priests and the elders" - They made accusations while standing outside the ***"Judgment Hall."*** *". . . and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the Passover"* (Jn. 18:28).

The multitude falsely accused Jesus before Pilate by saying: *"We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute* (taxes) *to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King"* (Luke 23:2).

"He answered nothing" - Jesus didn't have to defend Himself, even before the governor. His perfect life substantiated His innocence of the false accusations made against Him.

For Jesus to answer would show His accusers as worthy of a response.

Jesus would have lowered Himself down to their game by verbally defending Himself. Their statements were not even worth rebutting.

". . . As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth" (Is. 53:7).

Cp. Psalm 38:13 - *"But I, as a deaf man, heard not; and I was as a dumb man that openeth not His mouth."*

V. 14

Pilate was greatly amazed that Jesus did not respond to a single charge.

Usually, you can tell a man is guilty by how much he desperately tries to convince you of his innocence. Because of the verbosity of his mouth, his own defense usually ends up contradicting itself and thereby incriminating him.

Although Pilate asked Jesus *"What is truth?"* (Jn. 18:38), he didn't realize that he was standing in front of the One who was *"the Truth"* (Jn. 18:37; 14:6).

Jesus always told the truth, lived the truth, upheld the truth, revealed the truth, and fulfilled the truth, because He is the Truth.

"No lie is of the truth" (I Jn. 2:21).

After Pilate's amazement at Christ's silence, he (passing the buck) sends Christ to King Herod, since Christ was a Galilean.

Hoping to see a sign or miracle from Christ, Herod was glad to see Him.

Even Herod's numerous questions went unanswered (Lk. 23:6-9). After a time of contempt and mocking, Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate and on this occasion became friends with Pilate (Lk. 23:10-12).

III. The <u>ENVY</u> of the Jews (v. 15-18)

V. 15

At the Feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread, Pilate had a custom of releasing someone the Jews requested. Very picturesque of the release of bondage from Egypt, but especially of the release Jesus provided by giving His life on this feast day.

V. 16

Barabbas actually was a rebel and a murderer. He *"committed murder in the insurrection"* (rebellion) (Mk. 15:7).

V. 17

***"Barabbas or Christ"* -** Which do you want? It's like asking:

A sinner or a righteous man - whom will you pick?
A law breaker or a law-abiding man?
A murderer or a life-giver?

It's sad to see which the world chooses.

If they chose Barabbas over Christ, it's no wonder that many choose abortion over life, A communist-liberal over a for-the-people conservative, Led Zeplin or Michael Jackson over Ron Hamilton, "NYPD Blue" over "Little House on the Prairie."

V. 18

***"Envy"* -** "the feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing or hearing of the advantage or prosperity of others" (Vine, p. 37).

They were envious of Christ because:

1) He had a moral excellence which they did not have
2) He had a Biblical intelligence which they did not have
3) He had an impeccable righteousness which they did not have
4) He had a Kingdom which they were not part of
5) He had a following which they did not have

--Christ's moral excellence was a rebuke to their sinfulness.
--Christ's Biblical insight and wisdom was a rebuke to their ignorance and tradition.
--Christ's perfect life was a rebuke to their vanity.
--Christ's Kingdom was something they would never see without the new birth.
--Christ's large following made them worry about losing theirs.

Their fears and selfish concerns are evident in John 11:47-48 - *"Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him:*

and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation."

IV. The <u>DREAM</u> of Pilate's Wife (v. 19)

***"Have thou nothing to do with that just man"* -** i.e. Don't have any part in His sentence and execution.

***"That just man"* -** righteous man

Christ was the only just man to ever walk on the earth (Eccles. 7:20 - *"For there is not a just man upon the earth, that doeth good and sinneth not";* cp. Rom. 3:10, 23).

The just died for the unjust (I Pet. 3:18).

***"In a dream"* -** Evidently a supernaturally-sent dream whereby God directly communicated a message to her, like He did to other pagans prior (cp. Gen. 20:3; Dan. 2, 4)

I can imagine Pilate's wife suddenly waking up, head dripping with sweat, heart pumping, eyes widely opened, hands shaking. We don't know the contents of that dream. Maybe it was a dream of her husband standing before God at the Judgment or perhaps of her husband engulfed in flames.

V. The WASHING of Pilate's Hands (v. 20-25)

V. 20

"The multitude" - which on Sunday was praising Christ and throwing palm branches in His path (Mt. 21:8), would now on Friday swing to the far left and be persuaded that Jesus should be destroyed. How fickle people can be.

V. 23

"What evil hath he done?" - Pilate further said, *"I find in him no fault at all"* (Jn. 18:38).

V. 24

Neither Pilate nor Herod found anything worthy of death in Christ (Lk. 23:14-15 - *"Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have no fault in this man touching those things where of ye accuse him: No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him."*

"Tumult" - A riot, an enormous uproar.

They --on one of the holiest holidays of their year-- became a mob of wild, frenzied, blood-thirsty wolves.

"Washed his hands" - symbolizing how he viewed himself as being clean and guiltless of whatever was done to Jesus.

"See ye to it" - Whatever happened to him is your responsibility.

Since Pilate had the authority to release Jesus but did not, he himself has bloody hands.

"Had Pilate been a man of real courage, he would have released Jesus no matter what the consequences. But the crowd roared and Pilate buckled. We are like Pilate when we know what is right, but decide not to do it. When you have a difficult decision to make, don't discount the effects of peer pressure. Realize beforehand that the right decision could have unpleasant consequences: social rejection, career derailment, public ridicule" (Life Application Bible note, p. 1886).

V. 25

"His blood be on us, and on our children" - The Jewish crowd claims responsibility forwhattheydid (Acts4:10;Zech.12:10). RejectingChristhascomebacktohauntthem over and over again (since 70 A.D.).

CONCLUSION:

V. 26

The release of sinful Barabbas in the place of innocent Jesus illustrates the substitutionary sacrifice which Christ made on behalf of all sinners.

"Scourged Jesus" - Pilate thought that by *"chastising"* Him he would appease the crowd, and then could *"release Him"* (Lk. 23:16).

"He released Barabbas" - In the release of Barabbas in the place of Jesus, who would experience crucifixion, we see an amazing illustration of the substitutionary death of Christ and the redemption it provides.

One man came out of a prison sentence he deserved, while Another would be executed for a reason He didn't deserve.

One man would be free from the judgment he should have paid, because the Other would be condemned to a judgment He shouldn't have had to pay.

More went on the day Christ was crucified than the people who had part in that crime realized.

Christ (as the spotless Lamb of God) would give His innocent life to be a substitute payment for the sins and crimes of the world.

The <u>Substitutionary Death</u> of Christ

a. Christ's death for sinners was a <u>predicted</u> event

1) Abraham by faith said to his son Isaac: "God <u>will provide Himself</u> a lamb for a burnt offering" (Gen. 22:8). Note: Abraham's offering of Isaac on Mount Moriah was not only a test of faith (Heb. 11:17-19), it was a <u>foreshadowing</u> of God offering up His "only begotten Son" (Heb. 11:17; Jn. 3:16).

2) Isaiah, who lived over 700 years B.C., foretold of Christ's substitutionary death with these words:
"But He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." (53:6)

"The LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (v. 6)
"For the transgression of my people was he stricken" (v. 8)
"Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin" (v. 10)
"He shall bear their iniquities" (v. 11)
"He bare the sin of many" (v. 12)

3) Daniel, speaking of the Messiah's death, said: 5
"Messiah [shall] be cut off, but not for himself" (Dan. 9:26).

By "substitute" we mean that Christ "took the place of us." The death we deserved, He died; the penalty we should have paid, He paid.

Two New Testament Greek words emphasize the substitutionary death of Christ:

1. ἀντι (anti) - meaning:
   To take the place of someone else

   Mk. 10:45 - "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (cp. Mt. 20:28)

2. ὑπερ (huper) - meaning:
   To do something on behalf of someone else

Scriptures emphasizing the fact of Christ's substitutionary death (using the word huper):

"This is my body which is given for you" (Lk. 22:19)
"This cup is the new testament in my blood which is shed for you" (Lk. 22:20)
"The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (Jn. 6:51)
"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (Jn.10:11)
"I lay down my life for the sheep" (Jn. 10:15)
". . . He (Caiaphas) prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation. . . and not for that nation only . . ." (Jn. 11:51-52, cp. 18:14)
"Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. 5:6)
"Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8)
"He . . . delivered him up for us all" (Rom. 8:32)
"Christ died for our sins" (I Cor. 15:3)
"For he hath made him to be sin for us" (II Cor. 5:21)
"Christ . . . gave himself for our sins" (Gal. 1:4)
"Christ . . . loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20)
"Christ [was] . . . made a curse for us" (Gal. 3:13)
"Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour" (Eph. 5:2)
"Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Eph. 5:25)
"Our Lord Jesus Christ. . . died for us" (I Th. 5:10)
"Who gave himself a ransom for all" (I Tim. 2:6)
"He by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9)
"But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God" (Heb. 10:12).
"Christ also suffered for us" (I Pet. 2:21)
"Christ also hath once suffered for sins" (I Pet. 3:18)
"Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh" (I Pet. 4:1)
"He laid down his life for us" (I Jn. 3:16)

b. Christ's death for sinners was an <u>important</u> event

The crux (key truth) of the Gospel message is the substitutionary ("vicarious") death of Christ (I Cor. 15:3; cp. I Cor. 2:2).

Christ's death for (in the place of) sinners is the <u>most essential element</u> of God's plan of salvation (In I Cor. 15:3, the words "first of all" mean "first in importance" - showing Christ's substitutionary death and bodily resurrection to be the most essential contents of the Gospel message).

c. Christ's death for sinners was a <u>blessed event</u>

Christ became the sinner's substitute so that we would:

1) Have <u>life</u> (Jn. 6:51)
2) Be made <u>righteous</u> (II Cor. 5:21)
3) Be <u>delivered</u> from this present evil world (Gal. 1:4)
4) Be <u>redeemed</u> from the curse of the Law (Gal. 3:13)
5) Be <u>resurrected</u> and <u>raptured</u> to live together with him (I Th. 5:10)
6) Be <u>redeemed</u> from iniquity, purified and zealous (Titus 2:14)
7) Be <u>brought to God</u> (I Pet. 3:18)