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9 Following the Messiah Episode 9 (8:08-19:02) The Final Day: Jewish Trials

Opening:

1. You have viewed the video "Following the Messiah Episode 9" at www.appianmedia.org and have worked through the study guide Lesson 9 available from wtg2@hughes.net.
2. This lesson focuses attention on the three Jewish Trials experienced by Jesus preceding His death: 1) before Annas; 2) before Caiaphas; and 3) before the Sanhedrin. Consideration will also be given to the account of Peter's denials and Jesus being held in the house of Caiaphas prior to the trial before the Sanhedrin.
3. Note that this lesson focuses on the Jewish Trials. In lesson 10 we will consider His trials before the Roman authorities: Pilate, Herod Antipas and then back to Pilate.

Into the Text:

1. From the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus was escorted back across the Kidron Valley and into the city of Jerusalem. John 18:12-14 records what happened. Jesus was first taken to Annas the father-in-law of Caiaphas. Annas had served as High Priest from 7 A.D. He was deposed by the Romans in 14 A.D., so now in Jesus' day, Caiaphas officially served as High Priest, but Annas was "in the background." Luke 3:2 refers to "the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas." John mentions that Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was expedient for one man to die on behalf of the people. This recommendation is recorded by John in 11:47-53.
2. The high priest, Annas, questioned Jesus. Read Jn. 18:19-24. His questions involved Jesus' teaching and His disciples. Jesus reasoned that His teaching had been done openly and that the high priest should question those who had heard Him speak. Jesus was then struck by one of the officers who questioned the way He had responded to the high priest. Without much having been accomplished here, Annas sent Jesus bound to Caiaphas the high priest.
3. Mk. 14:53-65 describes what happened at Caiaphas' house. Obviously the move is to put Jesus to death. This was the plan. They sought testimony to support this move but it eluded them. Even though false witnesses were put forward there was disagreement in their testimony. But then the high priest asked, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" Jesus said, "I am." With this they condemned Him of blasphemy and proceeded to sentence Him to death.

In the video attention was given to Jesus being held in Caiaphas' house. Lk. 22:63-65 says that He was held in custody, mocked, blindfold, struck and blasphemed. In the foundational floors of The Church of Saint Peter in Gallicantu (Latin for "cock's

crow”), the traditional home of Annas and Caiaphas, there is a stable that has signs of being converted into holding cells with an area for flogging and restraining prisoners. There is also evidence of a Jewish ritual bath (mikvah) that had been retrofitted into a solitary confinement pit where prisoners would have been lowered through a cylindrical hole into the pit.

4. Jesus’ third trial is conducted before the Sanhedrin (read Lk. 22:66-71). This trial occurred “when it was day.” The question: “If you are the Christ, tell us.” Jesus openly acknowledged that He was. He associated Psa. 110:1 with Himself. “The Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God.” They said, “Are you the Son of God, then?” He said, “Yes, I am.” For them this is enough to establish the charge of blasphemy and the sentence of death. Note that Jesus is being condemned because of **who** He is and not because of **what** He has done. Note also that He is claiming authority as the Son of God and of being the one to be seated at the right hand of the power of God. Note the association with Dan. 7:13-14 also, as Jesus uses the designation “Son of Man.” Dan. 7:14 indicates that the Ancient of Days gives the Son of Man “dominion, glory and a kingdom.”

So they have convicted Jesus of blasphemy for claiming to be the Son of God, but this is not a charge that will “stick” with the Romans. This will become an issue later when Jesus is before Pilate. Pilate was being asked to execute a man for claiming to be the Son of God. This was not the kind of issue the Roman court system was designed to address. So Pilate said, “I find no guilt in Him.” We will talk more about this in the next lesson.

5. So there are the three Jewish trials. The first was, before Annas, the second before Caiaphas and the third before the Sanhedrin. It might be said that the results here could have been expected. We knew all along that they were in opposition to Jesus and we have seen the plot developing over a long period of time. But there are some descriptions given, intermingled with the trials, that are shocking!

Read Lk. 22:54-62. Jesus had predicted the challenge that Peter was going to face (Lk. 22:31-34). He had predicted that he would deny Him three times before the rooster crowed to announce the sunrise. Peter and another disciple (John?) who knew the high priest and some of his household had followed the arresting crowd and even entered the courtyard of the high priest’s house (Jn. 18:15, 18). As Jesus was meeting with Annas, one of the servant girls questioned Peter’s relationship with the Nazarene (Matt. 26:69-70). Someone else questioned him, and Peter again denied knowing Jesus (Matt. 26:71). But between his Galilean accent and a relative of Malchus (whom he had attacked in Gethsemane) recognizing him, Peter’s denial intensified to the point of swearing that he did not know Jesus (Matt. 26:73; Jn. 18:26-27).

It was at the moment of Peter’s third denial that the rooster crowed the second time. Somehow Jesus made eye-contact with Peter. Peter’s realization of what he had done resulted in bitter weeping (Mk. 14:72; Matt. 26:75).

6. Well the Jews have the charge of blasphemy, a charge in their judgment worthy of death. But it is not a charge that will be effective in the Roman courts and in order to execute Jesus they have to have the authorization of the Roman authority. In the next study we will see how this is handled.

Applications:

1. There are relational dynamics in the background of these events that often we do not notice. For example Jn. 18:15-16 describes Simon Peter as following Jesus along with another disciple. Then it says, "That disciple was known to the high priest, and entered with Jesus into the court of the high priest, but Peter was standing at the door outside. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the doorkeeper, and brought Peter in." It is in this context that Peter's denials are set. You can see why the slave girls are identifying Peter as a disciple. But that is not the end of it. When Peter is warming himself by the fire, one of the slaves of the high priest, being a relative of the one whose ear Peter cut off, said, "Did I not see you in the garden with Him?" (Jn. 18:25-27).

Peter's relational and geographical proximity is threatening to him. His response is to deny Jesus, again and again. He distances himself. He is in the courtyard (Matt. 26:69), but then went out to the gateway (Matt. 26:71) and then went out and left altogether (Matt. 26:75).

How comfortable are you with being close to Jesus?

2. Jesus openly acknowledges that He is the Son of God and will receive "the right hand of power" (Matt. 26:64). Are you willing to accept this even if it costs you your life? It will you know! It involves you taking up your cross daily and following Him right into the courtyard, and staying!! Yes, I know you are afraid. Me too! But we cannot deny Him!! It requires all our courage. How are we going to take up our cross if we can't stay for the trial? How have you manifest your courage in confessing Christ?

3. Here is an interesting thing. Even though Peter denies the Lord and weeps bitterly he comes back with courage, leadership, and incredible strength and makes a powerful contribution. He bears His cross and openly confesses His King proclaiming Him for the rest of His life. If the Lord accepted him, it gives me hope that even if I am weak I can come back. What does this hope mean to you?