

# GUILTY OF BEING GOD

April 28, 2019

By Pastor Stan  
Matthew 26:57-68

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INTRO.

-- We're going through the Gospel of Matthew and are in chapter 26. It is the last night of Jesus' earthly life. In about 12 hours Jesus will be nailed to the cross, fulfilling the purpose that brought Him to this world.

-- The final segment of Jesus' journey to the cross began in the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus struggled in prayer with the prospect of taking the place of sinners, of bearing their guilt and receiving the judgment for their sin. That prospect was so abhorrent that Jesus initially asked the Father to remove that cup of substitutionary suffering. But, knowing that without His drinking it there would be no way for any of humankind to be saved, Jesus willingly submitted to the Father's will and embraced His Messianic appointment with the Cross.

When Judas arrived in the Garden with an armed cohort of soldiers, Jesus refused to resist and allowed them to arrest Him.

-- Today's text starts immediately following Jesus' betrayal and arrest in the Garden.

Matthew 26:57f.

## I. The Assertion (vv. 57-64)

-- Jesus was taken to be put immediately on trial. During that trial Jesus would assert His identity as the divine Messiah in 2 ways - first, by His silence, and secondly, by His words.

### A. Jesus Asserts His identity by His Silence. (vv. 57-63a)

#### 1. The House of Caiaphas (vv. 57-58)

##### a. The Trial's Purpose

-- The purpose for the trial wasn't to determine Jesus' guilt or innocence. The religious leaders had already decided that Jesus must die. The reason for the trial was to declare Jesus guilty of an offense for which He could be executed and to do so without causing a riot among the ordinary people who largely admired Jesus.

##### b. The Trial's Irregularities

-- In order to accomplish that purpose, the religious authorities conducted a trial that was highly irregular in two significant ways:

###### (1) The Time

-- The trial happened at a highly irregular time - at night. Legitimate trials didn't take place in the middle of the night.

###### (2) The Place

-- The trial also happened at a highly irregular place - in the house of the High Priest. A trial like that of Jesus almost always took place in the Temple complex.

##### c. The Sanhedrin

-- The scribes and elders who had gathered at Caiaphas' house were members of the Sanhedrin, something like a Jewish Supreme Court. That group, of course, did not typically convene late at night. This was a hurried gathering that had been set into motion a few hours earlier when

Judas went to some of the religious authorities to tell them that the perfect opportunity for them to arrest Jesus would be that night in the Garden of Gethsemane. That prompted the High Priest to send out messengers to gather enough members of the Sanhedrin to form a quorum and to put Jesus on trial.

## 2. The False Witnesses (vv. 59-61)

a. To assure a prompt and guilty verdict, the High Priest brought in scoundrels to give false, manufactured testimony. The problem was that the guys rounded up to be false witnesses weren't the brightest bulbs on the shelf. Even though they were lying about Jesus, they couldn't get their stories straight, and they kept contradicting one another. Jewish law required at least two witnesses to agree on a charge in order to execute someone.

b. Finally, after going through several bumbling witnesses, the religious authorities came up with two witnesses who agreed on a charge.

-- v. 61b

-- This was a serious charge in that culture. To speak against a sacred place like the Temple was a form of blasphemy.

-- There was a problem with the account given by the witnesses, however.

Jesus had never said what they claimed He said. They were referring to an incident recorded in John 2, where Jesus had just cast the merchants out of the Temple. The religious authorities asked for a sign that He had the authority to do something like that. Here's how Jesus responded to that demand:

**John 2:19** Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

-- Notice that Jesus never said that He would destroy the Temple, which was the part of the charge that would have been blasphemy. And, furthermore, John goes on to explain that the "temple" that Jesus was talking about was His own body. In other words, Jesus was talking about His death and resurrection.

## 3. Jesus' Silence (vv. 62-63a)

### a. The High Priest's Question (v. 62)

-- After the false witnesses made their charge, the High Priest asked Jesus what He had to say.

v. 62

-- It was the perfect opportunity for Jesus to explain that He had been misquoted and misunderstood. But Jesus didn't do it.

### b. "Jesus remained silent." (v. 63a)

-- Matthew says that "Jesus remained silent." There are two significant aspects to Jesus' silence.

(1) First, Jesus' silence indicated His submission to the Father's will.

-- Jesus didn't try to defend Himself because He has already determined to go to the Cross and to die in our place.

(2) Secondly, Jesus' silence fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy about the Messiah.

**Isaiah 53:7** He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.

-- Jesus' silence was a powerful declaration of His divine identity and mission.

## B. Jesus Asserts His Identity by His Words. (vv. 63b-64)

### 1. The High Priest's Question (v. 63b)

-- Frustrated by Jesus' silence and not wanting to waste any more time, the High Priest took matters directly into his own hands and asked Jesus a question that went straight to the bottom line.

v. 63b

-- The High Priest invoked the most solemn of oaths ("by the living God") and ordered Jesus to tell them straight out if He was the Christ, the Son of God - in other words, to tell them clearly if He

claimed to be the Messiah.

## 2. Jesus' Reply (v. 64)

-- It was the moment of truth, and Jesus would no longer remain silent. Jesus would speak but not to defend Himself or to try to save Himself; rather, Jesus would speak to declare clearly and unequivocally who He was.

v. 64

a. "You have said so" is not an ambiguous or evasive response. Just the opposite, it is a definite confirmation. In effect, Jesus was saying:

"You have said it yourself. That's exactly who I am."

-- But Jesus didn't stop there.

### b. "But I tell you..." (v. 64b)

(1) "Son of Man"

-- "Son of Man" was a title that Jesus used to refer to Himself throughout His ministry. It comes from the OT book of Daniel, where it is used as a title for the Messiah.

(2) Two Messianic Passages

-- Jesus went on to apply to Himself two OT passages that everyone recognized as referring to the Messiah.

(a) **Psalm 110:1** The Lord says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool."

-- Jesus was saying that He would be exalted and enthroned at the Father's right hand and that the Father would make all Jesus' enemies to bow at Jesus' feet.

(b) **Daniel 7:13-14** "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. <sup>14</sup>And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

-- Jesus was saying to the religious authorities that He is the Son of Man, the One who will come in the clouds. He is the glorious Son of Man who will judge the earth and will reign eternally over the Kingdom of God.

## II. The Response (vv. 65-68)

### A. The Response of the High Priest (v. 65)

-- The High Priest understood clearly everything that Jesus was saying and responded with dramatic rejection.

v. 65

-- In a sign of extreme outrage, the High Priest tore his priestly robe and declared, "That's all we need to hear. He just spoke blasphemy in our own hearing. He just put himself on the throne of heaven and made himself equal with God. He just claimed to be the one who will judge the earth and will reign eternally. We don't need any more witnesses."

### B. The Response of the Sanhedrin (vv. 66-68)

-- Then the High Priest called on the members of the Sanhedrin to render their verdict, which they did without hesitation.

vv. 66-68

-- The Sanhedrin immediately declared Jesus to be guilty of blasphemy and sentenced Him to death, and then proceeded to demonstrate their contempt for Jesus by spitting in His face (the greatest of insults in that culture) and by hitting, slapping and mocking Him.

## CONCLUSION

The religious authorities found Jesus guilty of blasphemy because He claimed to be God.

They had not misunderstood Jesus. He did, indeed, claim to be God. There's only one way for that claim to not be blasphemy - if it is true - if Jesus truly is God.

When it comes to Jesus there are only two options: either He is a blasphemer or He is God.

And that means there are only two legitimate responses to Jesus:

-- If you agree with the religious authorities that He was a blasphemous charlatan, then Jesus deserves nothing from you but contempt.

-- But if you accept Jesus' claim and if you accept the witness of the Disciples and the writings of the NT and believe that Jesus was, indeed, the eternal Son of God who came in human flesh to die in our place and make payment for our sin, then He deserves nothing less than your life, your love, and your humble obedience.