

Lesson 11 – THE CONFESSION OF THE CLOUD RIDER

Last week we talked about how Jesus laid down the gauntlet and baited Satan into killing Him. That was the plan from the beginning as Jesus was the lamb slain from the foundation of the world. And that was done for us. God was/ is invested in His creation – humanity.

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹ And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.

And now we are at the place in our study where Jesus has been betrayed (why Jesus chose Judas?), arrested and is now on trial. Most of us are familiar with the term, “kangaroo court.” This is used of an illegitimate court proceeding in which someone is being railroaded – where the verdict is a foregone conclusion. Let’s look at Jesus’ trial in the home of Caiphas, the High Priest.

Mt. 26: 59-66

Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking false testimony against Jesus that they might put him to death, ⁶⁰ but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward ⁶¹ and said, “This man said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days.’” ⁶² And the high priest stood up and said, “Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?” ⁶³ But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, “I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.” ⁶⁴ Jesus said to him, **“You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.”** ⁶⁵ Then the high priest tore his robes and said, “He has uttered blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy. ⁶⁶ What is your judgment?” They answered, “He deserves death.” ⁶⁷ Then they spit in his face and struck him. And some slapped him, ⁶⁸ saying, “Prophecy to us, you Christ! Who is it that struck you?”

At Jesus’ trial, there were many people brought in to give false testimony against Him. But although many testified, the religious establishment in Israel still didn’t have the smoking gun for which they were looking. Although the trial was bogus, they had to make it look good for the people, because Jesus had many followers. And since the Jews no longer had the right to carry out the death sentence under Roman law, they had to have a good enough case to ensure Jesus would be crucified by Pilate. Therefore, they needed the smoking gun. And anyone who watches true crime shows knows that no matter what evidence you have, nothing is as close to a slam dunk as a confession. The High Priest became frustrated at the lack of

evidence, but he was more frustrated that Jesus said nothing in His own defense. At the very least, he wanted something from Jesus' own mouth that might be used against Him. But nothing would be better than a confession. Finally, in a fit of anger and frustration, the high priest put Jesus under oath, "I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God."

'Tell me one way or the other if you claim to be the Messiah!'

Look at Jesus' response.

Jesus said to him, **"You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven."**

Jesus gave what seemed like a pointless answer to a clear-cut question. In essence He said, "Do you really want to know who I am? The listen carefully!" And Jesus then quoted Daniel 7:13! The inevitable result was that Caiphas blew a gasket! He lost his mind! Why? What had Jesus said that was worth the charge of blasphemy – a charge that incurred the death sentence in a Jewish court?

Daniel 7, in the first 8 verses, begins with a vision where Daniel sees 4 beasts coming out of the sea. These beasts represent 4 nations or empires. All of the beasts are terrifying in appearance, but the fourth is set apart and more terrifying than the rest. But our focus is on what happens next.

Dan. 7:9 "As I looked,
thrones were placed,

and the Ancient of Days took his seat;
his clothing was white as snow,
and the hair of his head like pure wool;
his throne was fiery flames;
its wheels were burning fire.

¹⁰ A stream of fire issued
and came out from before him;
a thousand thousands served him,
and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him;
the court sat in judgment,
and the books were opened.

The “Ancient of Days” is the God of Israel. The throne described here is the same as the one described in Ezekiel 1. This is said to be a UFO by youtubers and ancient alien enthusiasts, but it is clearly said to be what is known as a cherubic throne. So verses 9 and 10 of Daniel 7, open with God sitting on a throne, but look carefully at what is being said. There isn’t just one throne, there are many thrones. And there are countless beings on these thrones. This is a divine council scene where the beasts of Daniel’s vision are being judged. These beasts, (nations/ empires) are judged to be guilty. The first 3 are to be rendered powerless, but the fourth is to be killed. They will all be displaced by another kingdom that will last forever. And then things get even more interesting.

**Dan. 7:13 “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.
 14 ^pAnd to him was given dominion
 and glory and a kingdom,
 that all ^qpeoples, nations, and languages
 should serve him;
^rhis dominion is an everlasting dominion,
 which shall not pass away,
 and his kingdom one
 that shall not be destroyed.

In these verses, we see, “one like a son of man” who approaches the throne of God and to Him is given dominion of a kingdom that will last forever!

So what? Remember how we’ve talked about the 3 tracks of the Messiah? This is the second one about which we spoke. The “son of man” is a phrase that occurs many times in the OT and it generally refers to a human. But this “son of man” (LIKE a son of man) is different. He ascends to the throne of God and receives a kingdom that will never end! How does He get to the throne of God? He “comes on the clouds!” What is referred to as the ‘cloud rider.’ So what? Well, every time that phrase is used in the OT, it is used only of God Himself! (**Isa. 9:1; Dt. 33:26; Ps. 68:32-33; Ps. 104: 1-4**) But in this scene, God was already on His throne, when someone LIKE a

son of man (human) approached God on His throne. Daniel saw another “God figure.” This is how we think of Jesus and the Father (Trinity). And that was precisely the point! This is why Caiphas lost his mind! Jesus had just claimed to be one who rode the clouds, (as only God did in the OT) and was to be given an everlasting kingdom! At that point, He claimed to be God! The Messiah, in no uncertain terms! There was nothing cryptic being said now! Jesus had just signed His own death warrant, as far as the Jewish court was concerned. And die, He did. At that moment a shout went up in the camp of evil. Jesus had sealed His fate. Let’s look at what Psalm 22 has to say about this.

Ps. 22:7-14

All who see me ^gmock me;

they make mouths at me; they ^hwag their heads;

⁸ ⁱ“He trusts in the LORD; let him ^jdeliver him; let him rescue him, for he ^kdelights in him!”

Psa. 22:9 Yet you are he who ^ltook me from the womb;

you made me trust you at my mother’s breasts.
¹⁰ On you was I cast from my birth,

and from ^mmy mother's womb you have been
my God.

¹¹ Be not ⁿfar from me,
for trouble is near,
and there is ^onone to help.

Psa. 22:12 Many bulls encompass me;
^pstrong bulls of ^qBashan surround me;
¹³ they ^ropen wide their mouths at me,
like a ravening and roaring lion.

Psa. 22:14 I am ^spoured out like water,
and all my bones are ^tout of joint;
my ^uheart is like ^vwax;
it is melted within my breast;

We know this as a psalm referring to Jesus at His crucifixion. We tend to focus on the parts about His bones being out of joint and the people mocking Him while He was on the cross. But there is much more going on here. Did the name, "Bashan" jump off the page at you? It should have. Remember talking about that last week? Bashan – 'the place of the serpent, the realm of the dead, the gates of Hell' and ground zero for evil spirits?

**Psa. 22:12 Many bulls encompass me;
^pstrong bulls of ^qBashan surround me;
¹³ they ^ropen wide their mouths at me,
 like a ravening and roaring lion.**

The bulls of Bashan are a reference to demons. Bashan was a center for Baal worship where bulls were sacrificed to pagan gods. And we read here that these demons surrounded Jesus and opened their mouths to devour Him. (death scene of Aslan) But just as in the book/movie, where the white witch and her demonic hordes thought they had achieved the victory, she later discovered that she and her hordes had been played for fools. Aslan rose and conquered evil through his death. And this, of course is an allegory to Jesus.

But Satan didn't just lose his claim on humanity. His evil cohorts would also be judged for their part in leading mankind astray. The nations to which they were assigned at the tower of Babel, the nations they had ruled unjustly, as they led them from God, were to be taken away from them and reclaimed through Jesus.

**Psa. 82:1 ^mGod ⁿhas taken his place in the divine council;
 in the midst of ^pthe gods he ^qholds judgment:
² "How long will you judge unjustly**

and ^rshow partiality to ^sthe wicked? *Selah*
³ ^tGive justice to ^uthe weak and the fatherless;
^vmaintain the right of the afflicted and the
 destitute.
⁴ ^wRescue the weak and the needy;
^xdeliver them from the hand of the wicked.”

Psa. 82:5 ^yThey have neither knowledge nor
 understanding,
^zthey walk about in darkness;
^aall the foundations of the earth are ^bshaken.

Psa. 82:6 ^cI said, “You are gods,
 sons of the Most High, all of you;
⁷ nevertheless, like men ^dyou shall die,
 and fall like any prince.”¹

Psa. 82:8 ^eArise, O God, judge the earth;
 for you shall ^finherit all the nations!

Jesus’ death and resurrection would lead to their judgement. And though they were divine creatures, they would die like men. The end result being that God would inherit all the nations! The great reversal would begin with Jesus’ resurrection! We read that in Daniel 7:14.

**^pAnd to him was given dominion
and glory and a kingdom,
that all ^qpeoples, nations, and languages
should serve him;
^rhis dominion is an everlasting dominion,
which shall not pass away,
and his kingdom one
that shall not be destroyed.**

The Apostle Paul tells us that Jesus is already on the throne we saw in Daniel seven.

Eph. 1:19-23

and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, ^vaccording to the working of ^vhis great might ²⁰ that he worked in Christ ^vwhen he raised him from the dead and ^vseated him at his right hand ^vin the heavenly places, ²¹ ^vfar above ^vall rule and authority and power and dominion, and above ^vevery name that is named, not only in ^vthis age but also in the one to come. ²² And ^vhe put all things under his feet and gave him as ^vhead over all things to the church, ²³ ^vwhich is his body, ^vthe fullness of him ^vwho fills ^vall in all.

The everlasting kingdom has been inaugurated, and we are living in the process of its coming to fruition, though that won't be seen in its full fruition until Jesus comes back.

WHY DOES ALL THIS MATTER?

Satan has lost his claim to our souls! He has no claim on the soul of the believer, and we should understand that God will not give His ear, nor any credence to his accusations. Do we understand what that means? Satan has no more claim on our souls.

But if that is the case, then why do so many of us live like he does? Why do we live in defeat and fear? Where is our joy? We have nothing to fear in the way of Satan staking any claim on our eternal destiny. We have to understand, as we go through this series, that this plan, the history of our world, centers around God's love for us. Everything we have been studying, every failure of mankind was followed by a move on God's part to restore us to a relationship with Him! Look at how much God has done for us, as failed creatures. We have to see that God desires a relationship with us more than we desire one with Him. God knew that if the relationship was to exist, then He would have to carry the load. And that is where grace comes into the picture.

Eph. 2: 4-10

But³ God, being ¹rich in mercy, ²because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even ³when we were dead in our trespasses, ⁴made us alive together with Christ—⁶by grace you have been saved—⁶ and raised us up with him and ⁷seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable ⁸riches of his grace in ⁸kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For ⁸by grace you have been saved ⁸through faith. And this is ⁹not your own doing; ⁹it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, ⁹ so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For ¹⁰we are his workmanship, ¹⁰ created in Christ Jesus ¹⁰for good works, ¹⁰ which God prepared beforehand, ¹⁰ that we should walk in them.

Salvation is not gained by moral perfection. All that we've seen thus far shows us that man is not capable of it. Therefore, salvation is impossible without grace. Faith – “believing loyalty” in the work of Jesus Christ – His death, and resurrection, is the only way salvation is achieved. That is extended by the grace of God. And if that gift is not attainable through moral perfection, then it can't be lost through moral imperfection. What is not gained through moral performance cannot be lost by poor performance. Think about that! Trusting that Jesus defeated death and Satan in order to reclaim the nations – to reclaim each of us, and seeing Him as our Lord, savior and king and no other, that faith in His work gains us salvation. And because of that, we are left with the same commission that Jesus left the disciples with:

Mt. 28: 19-20

And Jesus came and said to them, **“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in² the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”**

And every time that is done, the dominion of evil shrinks a little more. With every soul that is saved, another temple is built, and more sacred space is recaptured.

Please think on what God has done for each of us and how we each play a part in bringing others to the same destiny.