

The Council of the Chief Priest

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Matthew 27:1-2

1:When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death:

2:And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

When the morning was come, and Jesus has told us that evil men love darkness, and the reason they love darkness is because their deeds are evil. These that we are reading about this morning are evil folks. They don't appear to be such, nobody would ever consider them evil, but they are. The night is past, and they have held a trial, a mock trial, and now that the darkness has given way, the chief priest and the elders of the people took council against Jesus to put Him to death. The Jews couldn't put anybody to death because they are under Roman authority. So verse 2 said, "***And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor***". Having trumped up charges against Him, they found Him guilty. They finally got a couple of false witnesses to agree. And with their testimony, they determined that they would kill Him. There is no new thing under the sun and what has been will be. What was here, is taking place all over again in our day with the chief priest and the elders.

There is in the Revelation, terminology of John as he speaks about the great whore. And he is talking about a religious system made up of good moral people. And the same thing is taking place. That's the one nation that had the prophets, the priests, the oracles of God, yet they crucified the Lord of glory. Turn with me to Romans Chapter 9. You see, to be a part of the harlot you've got to know about religion, and it was that system, the chief priest and the elders that took council to put Him to death. Romans 9:4 "***Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;***" The only nation on the face of the earth that had this

knowledge was Israel. Every other nation, all other people sat in darkness. They knew nothing about the living God. They worshipped sticks and stones creation. They did not have the law and they did not have the service of God in the tabernacle. They didn't know anything about it. Romans 9:5-6 says ***"Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:"*** Just because they were born of that nationality does not mean that they were the true people of God. Abraham had two sons, and Abraham is the father of faith, but not all the lineage of Abraham belonged to the church. Some folk think that there was not a church in the Old Testament, that the church was formed on the day of Pentecost. Paul speaks in Hebrews about the church in the wilderness. There is but one body of people. There is not a national Israel that God dealt with in the Old Testament and church in the New Testament. God saved the old as He saves the new; they all make up one body, that is the bride of Christ.

Now over to the next chapter in Romans, chapter 10, these folk had priests, they had the glory of God, they had the fire that carried them through and protected them at night. They had the cloud, they had the glory of God that came down in the tabernacle and ministered to them. They had the law of God; it was carried in the Ark of God and it went before them at all times. And yet with all that, they turned out here in the day of Christ to be but the harlot system. The reason that they did this, Paul said of Israel in chapter 10:2-3 ***"For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."*** They would not bow to established righteousness of God. They went about to establish their own method of worship, their own righteousness and thought that that would be acceptable to God. Wherefore God cut them off. In Romans 1, Paul spends the first three chapters showing that the Jews, the Gentiles, and that the whole world is guilty before God. In Romans 1:21-24 ***"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became***

fools, 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. 24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:”. In every son of Adam, every last one, there is a pride about all of us that would take Christ off the throne, because we don't like the way that He came and we don't like the way He has arranged things. And it is too humbling for us to submit to a righteousness entirely of Him and not of our own. The preaching of the cross, Paul said in I Cor. 1, is foolishness to those that perish. To the Jew that had the oracles and all these things from God, it is a stumbling block. They want nothing to do with it and because they would not bow to this man Jesus, they plotted to put Him to death and accomplish their end and brought about their desire and kept their religious system in tack. This man left alone was going to tear it up, they thought, so we best get rid of Him before He gets rid of our system.

Ever since the fall of Lucifer, you know Isaiah 14, he fell because pride entered into his heart. That thought came into his mind, that I will ascend to hill, to the very throne of God, and I will be as the most high, and I will be just like Him. I'm not going to bow to a man that God makes of the dust and he becomes the redeemer. I will ascend to the throne of God. And ever since he has gone about to establish religion without Christ, the true Lord. His first sin, or the first sin after his sin, was when he came to Eve and he got her with pride. You eat of the fruit of that tree and you will be as God or Gods. And she ate because of the pride and that which she wanted to do herself. In Genesis 11, you know the story, after the flood there were the three sons of Noah and their families. There was this relationship between God and man at that time. And these families got together and said, "Let us build a city and a tower that will reach to heaven. Let us do this, we don't need outside help. We can form our own system and we can make it so that we can get there without any aid from anyone above mankind." The relationship between God and Man was then broken. When they confederated to get to heaven by themselves, God called out one man, Abraham, and ever since God has been dealing with individuals, bringing individuals into the church. And the harlot system continues to build up herself with her city and her tower, trying to get to God. Now the city and the tower that she has

made, or are in the process of making is today what the world sees as the church. They have devised a gospel that will leave man in his pride, removed Christ from the throne, and fixed another gospel.

The gospel of the harlot, and I don't mean this to be ugly, and this is not pointed toward any particular group, the Lord knows my heart. But the gospel of the harlot is two words, Accept Jesus. And man in his depravity and in his sinfulness, is not dealt with today in the average, so called church. And you take Christ off the throne and begin building a system by the ingenuity of man and you have substituted the work of God and your building in the harlot system. All that is necessary today to convince men, women, boys, and girls that they can get to heaven is believe and receive. And they have taken a few verses from Acts and a few verses that they call the Romans road and they have left out repentance, and they've misconstrued the word faith, and it means little more than a head nodding to the acceptance that this book is true. No one, no one in scripture was ever told to believe, until there was a thorough work of the spirit, bringing repentance and confession of sins. The gospel is not an invitation to every man. The gospel is a command of God, not an invitation; it is a command of God to turn from sin and to the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul writes to the church at Thessalonica, and he said, "I thank God that you have turned to God from idols to serve the true and living God."

You don't have to turn from anything today; all they have to do is just receive Jesus. And it's the chief priest and it's the elders that have once again devised a system that has put the Son of God to death in the average church in this land. Lets turn to a couple of passages in Acts chapter 2:36-37. Peter has stood on the day of Pentecost and he has preached, and he is summing it up in these verses.

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. 37 ¶ Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" We go out in this day and we find folk and we tell them what they need to do before there has ever been a work of conviction, before there has ever been a drawing of the spirit of God. We go out and we pull off young apples before its time for them to mature, because we want to fill up our system.

When God pricked these in their heart they cried, "What shall we do"? Now listen in verse 38, Peter said repent, repent, turn from your sins. You can't turn to God until you have turned from sin. You can't and won't bow to the Lord Jesus until you are turning from your sin. Repent and turn from your sin and be baptized, every one of you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Peter preached in Acts 3:18 **"But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. 19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; 20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:"** Before Jesus Christ ever sets up in a mans heart, there has been a work of the Holy Ghost, and there has been a repentance, a turning from their sins. Verse 26 of the same chapter, **"Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities."** And the chief priest and the scribes have devised a gospel where you don't need to turn from your sin, you don't need to humble yourself to one such as that lowly Jesus. They've devised a gospel that you can accept Christ and if later on somewhere down the road you want to make Him Lord then they will give you that opportunity.

The harlot system thinks that man, due to time and education, teaching light, that man has been elevated to a higher plain and he is not as sinful today as he was in Christ time or as he was in the Old Testament time. So they devised a system that just tells them that God loves them and that they are to believe. Again, if you can show me one message or one sermon in the book of Acts on God is love, then I'll step down from here. I've shown you two, where it told them to repent and turn from their sins and the love of God was not mentioned. The Christ that they crucified was exalted by the mouth of Peter and the spirit of God in their hearts. All that a sinner knows is that God is angry with the wicked every day, and that God will turn to hell all nations that forget Him. That God will have mercy on no one except the repentant.

Let me give you two other illustrations. Peter is in the prison, and a light shines in prison and the angel whacks him across the head and tells him to get up and unloose the chains. And those sixteen soldiers that have bound and are keeping that prison, they don't hear or know a thing. Peter gets up and he walks out a free man out of that prison. He never wakes them up, he never preaches the gospel to them, and he never tells them about Jesus and the next day all sixteen are put to death. Paul and Silas are in jail and there is a great earthquake, and the jail doors spring open, and the prison guard there takes out a sword and was about to kill himself when Paul called for a light and he sprang in and said, "Do yourself no harm. We are all here." He said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved". And here is one of the verses they use, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thou house." I want to tell you this. Jesus was not offered to those sixteen soldiers when Peter was in prison, and He is never offered to anybody until there is an earthquake and the fire and the thunder of the law of God from Mount Sinai comes into their soul. The only person you've got a right, the only person that the spirit of God will let you say correctly, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved is the one that the law was thundered in his or her heart and they know that they are facing death. They have seen the fire from the mount and they have heard the terrible voice of God. Then and only then you have a right to tell them can you tell them to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. We are sending this nation to hell. We are sending boys and girls to hell, telling them to believe, and America and the world thinks it the gospel. The whore will have her damnable invitation system at the end of the service where they sing ten, fourteen, or twenty one verses of "Just as I Am" until they've got somebody to walk the aisle and they stand there and they say, "God loves you, and God wants to save you." But you must first decide, you must take the first step. God's never wanted to do anything, God has always done what He determined to do, we don't have that right.

America is like Israel, in Isaiah chapter 30, the people said to the seers, "See not; and to the prophets, prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things" and the word smooth means flattery. Speak smooth flattering words. They said words of deceit. God said ok, that's what you want, that's what I'll give you. They will throw Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel away and God will send them

preachers out of their own heart. If that's what you want, I'll give you preachers having itching ears. And if that's what you want, flattering words, I'll send a strong delusion that you will all believe a lie and be damned. The harlots have bound Jesus today and we ungodly, uncalled preachers, we have put Him to death in the pulpits and we have devised a scheme and we have devised a system and we have intoxicated folks with a false gospel and the harlot has spread her tentacles throughout this land and throughout the world.

The great enemy of the church and the great enemy of the gospel, its not government, its not politics, its not infidels, its not atheist, its not even heretics. The enemy of the church is not the lady that can get prayer taken out of school or the bible taken out of the lawmaker's hands. The great enemy of the church is a far more subtle silent one. Its one that we discern so little. And it's sending our children and our friends and our families to hell. It's the Swaggart's and the Baker's and the Graham's and its all these. Some of them that didn't fall into great sin, some of them living moral lives. And its these that are supposed to preach the word of God that will tell a Bill Clinton, God will forgive and tell a Jessie Jackson that it is alright. And tell them that God knows that you are just human. It's the mouth of the harlot that's spreading a gospel that has suited the nature of fallen man. And it is all around us and most of us want to put our head in the sand and think, "Well it's not that bad." It's the same crowd, it's the same crowd that bound Jesus and sought council to put Him to death, that's putting Him to death today, the chief priest and the elders. That crowd against eleven disciples. Now whom is the world going to believe? The chief priest and the elders of that great religious system that have had their training and their seminary and their biblical discourses in the great school of the day. Taught by the Sanhedrin, sit at the head of the Sanhedrin. Caiaphas is the big chief in all of this. Who is the world going to believe? Are they going to believe these doctors of divinity, or are they going to believe eleven fisherman that trot around the country and heard about birds and flowers and fish. You know who they are going to believe. Who is going to come here? One preacher against the county, most of the state, with just a few folks, and you're labeled maybe as one that follows a man. Or you are labeled as one that is not all there upstairs. Or you are labeled as one that can't get along with other folks. Why should they come here and give up the good thing, that is

they can go to heaven and enjoy their sin through the week and live selfishly. Go to a church building and leave not feeling too badly about themselves or the children or the family. Why should they? Jesus stood that day of the great feast and cried out, "Come unto me". Who do you think came? He is a heretic. Twelve disciples, they're foolish enough to turn their back on the religious system of the day. They're not going to follow a lowly Jesus. I'll tell you who is going to come. The poor, the destitute, the lonely, the sick, the bereaved, for they can't find of the chief priest and the elders any hope or cure. As long as there is any hope in your ability, or in your power, do you think that you will ever bow to the lowly Jesus? The verse we read this morning on how difficult it is for a rich man to get into heaven. It's like that camel going through the eye of the needle. I don't know, but they say there was a place over there that was called the eye of the needle, and for a camel to get through there, they had to unpack everything on him. And he had to get down on his knees and he had to crawl through because it was so low that he couldn't stand up. Or I don't know if it's actually the eye of the needle, but it doesn't matter, the inference is the same. That's how low you have to get before you will ever need the Lord Jesus. Jesus said, "No man can come to me except the father draw him". That drawing spirit is felt when the word of God is preached and the spirit of God empties you of self and of self-righteousness and goodness. It empties you of your strength and self-sufficiency. Pride will keep you away. See, the harlot doesn't strip you of pride; she builds it up in you. I can use this illustration simply because he told me to tell you. There are some things that I can't relate to you that folk give me but this one said tell them, and most of you know him. Dennis called me this morning and he said I just wanted you to pray for me. And I said that I appreciate you asking, but you didn't have to ask, I've been doing that. He said Rita brought me a tape by and I just wanted you know how much I appreciated it and I want you to pray that I'll do God's will. God has to sometimes get us pretty low. But I tell you, when God lays you out on a bed and you can't breathe good and you know that your life is in trouble. If God's gracious enough to open your heart, you're going to seek not the chief priest and the elders, you're going to seek the lowly Jesus. And it sure was good to hear a man fighting back tears just asking to pray for him. That crowd, they'll take off their coats and they'll throw down palm branches in front of him and they'll cry out Hosanna to the king, to the son of David. For that king has satisfied

their old carnal nature. This world will take Jesus if he will give them two Cadillacs and a lake home, and an ocean front property, and a beach house or a townhouse. If you'll give them all these things, they'll take Him if he will keep them healthy. If we declared that kind of Jesus and got in these folk that would imitate being healed, then we would have to rent the largest stadium in the state. That's the Jesus they want. That's the one that the crowd wants. But if it's the Jesus Christ that demands repentance, if it's the Christ of scripture that demands you bow to His lordship, if it's the gospel that demands God has exalted Him that you crucified, then you can't find folk today that need Him.

That Jesus was sitting on a mountainside alone, looking over Jerusalem saying how oft would I have gathered you. Boy, you talking about God laying aside all that He was. He compared Himself to a mother hen. He said, I would have gathered you like a mother hen gathered her chickens. But you would not. They didn't need Him. They had the temple. They had a form of godliness. They had the chief priest. They had the elders. They had to trump up charges that He said He would destroy the temple and raise it up in three days. They couldn't stand the sight of that magnificent building being destroyed.

I tell you the only ones that are going to come and leave stately structures are those that God works in their heart. But oh just to see another one bow and follow the Lamb of God. It would be worth everything you have put into this, to get this little building up. It would be everything you put in to get the gospel out. It would be worth it all just to get another sinner to become an eternal worshipper of the Lamb of God. See folk, the same thing that happened here in Matthew 27 is happening all over again today. The religious crowds are taking council against the Son of God. They bound Him; They have sent Him off to put Him to death. The religious crowd said, "Lets get some common ground. Lets get some common ground where all can get together and evangelize the world." If it means the Seventh Day Adventist, the Mormons, the Jehovah Witnesses, who ever it means. If it means Baptist and Methodist and it means that we've got to lay aside the name Jesus, let's lay it aside so that we can find a common meeting ground. Lay it aside if you want. All we

are doing is ripening this nation for a greater damnation and judgment.

It didn't matter in the sixties, the world council of churches met and then the great evangelism in the sixties that started out in Texas. It didn't matter if they couldn't use Jesus or the Jesus of scripture or that they had to water down the word of God, all it mattered was to get them on common ground. Unite mankind for the good of mankind. I tell you, it does matter. Those of you that get brother Gene's bulletin, you read in there about a man, a preacher, and if I called his name, some of you would know him. He publishes a little brief message in a paper over there near Fayetteville. He dealt with John 14 where "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life." Fifteen minutes after the paper went out on the market, a Jewish priest got a hold of it and called him up and said "I want you to know one thing, your little religion of Jesus is finished in America." It is the Catholics rising again and the Jews coming back on the scene. The Christ of the scripture has been rejected for another God. The one who rules and reigns in heaven and upon earth has been rejected for the one that is now obliged to do what all men desire Him to do. That the authority of Christ has been done away with from the pulpits and now it's been placed in the hands of men who say its up to you what you do with Jesus. I've got news for you folks, its not up to me or up to you what you do with Jesus, its up to what God does with you. Oh, He really doesn't want you to go to hell, but He has done all He can do. If God had done all He could do at Calvary when He put Jesus to death then He was an utter failure. Unless God by His holy spirit takes you all the way back to Calvary and applies your true condition, you are never going to decide on the Christ of the scripture. You haven't got a big enough chooser.

Surely your coming to that testimony within your heart that He could have left me in religion. He could have left me alone. He could have left me in the religious system. He could have left me in my religious deeds. I'll tell you what I read this morning from William Jay in his morning devotions. He said God sees more depravity and more sin in our holy devotions than we see in our sins. If the Lord Jesus Christ can take your prayers, your church attendance, your worship, and your Bible reading and if He didn't purify in the sight of His Father, every last prayer we say, every last gathering at the house of God

and everything we do would be a stench in the nostrils of a holy God. God sees more depravity in our spiritual duties. God sees more sin in our spiritual duties than we see in our sins. There is a man sitting at God's right hand, He is called Christ, He is the high priest. He is the one that went into the holy of holies and He threw that oil. He threw those spices into that little cup of coal and it arose in the temple and the tabernacle as a sweet odor to God. And He sits at the right hand of the father today with all the sins that's in my prayers and when I step down from here all the sins that was about my preaching today and about my devotions this morning, He had to purify it or its unacceptable to my father. You need Him and I need Him. But you preach a poor weak pathetic, sympathetic loving Jesus that just wants to bow any time anyone wants to run to Him. Boy, that's the kind that the crowd is sitting around waiting on. They will wait till they get old and they will wait till they have had a good time. They will wait till they have spent their best years. Yes, just wait and you may have Him say depart from me.

I remember reading this and it was in the seventies. There was a man who said his dying mother on her death bed quoted Matthew 6:33 "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" She said "Son will you promise me that you will do that?" And he gave her a nod of the head and the next week after she was buried, he started down to the church and out on the church sign there was a message Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and he said to himself that he wasn't going in there. He went on back home and the next Sunday he rode by the Methodist church and they had up another passage of scripture and he walked in and he set down and the preacher said, "I apologize for the sign that's out there, but the Lord has impressed me to preach from Matthew 6:33." He preached and the man got up and he walked out of the church and he stuck his finger up toward heaven and he said, "Why don't you leave me alone?" And the man that was telling that was the preacher that was visiting him in his dying hours. And he was begging him to get saved and he said, "Preacher, I want to tell you the story." He told him about his mother's death request, and he told him about the Baptist and Methodist church and how he had shaken his finger to God. He said that day that I shook my finger at God and told Him to leave me alone, He did exactly what I told Him to do. He said, "He has not

bothered me one day since and He said I can't get saved. There is no possibility of me getting saved." Now that story was told a long time before this easy believism ever spread across this land.

If you declare a Christ that controls all men's hearts and all men's time is in His hands to do with as He pleases. And they'll say, "Away with such a God as that." And the chief priest and the scribes of the land, they took council, and they had the trial at night. There is more to it than just them meeting at night. It was the darkest day in Israel's history. You remember Nicodemus in John 3 comes to Jesus at night, I believe there is more to that than him being embarrassed. I believe he is telling us the state of that nation when Jesus came on the scene. Darkness, darkness, light was coming to the world, but men loved the darkness because their deeds were evil. Old Nicodemus sat on that council and he was a religious man, but he comes to Jesus by night and when he leaves, it's still dark out but there is still light shining in his heart as Christ has carried him back to what he must do to inherit eternal life and to get into the kingdom of God. He said, "Ye must be born again". Nicodemus didn't understand that, but Jesus taught him about the spirit of God blowing.

He said the spirit is like the wind, it blows hither and yonder and nobody can tell where it's coming from or where it is going. If that breeze ever blows through your soul, you better not reject, you better not put it off. God in sovereign mercy sent it through and it may never come again. But the old harlot system in the lands figured out, we can get the wind to blow. They will play on people's emotions. I hate to tell you this, but I am going to tell you anyway. In the early seventies, a man from the church there in Alexander City wanted me to go to Jack Hyles' pastor school for a week. He bought my plane ticket there for a week and paid for my lodging and everything. I didn't want to go because there were things that they were doing that just wasn't right. There were things going on there that I just couldn't do. All that was crammed into our heads for that entire week was how to get men saved. You don't ever tell them ever that this is the last thing I am going to tell you. You sneak up on them and you don't ever tell them we are fixing to have a hymn. You give them a sad, tear-jerking story and then you slip into the invitation before they are aware of it. I thank the Lord that He kept me from that ungodly system. The greatest day of shock that will ever be, is when most folk that think they are going to heaven, hear the Son of God say,

“Depart from me, I never knew you.” You talk about cursing some men with cloth, they stood in their robes behind the pulpit and told them about a Jesus that the scripture does not declare. They are going to curse the day they ever saw them. Dear ones, I leave you with this. You remain faithful to God, you labor and you pray. You distribute the word of God, if it is a track or a tape or if it’s just at home in the closet praying. And you will be the one rewarded that day and there will be somebody going with you. You may not know about it, but if you live holy and you will pray for those that God puts on your heart, you will take sinners to glory with you. You may never get a pat on the back here cause nobody may ever know about it, but you will take them with you. You just be faithful to Him. May God establish a heart in this people and you as a people here that you will be faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ, no matter of critics, no matter of criticism, no matter how it is looked upon, no matter how you are talked about. You be faithful and you spread the word of God, the gospel of the true Christ. And you don’t let them get away with pushing off or soft peddling a Jesus that the Bible does not declare. You may offend, but you will take folk with you. There are three other things in that chapter that I wanted to point out and one in the next chapter. But I will leave that to you, I don’t know if we will get back to it. If I don’t, look up in that chapter the chief priest and the elders and three or four more times you will find their actions and what they did and how they got rid of Christ. God help us that we might stay faithful to the crucified exalted Lord of Glory.

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