

**Week 44**  
**“The Lamb King”**  
**Matthew 26:59-66; 27:11-26; 28:1-6**  
**November 2/3**

**Summary & Goal:**

The story of Jesus’s trial and death on the cross is one that Christians have heard time and again. It’s easy to become desensitized to the details and significance, but Jesus’s death and resurrection fulfill prophecy, demonstrate His deity and provide redemption for us all.

**Main Passages:**

Matthew 26:59-66; 27:11-26; 28:1-6

**Session Outline:**

1. JESUS IS KING
2. JESUS IS LAMB
3. JESUS IS SAVIOR

**Session in a Sentence:**

A difference in any one part of Jesus’s story would change the significance of His sacrificial death; understanding Jesus as King is the key to understanding Jesus as Lamb and Savior.

**Kingdom Connection:**

The intent of the entirety of Matthew’s Gospel is to give evidence of Jesus’s kingship. The goal of every part of his account is to prove to the reader that Jesus was and is the prophesied Messiah. After stating his case, Matthew almost abruptly ends with the trial, death and resurrection of Jesus. It is as if to say that if you “got” the first 26 chapters, the final conclusion is inherent. Because Jesus is the King, only He could be the Lamb so that He could be the Savior.

**Missional Connection:**

Like the Kingdom connection, if you understand Matthew’s main point that Jesus is the foretold King, then you will be led to obey and go into all the world because He says to do so. Once you grasp the significance of His sacrificial death, it will motivate you to share that good news with the world around you and beyond.

## **INTRODUCTION:**

In 2015, Netflix released a 10-episode documentary that chronicles the case of two men convicted of a heinous crime. Just after airing, it immediately gained huge interest and has remained a global phenomenon. The draw to the show is that the two men are seemingly innocent, but under the crosshairs of an arrogant prosecutor, evidence was mishandled, misinterpreted and eventually used to convict the men. In 2018, a second season of the documentary aired, chronicling efforts by defense attorneys to retry or overturn the convictions without success.

Part of what makes the series so interesting is the story behind the defendants. Of particular interest is the younger of the two convicted men. Just 16 at the time of the crime, he was interrogated for hours without an attorney or other adult present. He has documented intellectual limitations and the entire case against him was based on a coerced confession. The older defendant had a history with the prosecutor, who appears to have a vested interest in harming the defendant more than finding justice. Ultimately, as you watch, the viewer realizes that the harder the authorities try to prove the guilt of these two men, the more it appears that they prove the opposite.

Two-thousand years ago, a trial not so different took place. D. A. Carson explains about the trial of Jesus that "the breaches in law are so numerous as to be unbelievable ..."<sup>1</sup> And also like the modern-day case, to fully understand the absurdity, you have to know the backstory. Once you do, however, three things become very clear. The trial of Jesus, while intentioned to undermine and destroy Him, proved that Jesus was simultaneously King, Lamb and Savior.

### **1. JESUS IS KING**

We have spent the past 9 months looking closely at the Old Testament. We have seen how God called a group of people His own and then gave them instructions for how to live differently than the world around them. This included laws to abide by and rules to follow. He outlined exact sacrifices and practices so that imperfect people could interact with a Holy God. The Jewish people took those laws and practices very seriously. They memorized them and followed the rituals exactly. Except, of course, when they didn't. We have also seen how God's people got it wrong, fell into the hands of neighboring countries, spent years enslaved and ultimately compromised their devotion to the point that God became silent. He seemingly stopped intervening, instructing or interacting with His people for over 400 years,

<sup>1</sup>"Matthew" by D. A. Carson (p. 549)

During that time, the rituals, laws and traditions God gave their ancestors became of even greater importance to the Jewish people – most likely not because they fully understood their need for a relationship with God, but because it was the thing passed down from generation to generation. It was their defining characteristic. That rigid structure was something tangible they could control, and they used it to create systems, divisions among the people and hierarchies. Their religious texts promised that God would send a deliverer, but unlike when He sent Moses, this savior would set up a kingdom greater than any they had ever known. The scriptures foretold of a Messiah that would save the Jewish people from oppression, and they clung to their understanding of what that meant. As they lived daily under the control of the Roman empire, they longed for the day their king would come. They just didn't realize their king would look very different than they envisioned.

The leaders who had become powerful and wealthy based on their legalistic interpretations of Jewish law were understandably shaken by the notion that Jesus was the foretold Messiah. While they hoped for a kingdom to rule over the surrounding nations as had been done to them, Jesus preached a very different kind of life. He encouraged the people to be meek and mild. He preached that one should love even those who did not follow the commands they had been taught to fear. Like a made-for-tv drama, the more popularity Jesus gained, the more religious leaders set out to accuse and convict Him through both a Jewish trial and a Roman one – trials that resulted in capital charges but lasted less than a day.

#### Dark Hours of Friday Morning

The Jewish trial was really a preliminary hearing. Jesus was arrested, bound and while Annas questioned Him, members of the Sanhedrin were assembled together. (see John 18:12-14, 19-23) He was then brought before the ruling body.

**Matthew 26:59-66** - *Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. But at last two false witnesses came forward and said, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.' And the high priest arose and said to Him, "Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?" But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, "I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!" Jesus said to him, "It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven." Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, "He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! What do you think?" They answered and said, "He is deserving of death." (Chronological Bible, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, p. 1409)*

Based on this brief exchange, Caiaphas (the high priest) and the Sanhedrin find Jesus guilty of blasphemy. As Bock explains:

“...the goal was not to bring a religious indictment, because that would be of little legal interest to the Romans. The goal was to bring a political allegation that would cause the Romans to act in their own self-interest. This explains the examination's starting point being Jesus' remarks about the temple. ... This also explains the interest in a messianic claim. If Jesus claimed to be a competing king, Caesar would not be pleased.”<sup>2</sup>

Ironically, the Sanhedrin sought to prove that Jesus claimed to be king so the Romans would get rid of him. Matthew does the same but for very different reason. Matthew spends 26 chapters making a case that Jesus was the foretold Messiah and fulfilled all the prophecies of the coming kingdom of God so that the injustice of His trial and ultimately His death would be seen as all the more grievous. He highlights how Jesus's actions even before the Sanhedrin fulfilled Scripture's promise of a final, atoning, sacrificial Lamb.

**Isaiah 53:7** – *He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth.*

**Matthew 26:63** – *But Jesus kept silent.*

**Matthew 27: 12** – *...He did not answer.*

**Matthew 27: 14** – *And He did not answer...*

## 2. **JESUS IS LAMB:**

Sunrise Friday Morning

With their charges of blasphemy documented, the Sanhedrin then send Jesus to Pilate. The Roman trial begins with Jesus before the governor (Matthew 27:12), but once he learns that Jesus is from Herod's jurisdiction, he sends Jesus to Herod for interrogation. (Luke 23:6-7). Herod, in Jerusalem at the time, questions Jesus mockingly and sends Him back to Pilate dressed sarcastically as a king (Luke 23:8-12).

**Matthew 27: 11-14** - *Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" Jesus said to him, "It is as you say." And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing. Then Pilate said to Him, "Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?" But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly. (Chronological Bible, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, p. 1411)*

<sup>2</sup>"Jesus according to Scripture" by Darrell Bock (pp. 371-72)

Pilate, amazed by Jesus's willingness to accept the charges against Him and out of his ongoing disdain for the Sanhedrin, tries to redirect the proceedings.

**Matthew 27:15-26** - *Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to releasing to the multitude one prisoner whom they wished. And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. Therefore, when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy. While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, "Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him." But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release to you? They said, "Barabbas!" Pilate said to them, "What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said to him, "Let Him be crucified!" Then the governor said, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they cried out all the more, saying, "Let Him be crucified!" When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it." And all the people answered and said, "His blood be on us and on our children." Then he released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified. (Chronological Bible, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, p. 1413)*

Barabbas, although often portrayed as a dangerous villain, was more of a "Robin Hood" figure. Known for leading groups of insurrectionists against the Roman government, his guerilla actions were fairly common<sup>3</sup> and widely known. The crowd choosing Barabbas over Jesus is yet another example of their insistence on a "messiah" of their own design. They preferred one who tried (unsuccessfully) to overthrow Rome's power over the ultimate Messiah with the true power to save them.

### **JESUS IS SAVIOR:**

Friday Mid-Morning

With the crowd's decision, Jesus's trials were over. He was convicted, sentenced and at Golgotha to be crucified by approximately 9am. Mere hours from the time He was arrested, Jesus died.

It is one thing to die for a cause you believe in. It is quite another to die and then be raised to life, overcoming even death. The power of Jesus's resurrection cannot be understated because it is the

<sup>3</sup>"Antiquities of the Jews" by Flavius Josephus (18:1:1)

central theme to Christianity. It is the difference between Christianity and every other religion. Jesus did not just die. He overcame death, hell and the grave. His earthly story ends with a miracle just as big as the one with which it began.

**Matthew 28:1-6** - *Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone from the door and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men. But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. (Chronological Bible, November 4<sup>th</sup>, p. 1415-1416)*

I recently heard a sermon in which the pastor described the last days of Jesus's life. He discussed how so much controversy has arisen around the question of who put Jesus on the cross. Saying that the Jews put Jesus on the cross is wrong and has fueled terrible acts of antisemitism. It is just as incorrect, however, to say that the Romans put Jesus on the cross or, as some claim, that "we" put Jesus on the cross – all of us for the wrong we do and the sin that separates us from God. None of those groups sent Jesus to His death. The pastor concluded with these words, "Jesus put Jesus on the cross."<sup>4</sup> Jesus died for the sole purpose of raising from the dead. He died willingly and sacrificially to save a world He loves who could not save themselves.

And not just the world – distant and unknown. He died for you. And me---intimate and personal.

The Netflix case I mentioned earlier has continued to gain worldwide attention. The men are still in prison and a possible third season was just announced. Attorneys have been working on the men's cases for over 12 years. Journalists have been following the story. As recent as this month, every major news outlet reported a new development when the younger defendant appealed to the governor of the state to grant him clemency after a well-known celebrity made an appeal on his behalf. People have quit their jobs and started funds or campaigns to help prove their innocence and free these men.

The question is, why? Of all the cases and all the news stories, why is this case of such interest? Why do people so far removed feel so invested in what happens to two men who are accused of such horrible offenses? Strange as it sounds, the answer is that it feels personal. The facts do not line up, which raises doubt about the justice system that defines our nation. It makes you

<sup>4</sup>"The Last Week" by Robert Morris, Gateway Church

question those who are meant to protect you. It makes you think that if these men truly are innocent and have spent most of their lives in prison, it could happen to you, too. It is personal, so it matters.

**Jesus is King:** Jesus' death fulfills the prophecies of the Hebrew Scriptures concerning Messiah.

**Jesus is Lamb:** Jesus' death satisfies the requirements for a sacrifice for sin.

**Jesus is Savior:** Jesus' death is a substitutionary sacrifice for sinners. Jesus' resurrection declares His deity and demonstrates the Father's acceptance of His work on the cross.

**Jesus is King. Jesus is Lamb. Jesus is Savior.** But He is not just any king. Jesus is YOUR king. He is YOUR lamb and YOUR savior. Jesus put Jesus on that cross for you. And for me. It happened a long time ago in a place you may never visit, but it is personal and it matters. It happened TO Him, but it happened FOR you.

*God speaks* by declaring the resurrection of Jesus and interpreting the scriptures in the light of Jesus (Lk. 24:27, 44).

*God acts* by raising Christ from the dead.

*God reveals* that Jesus is Lord by raising Him from the dead and sending His disciples to proclaim that message to all the nations.