

Theme: Armor of God

Object: Pictures of skateboard and protective gear

Scripture: “Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.” (Eph. 6:13 ESV)

Let’s say you've just gotten your first skateboard and you are wondering what to do with it. You've seen the skateboarders at the park and on TV, and you have seen all of the cool things they can do, but how do you get started? First, before you try anything crazy, you need to get comfortable just standing on your board. After you get comfortable just standing on the board, you are ready to try some skating. Oh wait! I think I have forgotten something. Can you guess what it is? That's right! We need to make sure we have the right protective gear.

The first thing is to make sure you have the right kind of shoes. You wouldn't go skating in a pair of cowboy boots, would you? Your shoes should help you get a good grip on the board. Next, every skateboarder should wear a helmet. You might think that wearing a helmet makes you look like a dork, but, believe me, it is the smart thing to do. Another thing you will need is pads. It is important to have pads to protect your elbows and knees. Now that you have all the right gear, it is time to go skateboarding. Even professional skateboarders make sure they have the right protective equipment. Doesn't it make sense that you should use it too?

Just as we need protective gear in skateboarding, the Bible teaches us that we need protection in life. The Bible calls it the “Armor of God” and it tells us that we need the Armor of God to protect us from Satan's evil schemes. What kind of protection does the Bible say that we need?

The Belt of Truth - The Bible tells us that Satan is the "father of lies," but he can never win if we will hold on to the truth that Jesus Christ is Lord.

The Breastplate of Righteousness - Satan can never harm us when we choose to do what God says is right.

Feet fitted with the Gospel of Peace - Satan tries to create worry and confusion in our lives, but knowing Jesus brings peace.

The Shield of Faith - Satan will try to plant seeds of doubt in our hearts and minds, but those seeds of doubt can never take root if we have faith in Jesus in our heart.

The Helmet of Salvation - Jesus came from heaven to earth to save us from the evil one, if we accept salvation in Jesus' name, we will win the battle against Satan.

The Sword of the Spirit - the Bible, God's Holy Word, it is a powerful weapon against Satan.

No skateboarder should ever get on his board without the proper equipment, and you should never try to go through life without the Armor of God.

Heavenly Father, thank you for giving us the protection we need to walk safely through our daily life. Help us to make sure we always put on the full armor you have provided. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.



Title – Jesus’ Trial – Phase I

Opening

The Lord has placed on my heart things I want to share with you. I find our scripture passage this morning has much to say about life in our society today. What I want you to understand is a mixture of scripture and history and what it says about today and lessons we need to learn to live for Christ in today’s world. So I begin with reading, starting at verse 12, “**So the band of soldiers and their captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound him. 13 First they led him to Annas.**” Annas (**an·nas**) was the temple high priest prior to his son-in-law for 8 years. In my opinion, Annas’ parents misnamed him. In the Hebrew his name means, “humble” and from my observation this does not appear to be a trait he possesses. In the book, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, the author, Alfred Eldermans’ research leads to the conclusion that much of Annas’ income and wealth was derived from controlling the sale of sacrificial animals at the temple. He received a percentage of the fees charged by the moneychangers and other merchants because he controlled who could sell in the outer courts of the temple. Eldermans writes, “**So infamous was his greed that the outer courts of the temple, where those transactions took place, became known as the *Bazaar of Annas.***” **By this we know that Annas had reason to dislike Jesus greatly as Jesus had at least twice disrupted his cash flow by cleansing the temple as recorded in John chapter 2 and Matthew chapter 21.** Annas may have desired to be the first to see Jesus bound and defeated as revenge for his losses by this lower

class man from the backwater province of Galilee. This preliminary hearing before the religiously powerful Annas is only recorded here in John. After Jesus stands before Annas he is taken to Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin. Jesus is then taken to the civil authority Pilate, then to Herod and back to Pilate.

Then and Now

Jesus' ministry on earth is quickly coming to an end – or is it? Everything is moving rapidly now, and both the end and beginning are near. The disciples feared and saw only the end even though Jesus had told them what would come. I have to ask, are we like Jesus' disciples at the time of the trial? Do we see hope and future through Christ or darkness? There is evil all around – but my beloved, do you believe God is in control? With Jesus gone, the Sanhedrin saw the end of the disturbance to their power and position that had started three years earlier. Is this not the growing attitude of our government towards Christians today? We are a disturbance, if not an enemy? Many people did not know what to make of these claims of Jesus and the attacks of the Jewish leaders upon Him – they just wanted to live their lives, work at prospering and hope for a better future. Is this not the case we find with most people living today? Especially in America, life is about obtaining material wealth and comfort by hard work or even at someone else's expense.

In A.D. 30 the followers of Jesus were confused, frustrated and angry. I can hear them asking, "Where is God? How could God allow men to act with evil against a righteous person?" Today, we have the advantage of knowing the outcome of this misuse of law and of evil meant to bring God's plan of redemption to a screeching halt. However, like the disciples and followers of Jesus at the time of

His trial we do not know the future results of the current evil events around us. They did not see into the future by just a few days. We do not know the future result of the evil and injustice we see around us today. The question is, “Do you trust God? Do you have faith in God?” “Will you stand firm for Christ or deny Him during times of trouble as Peter did?” God calls His children to stand for right, His right, not the world’s right. As the eighteenth century statesman and believer in Jesus, Edmund Burke said, “All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.” The question is what is the right course of action.

Course of Action

The right course of action is not violence as the rebel Barabbas wanted against the Romans or violence that is becoming so common in our own day. The right action is not asking, “Why would God create mankind knowing that they would sin and commit acts of evil?” Martin Luther said in response to this very question, “Let us keep clear of these abstract questions and consider the will of God such as it has been revealed to us.” Luther was referring to the revelation of God found only in the Bible. Consider these questions instead; who knows the depths of God? Who knows the entire mind of God? I ask you, in your way of thinking, is God truly God or have you made Him into something else? Let me ask this pointed question for you to consider, “If God did not or can not see evil coming then what kind of God is He? If God does not know the past, present and future and the role that good and evil plays in His plan of redemption – well then, He is not a very big God. How can God, a God that is not a wooden idol, a manmade God, **not** know the future? The answer is - if He does not know the future, then He is not God. If God has no control over evil then He is a weak God and a weak

God certainly would not have the power to create the universe from nothing or have sovereign reign over everything in the universe, including Satan. If there is not a purpose to evil and God does not bring good from evil then He would be a malicious God. Maliciousness is a trait of fallen men not God. My beloved, this brings us to the preverbal “fork in the road.” This begs these questions, “Do we believe in the God of the Bible and know He is beyond our ability to fully understand? Do we believe that God has a plan, He is in control and all things, both good and evil, have a purpose and are needed for His plan? Do you believe the events of the world are ultimately for the benefit of those He has called to be His children?” If so, we need to quit asking, “Where is God?” and learn from both the Bible and history that God is active, He is in control and He has a purpose and plan.

We need to believe and say “God is here!” We must trust God and give our heart and soul to Him. Edmund Burke also said, “... those who have much to hope and nothing to lose, will always be dangerous.” My beloved, “Are you dangerous?” In the power of the name of our Lord Jesus are you a threat to Satan, to evil and to injustice? Are you a threat to evil by living the gospel? Are you a threat by sharing the gospel? Are you waging war against the evil one by praying for and loving the unsaved? Have you girded yourself with the armor of God?

The missionary, Jim Elliot, who freely gave his life for the cause of Christ said, “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.” Jim knew that as a saved child of God he was ready for heaven and the Quichua tribe of Ecuador, these people he came to share the gospel with were not - for they did not believe in the only true God. He did not resist when they came to kill him and

his fellow missionaries. Jim's wife, Elizabeth, along with others, returned to the Quichua people who had murdered her husband and brought the tribe the gospel of Christ. Over time most gave their lives to Christ. Jim did not see the future of his sacrifice, but he believed and knew God always has a plan. Elizabeth believed and had faith and because she was faithful she witnessed the fruit of her husband's sacrifice. This is what it means to live for Christ in a broken world. This story of Jesus and Annas should demonstrate our need for the spiritual armor of God and make us determined to be dangerous to the evil one. It should spur us to live boldly for Christ. It should drive us to our knees in prayer. We must be ready for holy battle of the good God verses the evil of the fallen world.

Returning to John's gospel account, I see a lot of similarities between our scripture passage this morning and the condition of the world today. We live in difficult times, but so did the people at the time of Jesus' arrest. God created Israel and Israel was to be His chosen nation. He gave them His revealed Word, the Scriptures to guide their lives and laws to live by. These were different from all other nations. America was founded with Bible precepts at its foundation in reaction to a government gone amuck and committing evil to maintain control. Out of this fight against the unjust actions of a government against its own people, a government that was meant to serve its people but sorely failed its people. Men fought this tyranny and birthed a new nation that for nearly two hundred years radically changed the face of the world, mainly for the better, a nation that gave its people hope and opportunity not only in America but throughout the world by its influence. America was a nation, by its actions, that stood against tyranny and evil of the world.

Gradually the leadership of America, like that of Israel that we are studying this morning, and governments of Rome and England and others we know from history – these governments including America began serving their own interests instead of serving God as He had directed them and serving the people He placed in their trust. They abused the laws given by God to maintain their own power and in doing so inflicted harm on people. We have seen these cycles of nations coming to God with His focus, like the birth of America, then blessed and growing. But history shows that with growth and prosperity, people and nations become self-satisfying, self-serving, pleasure seeking and they grow in their feeling that they no longer need God. Then they begin to turn from God beginning a downwards spiraling and collapse as God brings judgment. From the ashes God may decide to create and establish a new focus. Why would one think American would be the exception? We do not see the future, but God does. Have faith in God, not man and certainly do not judge God by the actions of man! We are not of this world, but belong to Christ. Do not let the troubles and evil of this world rob you of your joy found in Christ.

Israel and America – Things in Common

We now go back to the trouble in Israel, but with a continued view of our world as well. God had given Israel laws to protect and serve the people's interests. These laws were meant to help the people to be spiritual people, good people and to protect the innocent. Men felt these laws were not good enough so they grew these foundational laws of God into the Talmudic Law containing two parts - the Mishnah, which is the basic law, and the Gemara, which we would call commentary on the Mishnah. The Mishnah allowed for only the Great Sanhedrin

to preside over capital cases considering the death penalty. The qualifications of the men of the Sanhedrin who judged capital cases were the qualifications of judges. They were to be Hebrews of the Hebrews with legal experience and training. Paul was called a Hebrew of Hebrews and we know what kind of man he originally was. These judges were not to interpret the Law but to enforce it.

We know that by the time of Jesus many men in the Sanhedrin were appointed for political reasons and were not qualified. The Sanhedrin had become a career path to power and wealth, just as it has for our politicians. It is has become a career path for personal wealth and power. This was the same foundation on which the USA Supreme Court was created – highly qualified men of character and law to enforce the law and protect the innocent. Both the Sanhedrin and the Supreme Court took upon themselves to go beyond enforcing the law and began interpreting and creating laws that were not in accord with God’s laws and not in the best interests of the people. Judges were to have no direct interest in the outcome of a trial but be concerned with what was true and right and in the best interest of their nation. We see in our passage this morning and in our country today these standards have fallen by the wayside. It is the hope of Canyon Bible Church for each of us to live by the laws and precepts of the Bible and the Bible only. God does not need us to help Him out by adding to or changing what He has divinely given in the scriptures. Unfortunately, this stance places us at greater and greater odds with our neighbors, our society and our government that disavows God by its actions. This is what the nation of Israel did at the time of Jesus and the Sanhedrin did in their abuse of Jesus’ rights as a person and as God. Let’s examine this attitude of abuse I read beginning in John chapter 18, verse 12,

“So the band of soldiers and their captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound him. **13** First they led him to Annas, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. **14** It was Caiaphas who had advised the Jews that it would be expedient that one man should die for the people.”

Jesus is arrested in violation of the law and tried in violation because the Sanhedrin lacked evidence or witnesses of good reputation. They violated the law by arresting Jesus at night. It was a violation to take Jesus to Annas instead of the Sanhedrin, which by the way, according to the law was not to meet at night.

A little background might help here. Annas was the first Jewish high priest under the new Roman province of Judea from A.D. 7 to 15. The Jewish high priest was no longer a spiritual position of justice, but was a politically appointed position. Quirinius appointed Annas, Roman governor of Syria, Annas was put out of office by Valerius Gratus, procurator of the new province of Judea. Three minor short-term high priests served in the years A.D. 16 and 17. Obviously they did not meet the needs of the Romans. Caiaphas succeeded Annas to this political position of high priest in A.D. 18 as recorded in John. Verse 13 says, *Caiaphas, who was high priest that year*. This further illustrates this was position of political appointment was controlled by the procurator of Judea – there was no way to know who would be high priest the following year. However, the tenure of Caiaphas extended from A.D. 18 to 36. This makes evident two things: first he was politically astute to stay in power under the Romans for 18 years and second, he was high priest at the time of Jesus’ public ministry and arrest.

I do not want you think I am forgetting Peter when I skip to verse 19. I wanted to spend time in depth with Annas and our Lord Jesus. I have not forgotten him and

we will explore Peter and his actions in the coming weeks, but not this morning.

Trials – Then and Now

Now we go back to the Jesus' trial of sorts, before Annas. However before we study verses 19 to 24 of John 18, I want to lay some foundation. Verse 14 reminds us that, "It was Caiaphas who had advised the Jews that it would be expedient that one man should die for the people." As we just saw Caiaphas was a politically motivated and shrewd man. Verse 14 is referring to what John recorded in chapter 11 of his gospel account. Please turn in your bibles to John chapter eleven and I will begin to reading at verse 47. "So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, 'What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. **48** If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.' **49** But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, 'You know nothing at all. **50** Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish.' **51** He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, **52** and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. **53** So from that day on they made plans to put him to death." Even though Caiaphas did not fully understand this prophecy because of his evil intentions, it was true that Jesus would die for a nation and beyond that for people that they might have salvation. Here we see the power of Caiaphas and the determination of the Sanhedrin led by him to maintain their positions of affluence, power and authority. Their behavior demonstrates they had no concern for God or the people. We will study

Caiaphas more at a later date. Lets now investigate Annas treatment of Jesus.

Turn back to chapter 18 of John and read beginning at verse **19** “The high priest (Annas) then questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching.” Even though Annas was no longer high priest according to the Romans - by Jewish tradition the high priest served for life. So, in a sense there were two high priests at the time of Jesus’ arrest. In verse **20** “Jesus answered him (Annas), ‘I have spoken openly to the world. I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. **21** Why do you ask me? Ask those who have heard me what I said to them; they know what I said.’ **22** When he had said these things, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand, saying, ‘Is that how you answer the high priest?’ As we just learned, Annas controlled the commerce of the temple outer court and would have influence over the temple officers and they may have been on his payroll. The action of this man striking Jesus would have pleased Annas. Men like Annas always have others do their desired dirty work. **23** Jesus answered him, ‘If what I said is wrong, bear witness about the wrong; but if what I said is right, why do you strike me?’ **24** Annas then sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.” Jesus responds with calm honesty, not with anger. It would have been with great pleasure that Annas would now have sent Jesus to his son-in-law as a bond and defeated man for he had received some vengeance against Christ and satisfaction at seeing Jesus stuck by the officer – this is the first of many wounds.

I call this a kind of trial because first, by law, trials were to be held between the morning and evening sacrifice. A second violation was that judges were not to accuse the person standing trial, but he was to be accused directly by the

witnesses. We know from Mark 14 that the witnesses' testimonies did not agree. From Matthew 26 we learn that the witnesses were false. "Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking false testimony against Jesus that they might put him to death, but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward." (Matthew 26:59-60a) However, as is with every good lie there is an element of truth to make it believable. Verses 60 and 61 says, "At last two came forward and said, 'This man said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days.' " These men sitting in illegal judgment knew Jesus had said this and they knew Jesus was speaking of the death of His body and His resurrection. Jesus had said earlier in the Gospel According to John, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." (John 2:19) We know they understood what Jesus was speaking of His resurrection because after they murdered Jesus they wanted the tomb guarded. However, since Jesus remained silent and the witnesses testimonies conflicted they could not convict Him of blasphemy. The third violation of the law was that in capital trials, the accused had to be convicted by a two-thirds majority or 37 of the 71 judges. The whole Sanhedrin was not present. Fourth, the guilty verdict and the sentence could not be given on the same day. One can quickly see that Jesus' trial began and ended in violation after violation of the Jewish law. There was nothing right or just in the false trial that was held for political gain. We know from the gospel accounts that the testimonies of the false witnesses did not stand. So Jesus is taken to Caiaphas.

Questions & Answers – Right and Wrong

At this point, one might again ask, although wrongly ask, but ask anyway, "Why

would God allow this injustice of His only begotten Son?” First, we know from our perspective, after the fact, that God had a great purpose in Jesus’ murder and resurrection – that is our salvation. Second, the answer is found not in the law but rather in the hearts of fallen men that are corrupted by sin. The prophet Jeremiah wrote of fallen man, [“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick”](#) or wicked. (Jeremiah 17:9)

What can men do to cure such a wicked heart? Nothing absolutely nothing! But what is impossible for man is possible for God. This is why Christ came to earth to solve the problem of man’s wicked heart. Christ, was condemned by the wicked that they might be saved. The one and only righteous One was made to bear our sins that for those God calls, so that they would be transformed from people with wicked hearts of stone to hearts of the flesh of God. You and I were such people. We were men and women who lived without God’s grace and the gift of Christ. We would have condemned the innocent. Praise God that He saved us and we are no longer as we were. [“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”](#) (2 Corinthians 5:17) In your hearts, my beloved, do you believe this to be true? Faith is based on belief.

Closing

Being spiritually alive and understanding the nature of fallen people, as we once were and looking at the history of nations, does it not give you pause and set you back to contemplate just how gracious God is towards you? You don't deserve salvation and you cannot earn it – it truly is a gift of God the Father through Christ, God the Son. I echo God’s desire for each and every believer and charge you to live each day for Christ. As Paul wrote to the Philippians, **21** [“For to me to](#)

live is Christ, and to die is gain. **22** If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. **23** I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. **24** But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. **25** Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, **26** so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus.”

(Philippians 1:21-26) This is my desire as your pastor and this should be your desire as fathers and mothers who pray to see their children in the kingdom of God and young adults struggling to live holy in a broken world. All of us should desire that God use us as His instruments to the unsaved world. Do not let the evil of this world shake your faith in Christ. The evil did not affect Jesus' faith, a faith He has passed on and given to you. Live each day to the fullest and give glory to Christ our Lord! Amen.