

**THE SUFFERING SAVIOUR**  
Meditations on the Last Days of CHRIST

By

F. W. Krummacher

Copyright © 1947

edited for 3BSB by Baptist Bible Believer in the spirit of the Colportage Ministry of a century ago

*~ out-of-print and in the public domain ~*

**CHAPTER NINETEEN**

**THE JUDICIAL PROCEDURE**

NIGHT STILL REIGNS. The city of Jerusalem lies for the most part in profound slumber, and has no presentiment of the awful events which are occurring within its walls. Occasionally, isolated footsteps are heard along the streets, in the direction of the high priest's palace, the windows of which, now glaring at an unwonted hour with the light of lamps and torches, cause events of an extraordinary nature to be inferred. Let us also repair thither.

An assembly of high rank, collected together in the spacious hall of audience, receives us. It is the council of the seventy rulers of Israel, with the high priest as its president. A venerable assembly, as regards its appointment; the most illustrious and awe-inspiring in the whole world; since, sitting in the seat of Moses, in the midst of the chosen people, its office is to administer justice according to the book of the law, and in the name of the Most High GOD.

Next to the president we perceive the men who had previously filled the office of high priest. Behind these, we observe the representatives of the four and twenty classes of the priesthood. Then follow the elders or rulers of the synagogues, while the rest of the assembly is composed of the most eminent doctors of the law, men well versed in the Mosaic statutes and the traditions and ordinances of the Rabbis.

It was the primary duty of these men, as keepers of the sanctuary, to maintain the observance of the ordinances of The Lord among the people; to settle the legal differences of the various tribes; to watch over the purity of doctrine and of divine service; and to examine and judge any heresies that might spring up. It certainly belonged to the privileges and even duties of the authority thus constituted, to bring before them a Man who gave Himself out for the Messiah; and to examine Him in the strictest manner. And that it did not occur to the Holy One of Israel to dispute their right to this, is clearly manifest from the reverence, which, apart from the moral qualities of its individual members, did not fail to show itself in His deportment during the whole course of the proceedings.

Before this supreme tribunal the Saviour of mankind stands bound. However, we must not limit the great judicial procedure to that which is visible, but must see beyond it the invisible world. The Lord does not stand at the bar as a Holy One, but as the Representative of sinners. Our catalogue of crimes is displayed before Him, as if they were His own. Our sins are charged upon Him, for He bears them. He is laid in the scales of justice with our transgressions, for they are imputed to Him. What may then have passed between Him and the Majesty upon the throne, is concealed from us by the veil of eternity.

One thing, however, we know, that He stood there in our place. Had He not appeared, that position would have been ours; and woe unto us, had we been made responsible for our sins!

Such a thought need no longer terrify us, if we belong to CHRIST's flock. What was due from us, He has paid. We come no more into condemnation, since He has taken our place. We know no longer any judge; for the Judge is our friend. How blissful is this consciousness! Eternal praise to Him to whom we owe it all!

But we return to the hall of judgment. The council seek for witnesses against JESUS. They seek, because unsought, nothing of the kind presents itself. That which is unsought is all in His favor. But they have already decided to put Him to death.

Why? Because He spoils the game of the proud men who have Him in their power, and every where comes in the way of their selfish practices. They dislike Him because He disturbs them in their sinful haunts, because He disapproves of the ways of vanity in which they walk, judges their ungodly and carnal deeds, and pronounces them deficient in that righteousness which avails before GOD. And because, for these reasons, they dislike Him, they seek for witnesses against Him.

And what kind of witnesses do they bring? Those who not only contradict one another incessantly, but themselves every moment! while the witnesses which we bring forward in behalf of our faith, are the devout seers and prophets, the holy evangelists and apostles, the thousands of martyrs, who, in His strength, have sung their psalms to Him in the midst of the flames - yes, we appeal to the entire history of His Church, as well as to the daily experience of all believers, as a continuous testimony in favor of Him who is the object of our love, and of the truth of His cause.

The council of the Sanhedrin, who are anxious to clothe their legal murder with at least an appearance of justice, take great pains to find witnesses against JESUS. But a more fruitless undertaking was perhaps never attempted. Desperation then advises an extreme course. A number of bribed witnesses are suborned - who strive to fasten one or other false accusation on the Holy One. But what is the result? They expose themselves, with those who hired them, in the most barefaced manner, and serve only as a new foil to the innocence of the Accused. What they adduce condemns itself as an absurdity, and not even that is attained which was indispensably required by the Mosaic Law, that their testimony should correspond. They become more and more confused, refute one another against their will, and remind us of the word of the Lord by the mouth of Zechariah the prophet, "**I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness**" (Zechariah 12:4).

The venerable assembly now finds itself in the most painful dilemma.

At length, two witnesses come forward, and hope by means of an expression which the Lord had uttered a year before, to make amends for the deficiencies in their accusation. The words adduced are those in John 2:19, "**Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.**"

Even at the time, this expression was most maliciously misinterpreted by the Jews who were present.

**"Forty and six years,"** said they, **"was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake,"** says the Evangelist, **"of the temple of his body."**

The two hirelings were aware of this. It seemed to them, however, a very suitable expression to make use of for casting upon JESUS the appearance not only of an ungodly boaster, but also of a crime against the divine Majesty, by blaspheming the temple. Thus we hear them say, "He boasted that he was able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it again in three days."

Even the high priest is not yet base and inconsiderate enough to pronounce his judicial decision upon such miserable and suspicious evidence. His conscience was still sufficiently susceptible to make him feel the pitifulness and worthlessness of these last testimonies; and the secret apprehension that such a judicial inquiry might not satisfy the people, as well as the impressive, sublime, and commanding tranquility which the Accused opposed to the wretched fabrication of the two witnesses, restrained him from it. Thus in the end, the whole inquisitorial proceeding of the judge, only tended to our Lord's glorification, since by it His spotless innocence was placed in the clearest light. Yes, He is the Lamb without spot, which it was necessary He should be, in order to take away our guilt.

But how does the Accused conduct Himself during the judicial procedure? His whole conduct is extremely significant and remarkable. With a judicial mien, which only partially covers his perplexity, the high priest says to Him, in an imperious tone,

**"Answerest thou nothing to what these witness against thee?"**

**"But Jesus,"** as we are told by the narrative, **"held his peace."**

How eloquent was this silence! And why make many words on this occasion since His enemies, though against their will, witnessed so powerfully in His favor that He needed no further justification? He was silent. How easy would it have been for Him, by a few words, to have most painfully exposed the august assembly! But He honors in it, as before, the powers ordained of GOD, although they may be guilty of injustice; and viewing the matter thus, He deems it becoming Him to hold His peace.

The essential meaning of His silence, however, lies still deeper. His holding His peace is the reflection of a more mysterious silence before another and higher than any human tribunal; and regarded from this point of view, it may be considered as a silence of confession and assent.

When a criminal makes no reply to the accusations brought against him before a human tribunal, it is regarded as an admission of his guilt. Thus we must also regard the silence of JESUS, who, having taken upon Him, before GOD, the sins of His people by a mysterious imputation, deems Himself worthy of death and the curse.

By mutely listening to the accusations of His judges, without attempting to exculpate Himself, He wishes outwardly to intimate the actual offering up of Himself as a culprit in our stead. Thus He is silent, not only as a lamb, but also as the Lamb which taketh away the sin of the world. His silence enables us to speak, and gives us power and liberty to lift up our heads boldly against every accusation, while trusting to the justification wrought out for us by the Redeemer.

May the Lord instruct us all when to speak and when to be silent; the former, by enlightening the darkness of our natural state; and the latter, by an application to our hearts and consciences of the consolatory mystery of the sufferings of JESUS for us!

There is only one way of escaping the horrors of future judgment, and that is the believing apprehension of all that our Surety has accomplished in our stead. May GOD strengthen our faith for this purpose more and more, and enable each of us from the heart to exclaim, in the words of the apostle, "**Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift!**"

~ end of chapter 19 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

\*\*\*