

Midweek Lent – St. Matthew 26:62-68
April 9, 2025 | Saude, Jerico, & Redeemer Lutheran Churches

Holy Week Prophecies: Return in Glory

In Nomine Iesu

+ + +

St. Matthew 26:62-68

And the high priest stood up and said, "Have You no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against You?" 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." 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." 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. What is your judgment?" They answered, "He deserves death." Then they spit in His face and struck Him. And some slapped Him, saying, "Prophecy to us, You Christ! Who is it that struck You?" (ESV)

O Lord Jesus Christ, innocent Lamb of God, who before the Council were falsely accused, spat upon, mocked, struck and sentenced to death as a blasphemer and a deceiver of the people, we humbly ask You, show us the salvation that is in Your merit, and look upon us in mercy as You looked upon Peter, that, sincerely repenting of our sin, we may obtain by faith the comfort of forgiveness and at the end be found acceptable in Your sight, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, now and forever. Amen. (*The Lutheran Liturgy*, p. 108)

In Christ Jesus, "*the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end*" (Rev. 22:13), dear fellow redeemed:

Holy Week was filled with prophecies from Jesus. Some of them were fulfilled in a matter of days, some after a number of years, and some have not been fulfilled yet. In our midweek services, we have heard Jesus' prophecy that Jerusalem and its temple would be destroyed (Mat. 24:1-2). That happened about forty years later in the year A. D. 70 when the Romans overtook the city. We heard Jesus predict His crucifixion (26:1-2), His burial (26:6-13), the desertion of His disciples, and Peter's denials (26:31-35). Those were all fulfilled by the end of that week.

There are many other Holy Week prophecies by Jesus that we have not considered. During Holy Week, He spoke extensively about the end times. He described what His followers would have to endure as the end approached, and He encouraged them to stay awake and alert for His coming. He described His return in glory and His sitting on the throne of judgment on the last day (chs. 24-25).

He spoke again about His return to judge the living and the dead when He was brought before the high priest Caiaphas and the members of the Jewish Council. This happened in the early morning hours of Friday after Jesus' arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane. His disciple Matthew records the fact that the high priest and the members of the Council "*were seeking false testimony against Jesus that they might put him to death*" (26:59).

In order for a charge to be considered, it had to come from at least two independent witnesses. But when people are telling lies, it is very difficult to get their false testimony to line up. That's what happened in this sham trial. And no matter what lies were told about Him, Jesus stood there in silence. He was not there to defend Himself; *"like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth"* (Isa. 53:7).

Caiaphas could see that the attempt to pin a lie on Jesus was not working. So he pulled something different from his bag of tricks. He would put Jesus under oath. This would force Jesus to either deny that He was the Christ which would disappoint all the people. Or He would identify Himself as the Christ and be charged with blasphemy for presenting Himself as God. Caiaphas said, *"I adjure You by the living God, tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God."*

To his fellow religious leaders, Caiaphas seemed very powerful in this moment, and Jesus looked very small. There Jesus stood with hands tied, no disciples to defend Him, and no crowds to protect Him. All those gathered around Jesus were feeling very confident. They had Jesus right where they wanted Him. Soon they would be done with Him; soon He would be dead. But how would Jesus respond to Caiaphas' pointed question about who He was?

Jesus said to him, *"You have said so" – "I am"* (Mar. 14:62). Then He added these words which should have made every member of the Council shake in his sandals, *"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."* The leaders acted like they only heard the first part of what Jesus said. He had told them under oath that He was *"the Christ, the Son of God,"* and that's all they needed to hear. They accused Him of blasphemy and called for His death.

If they had truly been listening to what Jesus said, they might have realized that His prophecy about the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven sounded a lot like what the prophet Daniel wrote: *"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"* (7:13). This was an Old Testament prophecy about the work of the Messiah, who would carry out the will of His Father by suffering, dying, and rising again. Then He would return to the Father in glory as true God and true Man and reign over an everlasting kingdom (v. 14).

This is the reign Jesus now informed the high priest about. He told Caiaphas that He would be seated at the right hand of Power—a fitting way to describe God the Father who is almighty. Jesus appeared to be powerless in that human court, but He made it known that there is an authority far above anything we have here. Caiaphas and all the influential men around him were nothing compared to the power of God. They may have looked impressive on earth, but a little bug might feel important, too, until a heavy boot lands on him.

The heavy boot for the religious leaders was the pricking of their conscience as they condemned an innocent man. It was Jesus' words of love for them as the soldiers nailed Him to the cross: *"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"* (Luk. 23:34). It was His tender care for His mother and for the thief hanging next to Him. That heavy boot was His willful death and the earthquake that followed it. It was the tearing of the temple curtain in two. It was the report from the guards that an angel had rolled away the stone from the tomb, and Jesus wasn't there!

We do not know how many of these religious leaders later repented of their sinful actions. Some of them must have, since three thousand Jews were baptized on Pentecost and their number quickly increased to five thousand and more. But no doubt others of them did not repent. They were glad to be rid of Jesus. Now they didn't have to listen to His embarrassing and infuriating criticisms anymore. They could go back to the way things were before He came on the scene.

But when they finally faced the time of their death, they learned just how wrong they were. They learned that *"it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God"* (Heb. 10:31). They learned that apart from Jesus, there is no hope of eternal life. And on the last day, they will see with their own eyes what Jesus prophesied the day of His death, *"you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven."* All eyes will see Jesus come in glory on the last day. Unbelievers will wish they could hide from His presence. Believers will welcome His coming with joy.

These words of Jesus were not just meant for the religious leaders at His trial. They were meant for us and all people. Jesus is seated at the right hand of God. He is in the position of all power and authority, where He rules over the whole creation and bestows His blessings on the church. We must not forget this fact. When in our pride we act like the religious leaders eager for the world's glory, and in our faithlessness act like Jesus is weak, then we need to repent and throw ourselves at the feet of Him who conquered death itself.

He died on that cross for you. No human authority made Him do it. He willingly went there out of love for you. He wanted to save you. He wants you to know that your sins are forgiven through the shedding of His blood, and that a place in heaven is prepared for you by His grace. He will come again in glory on the clouds of heaven. That will be the great day of vindication for all who trust in Him. That will be the great day when every prophecy Jesus made will finally be counted as fulfilled. *Thanks be to God! Amen.*

+ + +