



BETHEL
African Methodist Episcopal Church
“The Human Conspiracy”

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PURPOSE OF THIS WORKSHOP

Through the years, we have read and discussed the events leading up to the arrest, trial, conviction and crucifixion of Jesus the Christ. However, we probably have not studied by asking ourself if there was a human side or how applicable these events are to our own lives.



PURPOSE OF THIS WORKSHOP

GOD has given us the ability to think and reason. Therefore, we should not be afraid to think critically.

Critically reading the scripture is not questioning GOD, rather, it is getting a deeper understanding of what Jesus's mission was and how it applies to our lives.



PURPOSE OF THIS WORKSHOP

Looking at the human side of the conspiracy identifies the pitfalls that life has for us and by identifying those pitfalls can avoid mistakes that may cause harm and separate us from the love of GOD.

You will discover by completing this workshop, that all of us, in some form or another, may fit a situation that can place us in a role of one of the conspirators and through discernment avoid such a travesty.



But first, let us look at the persons and groups that could have voluntarily and involuntarily contributed to the arrest, trial, conviction and crucifixion of Jesus

Jesus himself

The People

The Roman Government

The Sanhedrin

The Twelve



The Sanhedrin



In biblical times roughly from 30 BC to about 70 AD, the Sanhedrin was a Jewish judicial and religious council composed of chief priest, scribes, and elders, serving as the supreme legislative council and court of justice in Judea. They were put in place by the Roman Government in order to control the Jewish population in Judea and Palestine.




The Sanhedrin

The Sanhedrin consisted of local elites, including members of the high-priestly families, scribes and other religious experts that Rome approved to work with the local Roman jurisdiction.

They functioned as the supreme legislative council of the Jewish people in Palestine. This gave them supreme authority that carried impressive benefits and prestige not to mention economic rewards and opportunities.



The Sanhedrin



Joseph, son of Caiaphas, most often referred to simply as Caiaphas was the high priest in Jerusalem during the time of Jesus from 18BC to 36 or 37AD. This is important to know because he was considered the leader of the Sanhedrin along with his father-in-law Annas.




The Sanhedrin

Caiaphas, as the high priest, opposed Jesus because he saw Jesus's growing popularity and teachings as a potential threat to the existing religious and political order, potentially leading to Roman intervention and the loss of his power and influence.

John 11: 46-50



The Conspirator Act



The Sanhedrin is mentioned in the New Testament, particularly in relation to the arrest and trial of Jesus. They condemned him to death but did not have the authority to execute him and therefore sending him to Pontius Pilate.




The Conspirator Act

However, Nicodemus, regardless of his stance in support of Jesus, is still looked at as against Jesus by association because after all, he was a member of the Sanhedrin Council.

John 3: 1-9; John 7: 50-52



The Conspirator Act



It is possible, that other members of the council were not against Jesus but no one knows due to the power of the Sanhedrin leadership.



The Sanhedrin

Joseph of Arimathea

A wealthy member of the Sanhedrin, was described as a righteous man who did not agree with the council's actions against Jesus. He also requested Jesus' body from Pilate and prepared it for burial, further suggesting his faith in Jesus.

Matthew 27:57; Mark 15: 43; John 19:38



The Conspirator Act

What does that mean to us?

We need to be very careful of our associations.

We may find ourselves:

“Guilty by Association”



QUESTION

Have you ever been accused and even found:

“Guilty by Association”

Let's talk about it?



The Twelve

Although there were twelve (12) chosen by Jesus and trained to be Apostles, the bible presents them in different ways.

In each of the listings found in the gospels, the Apostles' names are always presented in distinct groups. The groupings are believed to have a particular significance.



The Twelve

The first group consist of Peter, Andrew, James and John. Of the 12, these 4 men definitely had the closest and most intimate fellowship with Jesus.

They are each mentioned several times in Scripture



The Twelve

Peter, James and John are known as “The inner circle”. They often got to go with Jesus to experience things that the other apostles did not. On occasion Andrew was included with them.

Matthew 17:1-6; Mark 1:29-31; Mark 13:3; Mark 14:32-36; Luke 5:1-10



The Twelve

The second group is made up of Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas. These 4 apostles enjoyed a strong, healthy fellowship with Jesus. There is a fair amount of information about each of them (except Bartholomew) in the gospel; including several quotations which they spoke. However, most Bible Scholars think that they were not as close to Jesus as the first group.



The Twelve

The third group of the twelve apostles of Jesus, often considered the least prominent in the Gospels, include James, son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus (also known as Judas, son of James), Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot.



The Twelve

What part did the Twelve play in the conspiracy?

Well, some of Jesus apostles were considered Zealots.

Well, what is a Zealot you may asked.



What is a Zealot

In the context of the Bible, “zealot” refers to a member of a militant Jewish sect who fought against Roman occupation of the Jewish homeland in the Palestine region.



Were any of the 12 Apostles
“Zealot”

“SIMON THE ZEALOT”
(which the bible clearly identified as a
Zealot)

Luke 6:15





Were any of the 12 Apostles
“Zealot”

“ THADDAEUS ”

(whom some scholars believe he was
a relative of Jesus)





Were any of the 12 Apostles
“Zealot”

“ PETER ”


(by what he said and by his actions)

Matthew 26: 33-35; Mark 14:29-31; John 18:10



QUESTION

Why would Jesus choose
and abide with
Zealots?





QUESTION



Could this have been a threat to
the Roman Government?



QUESTION

Are you sometimes known by
your associations?





The People

Here is an area that seems very difficult to understand because of our teachings. However, the people played an involuntary role in the conspiracy because of what they saw in Jesus and in some cases, outwardly express their beliefs.

Matthew 21:9-15; Mark 11:9-10; John 12:13



The People

In the Bible, “Hosanna” (from the Hebrew) word “hoshiana” means “Save us, please!” or “Save now” and is a cry for salvation and a recognition of Jesus as the Messiah.




The People

This phrase was most famously used in the Gospels when Jesus enters Jerusalem, where crowds greeted him with the saying: “Hosanna to the Son of David” and “Hosanna in the highest”

Matthew 21:9; Mark 11: 9-10; John 1:13



QUESTION



How do you think the Roman Government intercepted those sayings?



The Messiah

In the Bible, “Messiah” translates to “Anointed One” or “Chosen One” in Hebrew and is a title for a figure prophesied to deliver and rule GOD’s people. Jesus was and is considered “The Messiah” according to the people of Judea and Palestine and according to Christian belief.

John 1:41; John 4:25



The Messiah

Although Christians use the title Messiah as a “Spiritual Deliverer”; the term had a military connotation in the Roman world. Also, the meaning “Anointed One” were usually given to military leaders, like King David.



Anointed One

King David is considered the "anointed one" or "Messiah" (Hebrew for "anointed one") as he was chosen by God and anointed by the prophet Samuel to be the future king of Israel.



Anointed One



Kings

like Saul, David, and Solomon, along with other rulers, were anointed to signify their divine appointment and authority.



QUESTION

How do you think the Roman
Government interpreted:

“Anointed One”



Son of David

Although David was never called “Messiah”, he was considered the great deliverer of Israel which is one of the characteristics of the “Messiah”. So, when the people referred to Jesus as the “Son of David”; Rome got a different interpretation.

Matthew 1: 1-20; Matthew 15:22, Mark 12:35-37; Luke 1:32




King

The Jewish people of Palestine were oppressed by the Roman Government and felt the only relief was to be delivered by a Messiah or King. So, when they witnessed Jesus's teachings and miracles, their hearts leaped to the conclusion that he was their physical deliverer and King.

Matthew 2:1-3; Matthew 21:5; Matthew 27:11, Mark 15:2; Mark 15: 18-26; Luke 19:38; Luke 23: 2-3; Luke 23:37-38; John 1:49-51; John 6:15; John 12: 13-15; John 18: 33-40




Jesus Himself



Again, the Jewish people of Palestine were oppressed by the Roman government and felt the only relief was to be delivered by a Messiah or King. So, when they witness Jesus with his 12 and at least three of them were Zealots; well, a physical deliverance was at hand (or so they thought).



Jesus Himself



Jesus said some things that could have put fuel to the fire although Biblical Scholars argue that was not his intent:



Jesus Himself

“Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. I come not to send peace, but a sword.”

Matthew 10:34



Jesus Himself

Of course, we were taught that he meant the “Sword of Salvation”, but what did the people think?

and what about the Roman Government?



Jesus Himself

Jesus also said something else that could have implied something other than spiritual:

“Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.”

Luke 22: 36-38



QUESTION

“What?”

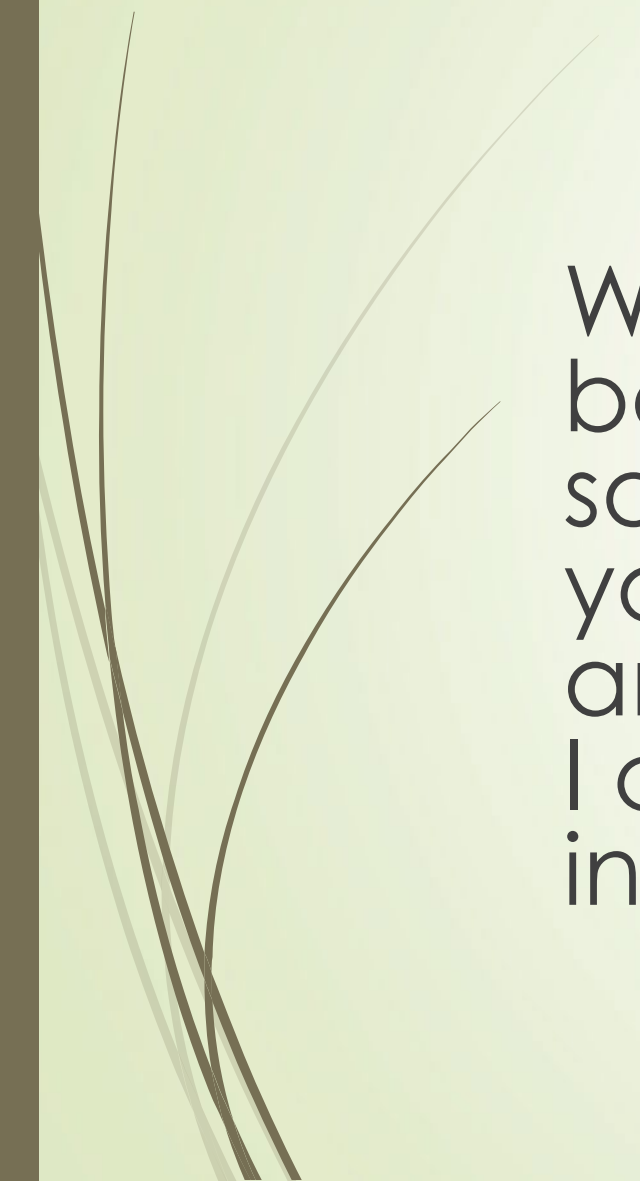
Did Jesus really say that?

If he did, what did he mean?





Involuntary Conspirators



We went over a lot of quotes that I believe were misinterpreted and, in some cases, still mis-taught. However, you may now understand why Judas and Peter did what they did and why I consider Pontius Pilate also an involuntary Conspirator.



Involuntary Conspirators

Here is my argument on behalf of Judas:

Although Judas was not identified as a Zealot, he thought like one. I believe he wanted to get the show on the road (revolution) and when he saw Jesus did not go along with what he thought the plan was, he felt so bad that he committed suicide.

Matthew 27: 3-5



Involuntary Conspirators

Here is my argument on behalf of Peter:

Peter was preparing for a revolution. He sincerely was willing and about to fight and die for Jesus. But in his eyes; Jesus change the script on him, and he did not know what to do.

Matthew 26:31-35; Mark 14:29-31; Matthew 26: 47-54



Involuntary Conspirators

Here is my argument on behalf of Pontius Pilate:

With council from his wife, the governor tried to release Jesus and be done with the claim of the Sanhedrin, but, was put in a Political Vice.

Matthew 27: 11-26; Mark 15: 1-15; Luke 23: 1-4-25; John 18: 28-40




QUESTION

Have you ever found yourself in
a
Political Vice?





SUMMARY



Life sometimes puts us in vicarious positions. By reading and studying the conspiracy, we should be able to understand the snags in life and circumstances and to help us make decisions that are pleasing to GOD.



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