inquirer had the privilege of reading this title, which we see revealed a great truth that Christ is for all nations.

III. Those Offended by the Title

1. The Sadducees.

We now come to take a close look at the religious party known as the Sadducees who desired the death of Jesus and who said that it was actually expedient that he should die. We must discover who these people are. They tell us that they were notable priests originating from the name Zadok who was a notable priest during the time of David and Solomon. These priests took on the form of a party and when the Jews returned from exile you recall they depended very much upon their priests. They had no king. They had no desire for a king. They simply wish for their community to be ruled over by God.

We also remember in the early days that the priests had great influence and were able to rally broked-hearted people and to give leadership to the nation.

We also remember well that the high order of priests were not elected but were born into a certain family.

THE PRIEST DEMANDED A NEW SIGN

John 19:19-22

Title of Both-

Our theme will center upon the priests and instead of proclaiming Jesus as Messiah when he came to the time of his death, they wanted to make mockery of him. They were God's authorized representatives, his ministers of reconciliation and supposed to be friends of humanity but they killed the hope of mankind. This action of the priests was not a forced action. It was deliberate, and over a period of months they plotted against him. We see that they trapped the perfect man, nailed him to the cross and secured the tomb and felt that they had one a victory over the Son of God.

I. The Title, vs. 19

When a criminal was condemned under Roman law, he was led out to the place of his crucifixion. A herald went before him carrying a whitened board on which were written his name and his crime. When the man was nailed to the cross and before it was set in its socket, this board with its record of shame was fixed over his head.

So Pilate wrote the title which was the subscription over the cross, Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews. This declared the cause of the crucifixion.

Matthew calls this the accusation. Mark and Luke called it the inscription. John calls it by the proper Latin name, the title. Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. Pilate intended this for his reproach that he pretendad to be the king of the Jews and thus in competition with Caesar and this would recommend Pilate for a promotion. He meant these words as an insult to the Jews and he knew that the high priests would be gaulded by them.

But God over-ruled and this only gave further testimony that Jesus was innocent and there was no crime which he had committed. It proved further that it showed his dignity and honor. This was Jesus the Savior.

1. It proved his claim of final moral authority of the race for he claimed that he revealed the things of God. Nocodemus had said as much.

It proved his claim of 1. perfect holiness because there was no sin attached to this title. It proves that he was the 3. judge of all men and that even Pilate will have to him. It proved his claim to be a king with 4. supreme authority. It proved all the claims within the Gospel. Pilate had said he was the king, so he was not only pro Son of Man, Son of God, but he was the king for whom Is had waited. He was the king who had entered Jerusalem a had been proclaimed such on Palm Sunday. Who is king to We think about kingdoms that perish.

II. Notice Taken of the Title, verse 20

Many of the Jews read this title, not only those of Jerusalem, but those from other countries, strangers as well, read it. For many had come to worship at the feast. So many read it becuase, in the first place, where Jesus was crucified was not a great distance from the city, but close by and many people because of curiosity, would come out to see what was taking place.

They read it in the second place because it was written in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, so that they all understood one or the other of these languages. Therefore, every curios

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Skull - Place where dead men's skulls & bones remained - Where the skull's & heads of malfactors were left. Place ceremonially unclean.
Place where tradition of Elders say: (1) That Adam was buried here & that Christ Dying Obscure where death triumphed over the 1st Adam, the 2nd Adam triumphed over death.
(2) Where they Crucified Him - not at an altar but bloody, painful, shameful death.
(3) The company he died in -

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2. Religious Racketeers

Ananias was of this group and probably was the chief agitator of the plot for we read in John 18:13 that Ananias was the father-in-law to Caiaphas, and they had no legal warrant for a trial before Ananias and he had no authority to send the prisoner to the high priest or to question Jesus before the Jewish superior court, the Sanhedrin. But he had said that it was expedient for him to perish and when Jesus was quiet before the high priest and the high priest questioned him as to whether or not he was the Son of God and Jesus said, "Thou hast said", the high priest was so insulted that he tore his robes and shouted, he is guilty of blasphemy. They condemned him as guilty of death. The Sanhedrin did not possess the power of imposing a sentence of execution. It was necessary for them to send Jesus to Pilate who represented the civil authority.

Pilate refused the demand of the Sanhedrin that Jesus be put to death and he conducted his own questioning. He discovered that Jesus was a king and that he could find no fault. He turned him over to Herod. Herod was puzzled by Jesus and returned him back to Pilate and then Pilate

Therefore, the priesthood was a closed corporation. It was exclusive and they were conservative in their attitude on public changes. In fact, they resisted major changes. So we discover that with them politics and religion were not kept apart. The priests were not only the spiritual leaders of the people, but they were the statesmen too, and we also discover that this was made up of the group who were pre-occupied and always selfseeking.

Now in this time of history Palestine came under the rule of the Roman emperor and it was with the Sadducees that the Romans dealt. For Rome used these governing priests like the Germans used the Quisling when they occupied France. Rome had procurators over Jewish provinces, but they were expected to work with the high priests. In fact, Rome often allowed many freedoms to conquered people, so the Sadducees were mere pawns of the Romans. Their security and comfort and position depended upon their relationship with the emperor.

So we see that these then were the responsibilities of the priests and the Sadducees, and heading up this party was the high priest himself, Caiaphas. We really have

nothing in our modern life which parallels to this situation.

How would these Sadducees come in conflict with Jesus? It is hard for us to understand why because they were supposed to be high and lifted up, but to them Jesus was beneath them, and on rare occasions did they even notice him. When Jesus came in and cleansed the Temple of its cattle and bird market and place for money changing back to a decent house of God, they sort of clashed with him. But they felt that this was providing a convenience for the people to have the birds and beasts on hand for sacrifices and also since heathen money could not be used they had facilities for changing it into Jewish currency.

But it seems that one day the high priest received a messenger from the Pharisees and that is a little unusual because their contact was not close. The Pharisees felt that Jesus was a dangerous imposter, that he had gone too far in cleansing the Temple and they would like the cooperation of the Sadducees in getting rid of him. Sin sometimes makes strange bedfellows. Normally, the Pharisees and the Sadducees had little to do with one another.

The Pharisees were quite religious and puritan and in close touch with the people, while the Sadducees were mildly moral, dealt in politics, far removed from the people, a very exclusive group. They did not believe in the resurrection of the body and they rejected the idea of angels. So they differed in belief and manner of life, but we see that the road which the Pharisees traveled and the road which the Saducees traveled met at the cross.

Why would these Sadducees desire the death of Christ? He had grown popular, people were flocking to him, there were amazing stories of healing and raising the dead. They felt if this continued that he might cause trouble for Rome, so the Phariseees said, it is blasphemy. The Sadducees said, he has political intentions. The thing seems to have come to a head with the Pharisees with the healing of Lazarus, for a man who has been dead in his grave four days to be made alive was simply too much for the Sadducees. In fact they said it was expedient that this man should die. This sounds very much like some modern-day thinking that people became more concerned in self-seeking. So, having established who the Sadducees are, those who objected and were offended at the title on the cross, I go a step further.

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art a high priest after the order of Melchiezedek." But it was quite to the contrary.

4. He Demanded that Four Things Be Done.

We come now to see how spiteful his attitude was for it was not enough for him to have Jesus crucified, but he wanted to have his name crucified also. He was jealous for the honor of his nation and therefore he would trouble Pilate some more. Let us note briefly the four things that the high priest demanded.

First, he demanded that Pilate destroy Jesus. He made an appeal that he needed the aid of Rome in destroying Jesus. He planned it carefully. He hired false witnesses and testified upon the accusation and he demanded nothing short of death. There would be no king but Caesar.

Second, he demanded that he did not like what Pilate had written on the title above the cross. They did not want Jesus to be known as the King of the Jews. But we know that Pilate read this message as it was the customary thing to send a herald ahead of the procession going to the place of execution bearing a placard on which the

yielded to public demand.

So we see behind this black crime Ananias the father-in-law to Caiaphas teamed up as religious racketeers. Luke tells us that when John the Baptist began preaching Ananias was high priest and that Ananias was removed from his high office by Pilate's predecessor. Each of the five sons of Ananias and his son-in-law served as priests. Although he had had no official office for many years he was still active and working with these ecclesiastical politicians. He was a leader among the Sadducees and sought to control the thinking of the priests. Jesus met him with silence for he would not have understood. You can apply the teachings of Jesus to men who do not have spiritual eyes and they would not understand. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God". Ananias was a religious exploiter and racketeer. He used his religion to promote selfish interest. He had accumulated a fortune from the taxes in the Temple from the people. He had engineered the sale of sheep and doves for sacrifices. We could stop here and talk about the crimes which have been committed in the names of religion by those who have used the church to advance their own financial and political

interests. What evil has been wrought in the name of religion. Jesus interfered with his life and his business. We find this repeated time and time again.

Amaziah the priest warned Jeroboram of the dangerous prophet Amos who was preaching against his established and profitable order of religion.

The Gadarene meat packers became, when their port business was hurt and a man was cleansed of demons, they told Jesus to get out of their country.

When Paul and Silas led a young woman to Christ who had been exploited by evil men, they put them in jail. The same thing was true at Ephesus when Paul preached against the temple of Diana. The people rose up against him, for the sale of little idols made by the silversmiths was a profitable business.

3. Caiaphas

We look now a little deeper into those who objected to the inscription on the cross, keeping in mind that it all stemmed from the priestly party of which the high priest

was the head. They repeated appeals to Pilate. ~~play games with Pilate~~. They are supposed to be the leaders of the Jewish church. To be high priests was to speak to God for men and to speak to men for God. When we think about what the church should have meant to the high priests, and yet it was only an institution filled with the spirit of worldliness. He had no love for the church nor did he seem to discover the truth concerning the spirit of God. His mind was already made up for he said that it is expedient that he should die. He does not even inquire into the claims of Christ. He does not raise a question. He turned his back upon truth and he saw the cross as the only goal. Now Jesus was well known unto the high priest. This was not the first time that his works and his teaching had been called to his attention. The cleansing of the Temple was not the first time that the priests had known about Jesus for he was aware of his miracles and his teaching. He had heard of those who had received mercy and yet he was willing to put Jesus to death in order to rid the people of the dangers which he felt were potential in Jesus. Therefore, instead of the high priest looking unto Jesus and stepping down from his place of authority, pulling off his priestly robe and saying, "behold the Lamb of God" and kneeling before him and saying "thou

said there was no fault to be found in him. Here we see that honor is done to the Lord Jesus. Pilate sticks to it that he was the King of the Jews. What he had written was what God had written first. Therefore, Pilate sticks to it that Jesus is their king. He will not alter the title in the least bit.

We see here, friends, three great truths. First of all we may do as the high priest, deny the title. In the second place we may be as Pilate, disregard it. Jesus had been proclaimed king by Pilate because of what he had heard among the Jews. But in the third place, we may bow down in consent to it as the disciples on that day. What he had written could not be changed and many times the decisions we make seem not to be the type that can be altered. Esau, finding no place of repentance, though he seeks it in Tears, or like the man who found himself on the other side of the great gulf. What verdict are you tossing at Christ. Are you saying, I have no king but Caesar. The verdict will stand, Pilate says, and this verdict gnawed on the hearts and consciences of the priests. Christ demands that we yield to him as king. He is man's only hope. We may try to alter and change

doomed man's accusation was written, crying aloud that all might know his name and crime.

At other times we are told that the board with the title was hung by a cord about the criminal's neck and worn to the place of execution, then attached to his cross. But we are certain that Pilate had this put on the cross.

And as we have stated before, it is significant that it was written in Hebrew, Greek and Latin. It was intended to increase the insults for they wished that all strangers present on the Passover might read it. There was represente Hebrew, tongue of religion, Greek, that of culture, Latin, the language of the law and government and Christ was declared king in them all. On his head are many crowns. He is crowned king of the religious sphere, the king of heaven, the king of culture, the king of the political sphere; he is the king of kings. And the priests after reading the title, urged Pilate to change it. It hurt his pride. It probed his conscience. It halted their thoughts It must be changed. Gen. 49:10 "The sceptre shall not depa from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until shiloh com

2 Sam. 7:16 "And Thine house & Thy Kingdom sh be established for ever before Thee: Thy Throne shall be established for ever.

The third thing the priest wanted happened just about sunset. The Passover sabbath would begin at sundown. The Holy Day must not be desecrated by the presence of three dying criminals on crosses. Deut. 21:22,23, Moses stated the law that would not allow the bodies to remain on the tree overnight, so the priests came back to Pilate again and demanded that his legs be broken with clubs that he might die before sunset. Pilate yielded but they found Jesus dead already and they merely pierced his side with a spear to make sure.

The fourth appeal or demand to Pilate came later. Jesus had been put in a tomb and they remembered that he had said he would rise the third day and this must not happen. So they demanded that the tomb be sealed and that it be guarded to prevent such.

This is very interesting as they troubled Pilate time after time and forced him against his own mind in dealing with Jesus. Perhaps Pilate will resent their repeated demands eventually. Let us refer back to the title. They fear that the title might be true and that death would not actually be able to hold him. We have

triumphed over him -- or have we. We have put him out of our midst and we will see him no more. We have saved the people from his teaching and yet this only suggests that they had fears, that it might happen so there must be a change in the title. We must not be discredited, but save the situation, the title must be changed and the tomb sealed. Pilate, you represent our king, Caesar. Now save us from our fears. Make the title read differently. He must not be king. If he is king we are sunk. Caesar also change the title to make it read, "He said, I am King of the Jews". Change it and then guard him. So what they really wanted to do was, if he must be king, let us put the burden of the proof on him. Make it so that he is a king in his own estimation, then we will have some excuse for putting him to death and we will have an answer. This sounds like a weak wall to hide behind.

III. The Judge's Resolution, verse 22

We come now to discover Pilate's answer to the priests. They were trying to get him to change the title on the cross with fear in their hearts and yet Pilate is tired of the priests dictating to him and he will not yield any longer. They had been unjust and unreasonable and Pilate

the title over the cross. They thought that he would remain in the tomb. And you may think there will be no resurrection day, but you march toward Judgement Day and wishful thinking will not destroy the title over the cross. The fears of the priests proved fatal, for in Matthew 27:66 they said, make the tomb as secure as possible, and we are amazed that after his resurrection he did not seek vengance upon these priests. Actually, he forgave all of them. This is Jesus Christ, the King of Glory, and for any person to attempt to hinder or destroy the intentions of the King is futile.

Sign Permanent

1 Tim. 1:17 "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour & glory for ever & ever" —

1 Tim. 6:15 "Which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed & only Potentate, The King of kings, & Lord of lords;"

Crown of Thorns he wore — which seemed to be shame

Today — wears Crown of Jewels

Throne of Wood — The cross to sign from

Today — Rifts of the mercy seat of gold.

Reign was rejected

Today He Reigns in Xians hearts —

Refused to be his subjects.

6. Nov. - Sept. 27 59 P.M.
To. Nov. B. - Feb. 8, 59 - A.M

Body subject unto his judgment.

When you come
to Die - What
Will the
Title Read?

All Hail the Person of Jesus name
Let angels prostrate fall
Bring forth the Royal diadem
and crown him Lord of all
Bring forth the royal diadem
and crown him Lord of all.