

He burst onto the scene – pitting himself against the establishment. His refreshing, honest, no-nonsense, tell-it-like-it-is approach won the hearts of the people and exposed the career bureaucrats as evil, self-righteous, self-serving, haughty phonies. He didn't hold back – tirelessly and relentlessly calling them out at every turn.

They brought in lawyers to trip him up but failed. Their arrogance and disdain for him blinded them to his mastery over them. Despite their numbers and resources, they were no match for him. Every time they thought they had him in their grip, he slipped through their fingers.

He spoke with authority. He supported the common man and rebuked the powerful hypocrites. Crowds thronged him. He did what he said he would do.

But after he raised a man from the dead, the establishment was beside themselves. They could see their little fiefdom dissolving before their eyes. They had to do something.

*If we let him ... alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away **both our place and nation**. ... Caiaphas, ... the high priest ..., said unto them, **Ye know nothing at all**, Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. (John 11:48-50)*

So what was their plan? It was to use their authority to arrest Him, assemble a mock trial, convict Him, and have Him put to death. Of course, that was a tall order for a *just* court to convict a *just* man. The trick, of course, was to use the **pretense of justice** to bring about **injustice** in the diabolical Machiavellian spirit of “the end justifies the means.”

What was His crime? Blasphemy. He claimed to be the Christ – the Son of God. Of course, His claim was true, but his accusers didn't buy it. They convicted Him, turned the crowds against him, and convinced Pilate to have Him crucified – saying His royal claim threatened Caesar.

Just days before, Jesus foresaw and wept over the tragic consequences of His people's rejection of Him -- prophesying that Jerusalem would be laid siege and leveled and the inhabitants killed. While man's justice often fails, God's justice endures (Psalm 89:14).

God's justice demanded the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. Jesus willingly suffered the ultimate injustice to satisfy God's justice toward fallen, guilty man. Jesus **came to earth to die** to redeem men and give them eternal life.

This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. ... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. (Romans 3:22-24 NIV)

It's ironic isn't it? God used the injustice of men to effect true justice and then extend His grace and mercy to all who believe. God's perfect plan sent Jesus (Savior) called Emmanuel (God with us) to leave His place in glory, live a sinless life, and pay our penalty that we might have life. *Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift!*

Merry Christmas!
Ron and Betsy