

Sermon for Good Friday [Purim], 6.iv.2006  
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saint James the Apostle / Brogue, Pennsylvania  
Isaiah 52:13-53:12, Psalm 22, Hebrews 4:14-16, 5:7-9  
The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ According to Saint John 18:1-19:42  
7:30 p.m., Passion Liturgy with Veneration of the Holy Cross



Grace to you and peace from Him Who is and Who was  
and Who is to come. ☩ Amen.

**"We have a law, and according to that law he ought to  
die because he has claimed to be the Son of God."**

**-- Luke 19:7b**

'There ought to be a *law* against that!' How many times  
have we heard others or listened to ourselves yammering in  
that way about something we want to ban, something we do  
not want to see or read about, something of which we would  
rather not even think.

To claim, even mistakenly, to be the Messiah,  
the Anointed, successor of King David, God's anointed savior  
of Israel, God's chosen instrument, was not a crime in Israel.  
There had been and there would be many who claimed this,

or about whom this was claimed. Ironically, the only 'Anointed' of the LORD who lived up to the expectations of the nation was one who never claimed that title, nor would he have thought much of it. Cyrus the Great, King of Persia, is described as the LORD's Anointed by Isaiah, for King Cyrus did indeed restore the land and people and even the Temple of Israel to something approaching their former glory under David and Solomon. It is not for claiming this that the Judæan opponents of Jesus want to see Him dead.

They find Him guilty of blasphemy, of claiming to be the Son of God in some unique way, and they 'have a law' against that. So did the Romans, who reserved that title for their Emperor, Divine Cæsar. *And so do we!*

If He *is* God's own and only Son, Son of God *and* Son of Mary, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, blood of our blood, then is all of humanity sanctified, made divine by His very existence, a life we must put to death. He *must*

be crucified, otherwise the enemy we hate becomes our brother and sister, otherwise the poor we use and oppress become lords over us, otherwise the sin that clings to us and to which we cling with all our strength will be washed away and our lives *changed*. And so we, too, cry: *Away with Him! Away with Him! Crucify Him!*

Make no mistake, He hangs there, on a cross that *we* erected, under a sentence of death that *we* demanded, because *we* refuse to accept the coming of His Father's Kingdom, because *we have a law against that!*

Jesus does not argue with His accusers. Almighty God does not argue with us. His Kingdom is coming, even though the One most innocent among us must suffer a death sentence we impose, even though it is necessary for Him to pass through the gate of death and hell for our sake. Then, perhaps, we will believe the Kingdom of love

He proclaims and in that Kingdom only find forgiveness for our guilt in killing Heaven's love with our infernal laws.

✠Amen.

Now to Him Who loves us and has freed us from our sin by His blood, and has made of us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion with the Father and the Holy Spirit, both now and forever. ✠ Amen.

S. D. G. !

