

GNITN

#464

Trump's Verdict: A Prophetic Sign of Lawlessness

A Polarizing Verdict

You would have to be living under a rock to now know about the recent guilty verdict in the Donald Trump case in New York City. Regardless of how you feel about Trump, both sides were very emotional about it. But I prayed and asked God what it means for America and the direction He pointed me to was one I already was pondering. You see, I always want to put things in a Biblical perspective and also a prophetic perspective as I believe we are living in the last generation before the Lord's return. Although it may be a stretch to ask God to put this in both of those views, He did and I can see how it could fit. He even pointed me to similar instances in the Bible, one you will easily recognize and that is easy to compare to our times, both in the New Testament. And He also connected things to end times warnings as well. The main reason things can be connected is a simple one and that is people don't change from generation to generation. Politics can be seen all the way back to the book of *Genesis* so it isn't difficult to find illustrations that fit what we just saw this week. The times and the names are different, but as I said, people all act the same way. All of this to say that there could be riots in our future.

Heated Rioting From Verdicts Are Not New

4 Pilate went outside again and said to the Jews, "I am going to bring him out to you now, but understand clearly that I find him not guilty." (John 19:4, TLB)

As I mentioned at the start, there are instances of raucous reactions to guilty or innocent men in the Bible. None is more famous to those who study the Bible than the ordeal Jesus suffered before He was crucified. This story has all the classic elements of an innocent man accused of crimes that he didn't commit and then didn't have more than one witness against him. He was tried illegally in court and found guilty before the trial ever started. Here is how an [article](#) that quotes Bible scholar and author *Dr. R.C. Sproul* explains that trial:

In his commentary Mark, Dr. R.C. Sproul writes about Jesus' trial: "Nearly everything about this hearing went in the face of Jewish law." According to Mark 14:53–65, Jesus was not afforded any of the due process that first-century Jews followed when trying capital cases. They were not supposed to hold a trial on the eve of a Sabbath or a festival, but Jesus was tried on the eve of Passover. Court proceedings were to occur during the day, in a public place, but Jesus was tried at night, in the private home of the high priest. The capital charges should have been dismissed as soon as it was not possible to find more than one witness to agree on their testimony, but the trial went on even when contradictory testimony was offered. This was a court that did not want the truth.

And the sentencing for the crime was death by crucifixion, something that the Roman leader Pilate didn't want to approve. It was the rioting crowd that turned the tide.

Between A Rock And A Hard Place

While court was still in session, Pilate's wife sent him a message: "Don't get mixed up in judging this noble man. I've just been through a long and troubled night because of a dream about him." (Matt 27:19, MSG)

Pilate was tasked with going against his wife's advice who was warned in a dream, the most respected communication from God in the Middle East. But he might have been influenced by fear for his job as we read in a [commentary](#) about Pilate's sticky situation:

Pilate is not stupid. He's seen enough to know that Jesus' message is not an immediate threat to Roman rule (John 18:36–38). He can also tell Jewish religious leaders are pursuing a personal vendetta (Matthew 27:18). However, they've also brought an agitated crowd (Matthew 27:20–23). History tells us Pilate's governorship was strained. He was criticized for brutal tactics, and deliberately antagonizing the Jewish people. At this point, he was likely under a strict warning that major unrest would result in losing his position. Rather than simply tell the mob to disperse, Pilate is looking for middle ground.

The commentary then lets us know that Pilate is trying to avoid this, just as his wife told him earlier:

Even though the Jewish leaders want Jesus killed, Pilate would prefer not to do their dirty work for them. Having Jesus brutally whipped and humiliated, awful as it is, seems to be Pilate's attempt to spare Jesus' life. Now, he prepares to present a maimed, mocked, and apparently defeated Jesus to the crowd. In a modern setting, his words might have been, "take a look, now, and see how much I've already done to an innocent man."

The meaning of Pilate's declaration is really a question: "isn't this enough?" As John's account continues, we see the mob settle for nothing less than death.

Ultimately, he gives in to the pressure of the religious leaders and the growing mob and gives them Barabbas who was sentenced to death in place of Jesus. The whole trial and sentencing was a mockery of justice from start to finish.

And About Those Riots

My point in telling you all this is that rioters can influence public opinion and also political decisions. Many prophetic words are pointing to a tumultuous summer in America. With the Democratic convention back in Chicago and with many antisemitic groups dissatisfied with their party over their support of Israel, some are thinking that what happened back in 1968 when anti-war protestors made life hard for that convention could play out again. And many expect protestors to come out in full force in Milwaukee for the Republican convention as well, but it is believed they will be organized and funded by the opposition. However, is such activity part of end time prophecy? Let's see just what the Bible shows about rioting before we answer that question. For that we'll turn to an [article](#) from [gotquestions.org](#):

A riot is a violent, noisy disturbance of the peace by a crowd. Riots usually result in property damage and injuries to people. We are seeing an increasing number of riots across the world, fueled by everything from race to religion. Sometimes a peaceful gathering can turn into a riot when something triggers strong emotion among the majority of attendees. Often those who are rioting believe themselves in the right as they passionately express their opinions en masse. But are they right? Does the Bible say anything about rioting?

The article goes on to explain a few things about riots using another riot in the Bible:

The Bible mentions a few riots, none of them favorably. Paul was the victim of rioters on several occasions (2 Corinthians 6:5; Acts 17:5; 19:23–41). In each case, jealousy and deception were at the heart of the riot. It was the hate-filled agenda of the instigators that fired up the townspeople, many of whom were not even sure of the issues at stake. The fact that most of the

Ephesian rioters “did not even know why they were there” says volumes about the mob mentality (Acts 19:32).

The article connects the dots between the rioters in the trial of Jesus as well:

Most riots begin with an instigator, someone with an agenda. Riots may appear to be spontaneous outbursts of unified outrage, but closer investigation usually reveals people behind the scenes stirring up the passions of the crowd. Those who expect to benefit from the riot may use inflammatory speech, exaggerated details, and the cooperation of a few colleagues to make the riot seem spontaneous. In other words, those who incite riots today use the same tactics that the scribes and Pharisees used in Jesus’ day.

The Bible Predicts Such Lawlessness

Now, dear brothers and sisters, let us clarify some things about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and how we will be gathered to meet him. 2Don’t be so easily shaken or alarmed by those who say that the day of the Lord has already begun. Don’t believe them, even if they claim to have had a spiritual vision, a revelation, or a letter supposedly from us. 3Don’t be fooled by what they say. For that day will not come until there is a great rebellion against God and the man of lawlessness is revealed—the one who brings destruction. 4He will exalt himself and defy everything that people call god and every object of worship. He will even sit in the temple of God, claiming that he himself is God.

5Don’t you remember that I told you about all this when I was with you? 6And you know what is holding him back, for he can be revealed only when his time comes. 7For this lawlessness is already at work secretly, and it will remain secret until the one who is holding it back steps out of the way. (2 Thess 2:1-7, NLV)

An interesting aspect of the coming of the Antichrist is that he is the opposite of Jesus Christ in every conceivable way, which is a good thing because it makes us study Jesus more if that makes any sense. And one way the man of sin will set himself apart is this total lawlessness or making himself a law unto himself. Here is how noted Bible author *Arthur W. Pink* [explains](#) it:

"And then shall be revealed the Lawless One, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of His mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of His coming" (2 Thess.2:8 R. V.). This is another name of the Antichrist which makes manifest his awful character. Each of his names exhibits him as the antithesis of the true Christ. The Lord Jesus was the Righteous One; the Man of Sin will be the Lawless One. The Lord Jesus was "made under the law" (Gal.4:4); the Antichrist will oppose all law, being a law unto himself. When the Saviour entered this world, He came saying, "Lo I come to do Thy will, O God" (Heb.10:9); but of the Antichrist it is written "And the king shall do according to his will" (Dan.11:36). The Antichrist will set himself up in direct opposition to all authority, both Divine and human.

The Spirit Of The Antichrist Is In Play

I’m not about to say that we haven’t seen rulers who have decided to set themselves up as lawgivers and change all laws that they don’t like. That is nothing new. But the standard here is way higher as *Pink* suggests and that is the law of God will be what the Antichrist will be hostile to. Think Ten Commandments opposition; think Sermon on the Mount antagonism; think all of Scripture resistance. The Greek word for this is *anomia* (an-om-ee'-ah) properly, without law; lawlessness; the utter disregard for God's law (His written and living Word). lawlessness includes the end-impact of law breaking – i.e. its negative influence on a person's soul (status before God). Utter disregard is a strong phrase and gets worse when you realize the consequences of such actions. We’re talking eternal repercussions and you don’t get worse than being thrown into the lake of fire for eternity. The

contrasts could not be starker in my opinion and will culminate in this son of perdition. However, this spirit is already at work according to **verse 7** and this peculiar wording merits a little scrutiny.

The Mystery Of Lawlessness

For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. (2 Thess 2:7, NKJV)

For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. (2 Thess 2:7, NIV)

You'll also remember that I told you the Anarchist is being held back until just the right time. That doesn't mean that the spirit of anarchy is not now at work. It is, secretly and underground. But the time will come when the Anarchist will no longer be held back, but will be let loose. (2 Thess 2:6-7, TMG)

Sometimes hearing the verses in multiple Bible translations helps in figuring things out. In three of those translations, we see talk of a mystery, secret power, and secretly and underground workings. But we also told of a time when things won't be held back and the full measure of the plans and persona of the Antichrist will be seen by everyone, and as prophecy tells us, it will be too late. For now, it is seen as a "mystery" but as we will see, it's not a mystery to everyone. Here is how this term is explained from *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*:

The word "mystery" in Greek does not necessarily involve any notion of mysteriousness in our modern sense. It means a secret (which may be, in its own nature, quite simple) known to the initiated, but incapable of being known until it is divulged. Here the whole emphasis is thrown, by a very peculiar order of the Greek words, upon the word "mystery." It may be paraphrased thus:— "For as a secret, into which the world is not yet initiated, that lawlessness is already at work." Thus the word "mystery" stands in sharp contrast with the word "revealed" in 2Thessalonians 2:6; 2Thessalonians 2:8 : the time for publishing, openly avowing, the secret is not yet come. To whom, then, is the mystery of that lawlessness now known? Not to all those who are contributing to its ultimate manifestation, for most of them are deceived by it (2Thessalonians 2:10), and, while sharers in the Apostasy, still believe themselves members of the Church. The mystery is known to God, and (1) to enlightened Christians like St. Paul; (2) to Satan and a few Satanic men who avow to themselves their real object in joining the movement.

Will there be riots coming for us next? It wouldn't surprise me at all and we would do well to intercede to restrain them as much as possible. And we certainly shouldn't participate in protests that devolve into violence. Not praying and then being a bad witness to boot are not good looks for the Body of Christ now. If we are going to get emotional let us use that energy in our prayers and intercession.