

**Jesus' Trial**

**Matthew 26:57—68; 27:1—31**

**(Mark 14:53—14:20; Luke 22:54—23:25; John 18:12—14, 19—24, 28—19:16)**

All four Gospel accounts need to be read to get a complete picture of all that took place during the trial. By doing this it can be seen that Jesus was shuffled between at least 5 different individuals or groups. The Jewish leadership desired to have Jesus put to death because He was a threat to their power over the people. They desired to kill Him for many months and when Judas came to them with an offer to betray Jesus into their hands they jumped at the opportunity. It seems Judas became impatient waiting for the chance to rule in the promised Kingdom and perhaps was motivated by money and power. By instigating a crisis he may have been hoping to see Jesus defeat His enemies and set up the Kingdom He had so often talked about. It appears Judas never imagined that Jesus would end up being condemned to death for he immediately felt remorse and returned the 30 pieces of silver and hanged himself (Matthew 27:3—4).

Details of Jesus' arrest and trial are contained in the four Gospels so a complete picture can only be obtained by harmonizing these four books of the Bible. Below is an attempt to put this information into one cohesive story.

**Jesus before Annas and Caiaphas** (Matthew 26:57—58; Luke 22:54; John 18:12—24)

Acting on orders from the religious leaders of Israel, the Roman cohort and officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and they brought Him to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest. It appears that John was able to go into the building because he knew the high priest and he was able to get Peter to enter the building also. Before entering, Peter was outside warming himself with a charcoal fire in the courtyard while Jesus was inside.

Annas brought Jesus to Caiaphas who then questioned Jesus about His Disciples and His teaching. Caiaphas had met with the Sanhedrin a few weeks ago to figure out what they should do about Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. It was at that time that Caiaphas prophesied that it was expedient that one Man die for the people (John 11:47—53).

**Jesus before the Sanhedrin** (Matthew 26:59—27:1; Mark 14:53—15:1; Luke 22:66—71)

After standing before Annas and Caiaphas Jesus was brought before the whole council of Jewish leaders. It was now morning and Jesus had been up all night. They asked Him if He was their Messiah. It was here that the chief priest and the whole Sanhedrin were trying to obtain testimony that would be worthy of putting Jesus to death. There were many who came giving false testimony but their testimony was not at all consistent.

They finally found some to testify that He said He would destroy this temple made with hands and in three days would build another made without hands. Even this testimony was flawed but at the moment it was the best they could come up with. When the high priest came up to Him to demand an answer to the charge, Jesus remained silent. So the high priest asked Him if He was the Messiah, the Son of God? Jesus answered by stating that they will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven. According to Luke they asked Him if He was the Son of God and He said, "Yes." This was all they needed to convict Him of blasphemy because they understood He was claiming to be God. With that, they all declared Him deserving of death.

They would have know who the Son of Man was from Daniel 7:13. Here the Son of Man is coming up to the Ancient of Days and being presented with dominion, glory and a Kingdom. This is the Messiah at His Second Coming. Psalm 110:1 also gives a clue that the person who sits at the Father's right hand is the Messiah. When the Son of Man comes He will be sitting at the right hand of the Father just as depicted in Revelation 6:16. This is one reason I believe the sixth seal is picturing the Second Coming and not the middle of the Tribulation as so many believe.

Following this questioning, those who had arrested Jesus blindfolded Him then proceeded to mock, beat and spit on Him, demanding that He prophesy whom it was that hit Him. They ridiculed His claim that He was their Messiah.

**Jesus before Pilate** (Matthew 27:1—14; Mark 15:1—5; Luke 23:1—5; John 18:28—38)

After standing before Caiaphas and the Jewish religious leaders, they brought Jesus to face Pilate, a Roman governor over the province of Judea. It's at this point that Judas realized that the Jewish leaders intended to put Jesus to death. He is filled with remorse and hanged himself (Matthew 27:3—9). Pilate didn't want to get involved in a local issue and told them to judge Jesus by their own law. They lied and said they did not have the authority to put anyone to death. This was proven wrong when they stoned Stephen. They were also going to stone Jesus in John 8:59 and they were going to stone the woman caught in adultery (John 8:4—6). Pilate was the one who could have Jesus crucified so they went to plead their case to him. Normally Jesus would have been stoned to death but in fulfillment of Scripture, He was hung on a cross (Psalm 22:16; John 3:14, 12:32—33). It was now early morning, probably before 6 a.m. (Note: John 19:14 says that that Pilate approved Jesus' crucifixion about the sixth hour. By Jewish reckoning that would be noon. However, John appears to be using Roman time making it around 6 a.m.)

The Jewish leaders were throwing out accusations that Jesus was misleading the nation, forbidding them to pay taxes to Caesar and saying he was the Messiah, King of Israel. Jesus didn't answer back concerning even one of the charges. Pilate questioned Jesus asking Him if He was the King of the Jews. Jesus admitted He was.

**Jesus before Herod** (Luke 23:6—12)

Pilate found no guilt in what Jesus had done but the chief priests insisted that He was stirring up the people from Galilee to all over Judea. When Pilate found out Jesus was from Galilee he decided to send Him to Herod who was in Jerusalem at that time. Herod Antipas was given a quarter of Herod the Great's kingdom after his death and was instrumental in John the Baptist's death. Herod was glad to be able to see Jesus because of all he heard about Him and was hoping that Jesus would do some miracle for him. The chief priests and scribes were there accusing Jesus vehemently but Herod could find nothing wrong. He mocked and mistreated Jesus then wrapped Him up in a robe and sent Him back to Pilate. It was this incident that cemented Pilate and Herod's friendship.

**Jesus before Pilate** (Matthew 27:15—31; Mark 15:6—20; Luke 23:13—25; John 18:39—19:16)

Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate and he pronounced Jesus innocent. He did nothing to deserve death. Pilate's wife had a dream about Jesus ("that Righteous man"). She suffered greatly from what she dreamt and told Pilate to have nothing to do with Jesus. Since it was customary for him to release one prisoner during Passover, Pilate was hoping they would release Jesus over Barabbas, a murdering insurrectionist. The Jews demanded, prodded along by the chief priests, that Jesus be crucified.

At this point Pilate washed his hands in front of the crowd proclaiming innocence concerning Jesus' death. The Jews shouted that they and their children would accept responsibility for His shed blood. With that Pilate had Him scourged and the soldiers put a crown of thorns on His head and clothed Him in a purple robe. Pilate brought Jesus out to where He could be seen and walked out of the Praetorium saying he could find no wrong with Jesus. The angry crowd cried out "Crucify, crucify!"

Pilate went back to Jesus and questioned Him some more. Jesus remained silent. Frustrated, Pilate asked Jesus if He understood that he had the authority to release or crucify Him. Jesus answered that he had no authority over Him unless it came from above. Pilate worked to release Jesus but the crowd would only accept Jesus' death. With that, Pilate handed Jesus over to them to be crucified.

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