

JEWISH TRIALS

Can you image going through six criminal trials carrying the death penalty within about five hours of the same day?

“Jesus’ trial took place in two stages: a Jewish trial and a Roman trial, each of which had three episodes.

For the Jewish trial these were:

- *The preliminary hearing before Annas, the former high priest (reported only in John 18:12-14, 19-24)*
- *The trial before Caiaphas, the ruling high priest, and the Sanhedrin (Mark 14:53-65)*
- *The final action of the council, which terminated its all-night session (Mark 15:1)*

The three episodes of the Roman trial were:

- *The trial before Pilate (Mark 15:2-5)*
- *The trial before Herod Antipas (only in Luke 23:6-12)*
- *The trial before Pilate continued and concluded (Mark 15:6-15)*

Since mark gives no account of Jesus before Herod Antipas, the trial before Pilate forms a continuous and uninterrupted narrative in this gospel (Mark 15:2-15).” (NIV, Mark 14:53-15:15)

Our lesson text deals with the second Jewish trial. It is carried by all four gospels (Matt.26:57, 59-68; Mark 14:53-65; Luke 22:54, 63-65; and John 18:24, 28) and we will study it by the following five homiletical points.

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| • Priests | (Mk14:53) | Caiphas’ home | (Matt.26:57; Luke 22:54) |
| • Peter | (Mk14:54) | Courtyard | |
| • Perjury | (Mk14:55-60) | Council’s false witnesses | (Deut.17:6-7; 19:15-19) |
| • Pronouncement | (Mk14:61-62) | Christ | (Isa.53:7; 1 Pet.2:23) |
| • Persecuted | (Mk14:63-65) | Contempt | (Isa.50:6; 52:14; John 18:22-23) |

FOUR aspects of the three Jewish Trials of Jesus Christ (continued)

1. **It requires all four gospels to study the three Jewish trials of Jesus Christ (Matt.26:57-27:2; Mark 14:53-15:1; Luke 22:54-23:1; John 18:12-28).**

The **three Jewish trials** took place before three different political groups.

The first trial took place at *Annas’ home* the ex-high priest and father-in-law of Caiaphas (recorded only in John 18:12-14, 19-24). Jesus offered a defense (John 18:19-21). A guard struck Jesus with a rod and Jesus challenged police brutality (John 18:22-23; Mark 5:39). Peter’s first denial (John 18:15-18).

The second trial took place at *Caiaphas’ home* the present high priest (all four gospels/ see above). False witnesses were brought against Jesus who remained silence against their accusation (Matt.26:60-62). However, He speaks against Caiaphas’ charge (Matt.26:62-64). Then Caiaphas charged Jesus with blasphemy and the death penalty (Matt.26:65-66). Once against there was police brutality against Jesus (Matt.26:67-68; Isa.53:14). Peter’s second and third denials (Matt.26:69-75; Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:55-62; John 18:24-28).

The third trial took place before the *Council of the Sanhedrin* (Matt.27:1-2; Mark 15:1; Luke 22:66-23:2; and John 18:28). This occurred the morning of the day of the crucifixion (Mark 15:1). They took Caiaphas' charge of blasphemy that fit their previous plot to murder Jesus (Matt.26:1-5). Jesus gave His third and final defense at this Jewish court (Luke 22:67-70).

2. Because of the curse of Coniah (Jehoiachin), following the Babylonian Captivity (Jer.22:24-30) the high priest had been elevated to a judicial role.

Coniah's reign was the last of the Davidic kings until the historical coming of Christ (Luke 1:32-33; 2 Kings 24:6-16) He reigned three months and spent 37 years in bondage. (Jer.52:31-34)

3. The Sanhedrin bound and brought Jesus to Pilate with two criminal charges for Roman trial (Luke 23:1-2). They offered two charges against Roman law, neither of which was brought up in the Jewish trials.

The Jewish court could decree but would not execute the death penalty because of Roman rule over Israel. Israel is under the fourth cycle of national discipline (Deut.28).

Principle: The enemies of Jesus Christ are ruthless and cruel but their evil cannot destroy the advancement of the plan of God (over-ruling will of God).

4. The Jewish trials were a travesty of justice by one of the greatest judicial system of the world.

The Jewish judicial system was founded on the word of God by the only priest nation and theocracy of the world (Ex.19:6).

The primary cause of this travesty of justice was the apostate divine agency. Apostate religion had gained control of the judicial system and turned the objectivity of constitutional law into the subjectivity of evil persecution. (John 11:49-53) Jesus; (Acts 7: 54-60) Stephen; (Acts 12:1-3) James.

Here were 13 areas of injustice in the Jewish trials.

- Trial before a lone judge was forbidden.
- No trial on Sabbath, feast day, or any preceding day.
- No criminal trial could be begun nor conducted during the night, not even during the afternoon.
- Judges involved in condemning had to fast all day.
- The condemned could not be executed on the same day of sentencing.
- The property of the accused could not be confiscated but must be given to the heirs.
- So as to not influence the vote, voting had to go from junior to senior members of the court.
- The accused was not required to testify against self.
- Under the law of evidence and witness, the witness and evidence for the defense was to be called upon first.
- Perjury in a capital crime case carried the death penalty.
- A Capital penalty could not be pronounced on the same day as the trial.
- The court gave a verdict of condemnation without legal evidence against the accused.
- The court allowed police brutality, in court against an accused.