

**THE
(MIS) TRIAL
OF
JESUS**

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Scholars have long sought after some legal justification for the trial and verdict of Jesus Christ. But there is no excuse for the absolute disregard of Hebrew law and customs for Jewish courts that occurred when Jesus was tried.

Jesus actually went through five trials before two powers: one ecclesiastical (the religious rulers) and the other civil (the ruling Roman power). Under the rule of Rome the Jews were allowed to continue their ecclesiastical courts (the Sanhedrin), but could not pronounce punishments of physical injury or death without a supporting Roman verdict.

Knowing this, Christ's persecutors had to devise a plan to convict him of a charge worthy of death and do so in quick manner before objection could be made. He would be captured, tried and convicted during the night, between sunset and sunrise.

PROCEDURE FOR HEBREW TRIAL FOR CRIMES WORTHY OF DEATH:

1. A court could not meet for capital punishment during feast days (Matt 26:4-5).
2. Before a trial, the morning sacrifice had to be made.
3. All of the Sanhedrin (Judges) had to be present - 70 total (Num 11:16-17).
4. When convened, all witnesses were examined both in private and in the presence of the accused. No one could speak against the accused until someone spoke in his favor. All evidence had to be heard. All evidence had to be established in the mouth of two or three witnesses (Deut 17:6; 19:15). Accused could not be compelled to testify against himself. A confession alone was not acceptable for a basis for conviction.
5. After the hearing, there was a debate and voting by the body. If any member of the Sanhedrin was found to have had a preconceived idea about innocence or guilt, the charge was dismissed. If acquitted, the defendant was released immediately. If found guilty, the court would adjourn and reconvene the next day and re-discuss the evidence and vote a second time. The verdict of the court could not be unanimous. A unanimous verdict of guilt was an acquittal.

THE TRIAL OF JESUS:

1. The Sanhedrin decreed Jesus should be killed before his trial (Matt 26:1-5).
2. His arrest was made through the information of a traitor, in violation of the code of Leviticus 19:15-18. See Luke 22:1-6, 52-54.
3. He was arrested by members of the Sanhedrin (Luke 22:52-54).
4. The arrest was made without warrant or legal mandate for a trial.
5. His arrest was at night (Mark 14:17,27,32,43-46).

6. He was taken to the house of Annas, who was not the high priest at that time (John 18:12-14,19-23).
7. This trial was in a house, not in the Temple.
8. All the Sanhedrin were not present in Annas' house.
9. Jesus was struck physically by a member (John 18:22) and spat upon (Matt 26:67).
10. He was judged and bound over to the high priest (John 18:24).
11. The trial before Caiaphas, the high priest, was before the morning sacrifice.
12. The witnesses could not agree (Mark 14:56).
13. Jesus testified against himself (Mark 14:56, 60-63).
14. The high priest rent his clothes (Matt 26:65). An ordinary Israelite could tear his garment as a sign of grief, but priests were forbidden because their vestments were made according to specific directions from God and were figurative of his office.
15. The trial before Caiaphas was also in a house, not a Temple (Luke 22:54). Not only should a trial of this nature be held in the Temple, but any sentence of condemnation also had to be pronounced there.
16. Jesus had two trials by the Jews, only hours apart, not on separate days (Matt 27:1-2; John 18:28).
17. The high priest could never say the accused was innocent or guilty. Yet Caiaphas did (Matt 26:65).
18. Jesus was never afforded the opportunity for someone to speak in His favor (His disciples had forsaken Him, Mark 14:50).
19. He was found guilty upon His uncorroborated testimony.
20. All condemned Him to death (Mark 14:64).

The Sanhedrin found Jesus guilty of blasphemy and sentenced Him to death. They sent Him before the Roman governor, who could either affirm or reverse their findings.

Jesus is put before Pontius Pilate and charged with perverting the nation, refusing to pay the imperial tribute and declaring Himself King. Not the charge of blasphemy that He was found guilty of. Pilate finds no fault in Him (John 19:38). He should have been released immediately.

The accusers made an uproar and so Pilate sent Him before Herod, ruler of Galilee. Herod found no guilt worthy of death and sent Him back to Pilate. Pilate attempts to chastise and scourge Jesus and release Him to appease the people, but they will not accept it (John 19:7).

It was custom at Passover to release a prisoner. As a last resort Pilate offers to release Jesus instead of the scheduled release of Barabbas. They demand Jesus be crucified.

Unable to quiet the masses, Pilate "washes" his hands (Matt 27:24). Pilate knew God's law (Deut 21:1-9) in which if a man was murdered and the killer was not known, Israel's elders would wash their hands as a token of the innocence of

the people. Pilate was saying this is murder and I am innocent of it! Every Jew there accepted the condemnation for their nation (Matt 27:25). See Deut 19:10-13, Joshua 2:19 and II Samuel 1:16.

This they did, despite knowing that Jesus was the Messiah (John 11:49-52).

INNOCENCE OF CHRIST ATTESTED:

1. By Judas - Matthew 27:3-4
2. By Pilate's wife - Matthew 27:19
3. By Pilate - Matthew 27:24
4. By Herod - Luke 23:15
5. By Pilate - John 18:38
6. By the thief - Luke 23:41
7. By the centurion - Luke 23:47

FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY:

EXODUS 12:46
NUMBERS 9:12
PSALMS 2:1-2
PSALMS 22:1, 7-8, 16-18
PSALMS 69:21
ISAIAH 53:7-12
MICAHA 5:1
ZECHARIAH 11:12-13