

Lesson 7. Trials, Crucifixion, and Burial of Jesus

The Trials of Jesus

- The chronology of the events following the betrayal and arrest of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane indicates that six separate trials were held.

The Jewish Trials

1. The trial before Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas (John 18:12-24) was held immediately after the arrest of Jesus. Annas had been a High Priest, but was not in that position at this time. This was not a legal trial since it was the High Priest who was the judge, not Annas. It was also illegal because it was held at night, in violation of Jewish law. Jewish law was also by-passed since there was no indictment, no witnesses heard, and no counsel for the accused. Annas sent Jesus to Caiaphas.
2. The trial before Caiaphas was also held illegally at night (Matthew 26:57-66). Many false witnesses were heard and finally two agreed that “This man stated, I am able to destroy the temple of God and to rebuild it in three days.” Jesus acknowledged that He is the Christ, the Son of God and was deemed to be deserving of death upon this confession.
3. The trial before the whole Council of elders, chief priests, and scribes took place in the morning (Matthew 27:1-2; Mark 15:1; Luke 22:66-71). Again, it was illegal, being held on a holy day during the feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread. Jesus affirmed that He is the Christ and the Son of God. They took Him to Pilate.

☒ Conclusion of the Jewish Trials: **Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God!**

The Roman Trials

4. At the trial before Pilate (Matthew 27:11-14; Mark 15:1-5; Luke 23:1-7; John 18:28-38) Jesus was accused of forbidding tribute to Caesar, misleading the nation, and claiming to be the King of the Jews. Jesus affirmed that He is the King of the Jews. Pilate pronounced Jesus innocent of any legal wrongdoing, but learning that Jesus was a Galilean, rather than setting Him free, sent Him to Herod who had jurisdiction over Galilee.
5. At the trial before Herod (Luke 23:8-12) his only desire was to see Jesus do a miracle. Jesus did not answer any questions. Herod had Jesus clothed in a brightly elegant robe and sent Him back to Pilate.
6. The final trial before Pilate (Matthew 27:15-26; Mark 15:6-15; Luke 23:13-25; John 18:39-19:16) resulted in a second pronouncement of innocence. However, Pilate yielded to the demands of the people to “Crucify Him” and allowed Him to be put to death. Note: A sign on the cross declared His “crime”: “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews”

☒ Conclusion of the Roman Trials: **Jesus is the King!**

The Crucifixion of Jesus: His Death Was Certain

Scripture

Matthew 27:27-56; Mark 15:16-41; Luke 23:26-49; John 19:16-30

This may seem obvious to most, but some go to great lengths to deny the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

I. Jesus was first whipped and beaten as He had predicted.

- A. The Jews were limited by law to 40 lashes (39 under legalism), but the Romans had no such limitations.
- B. Isaiah 52:14 "*His appearance was marred more than any man,*"

II. He was nailed to a cross and crucified.

- A. Crucifixion was first practiced by the Persians, then the Greeks under Alexander, and finally, the Romans.
- B. This type of death was reserved for slaves and traitors to Rome, not Roman citizens.
- C. The Jews normally carried out capital punishment by stoning, burning, beheading, or strangulation.
 - ❖ This should cause us to marvel at Psalm 22, written by David about 1,000 years before Jesus was born. The Psalmist speaks of suffering at the hands of his enemies in terms which bring to mind crucifixion (:12-18). Jesus cited this Psalm while He was on the cross (Matthew 27:46).
- D. Victims on a cross did not escape with their lives.

III. The soldiers found Jesus dead on the cross, but still pierced His side.

John 19:30-35

Blood and water came from His side, further confirming that He had already died.

IV. A Centurion gave his coroner's report affirming the death of Jesus on the cross.

Mark 15:44, 45.

The Burial of Jesus: The Setting for the Resurrection

Scripture

Matthew 27:57-66; Mark 15:42-47; Luke 23:50-56; John 19:31-42

I. Burial preparation

- A. The body was washed.
- B. The body was wrapped in clean, plain linen clothes.
- C. The body was covered with about 100 pounds of spices.

(History records that the body of Gamaliel was prepared with 86 pounds of spices. At the death of Herod, 500 servants were used to carry the spices.

II. The body of Jesus was placed in a tomb.

- A. Roman practice was to leave victims of crucifixion for birds and beasts to devour, or to throw the bodies into a pit.
- B. Critics once cited the burial in a tomb as evidence against the Biblical accounts. However, in 1968, archeologists found the tomb of Yohanan Ben Ha'galgal, a Jew who also had been crucified with nails yet buried in a tomb.
- C. The tomb was a cave cut in rock. (Mark 15:46; Luke 23:53)

III. A stone closed the tomb.

- A. The stone sealed the tomb and protected the body from both men and beasts.
- B. Matthew 27:60 records "a very large stone." Luke 16:4 records "an extremely large stone."
- C. The stone was most likely a large, heavy, disc shaped rock which could be rolled along a groove at the front of the tomb.
- D. The early Greek Bezae manuscript contains a parenthetical statement at Mark 16:4; "a stone which 20 men could not roll away."
- E. It has been estimated that a stone to cover the usual 4 1/2 to 5 foot doorway would weigh about 1 1/2 to 2 tons.

IV. The Roman seal was placed upon the tomb. (Matthew 27:66)

- A. The authority and power of Rome was indicated by the seal.
- B. The seal was probably a cord or string stretched across the stone and sealed at each end with wax imprinted with the Roman seal. (compare Daniel 6:17)
- C. Roman law forbade the breaking of such a seal. To violate this law resulted in death.
- D. The seal was specifically designed to prevent vandalism or robbery of the tomb.

V. Roman soldiers stood guard at the tomb. (Matthew 27:62-66)

- A. The guard was put in place to prevent a fake resurrection!
- B. The guard consisted of 4-16 men, efficient fighters, well trained, and well disciplined.
Matthew 28:11 "some of the guard came into the city and reported to the priests."
- C. The responsibility of the soldiers was to guard the tomb with their lives.

➤ The foolishness of man is seen in the events preceding the resurrection. In providing security against a fake resurrection, additional witnesses were present to affirm the fact of the empty tomb!