



Jesus Christ's Six Trials

The Lord Jesus Christ was tried six times. With the exception of one short interrogation, these six trials were unfair, fraudulent and unjust according to the law at that time. The Lord Jesus Christ was on trial – the unique Person of the universe, undiminished deity and true humanity combined in one Person forever. He had committed no act of personal sin.

Believers suffer for many reasons, two of which are because they get out of line and are disciplined by the Lord and because they have a loved one who is suffering and they suffer because their loved ones are suffering. The sufferings of Christ were designed to give a greater appreciation of the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Heb. 12.

One of the greatest systems of jurisprudence was used to condemn this One who was not only innocent, but who in His humanity was absolutely perfect. Disgraceful as this was, it is important to realize that all of this injustice was in the plan of God and out of this impersonation of justice came our so great salvation. Rom. 8:28; Heb. 2:3.

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:28 NASB)

how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, (Hebrews 2:3 NASB)

Important functions of human government are the policeman and the courtroom. This broke down completely and strangely enough when the only perfect, spotless, sinless person on earth was present, Jesus Christ. There were six trials, or perhaps more accurately, six aspects of the trial of Jesus Christ.

Who was on trial? Jesus Christ. He had no sin nature. The sin of Adam was not imputed to Him. He had never committed one act of personal sin. He was continuously indwelt and filled by the Holy Spirit. He had done nothing but absolute good.

In fact, some could come into that Sanhedrin courtroom and say: He raised me to life. I was lame and now I am walking. I was blind and now I am seeing. I was deaf and now I am hearing. I was dumb and now I am speaking. I was dead and now I am living.

One of the finest systems of law, the Mosaic Law, and its system of court justice was used to condemn One who was not only innocent, but absolutely perfect! However, all things worked together for good according to God's plan. The trials were prophesied by Isaiah in Isaiah 53:7-8.

"He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth. By oppression and judgment He was taken away; And as for His generation, who considered That He was cut off out of the land of the living For the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due? " (Isaiah 53:7-8, NASB)

Circumstances Existing During Our Lord's Trials

Annas and His Temple Bazaar

In 15 AD, Annas had surrendered his high priestly office to take over the Bazaar of Annas. In the temple on feast days, he sold animals for sacrifice and changed currency for Jews from outlying provinces. The



Jews had to bring their animals in for inspection to see if they were fit to be offered as a sacrifice. A fee was charged for this inspection. Many animals were travel stained and turned down. Then the Jews would have to buy one of the Bazaar's animals and pay another fee. Then they had to pay a fee to get their money changed into temple script. The temple bazaar was going full blast raking in money hand over fist.

The Position of Annas

Having resigned the high priesthood, Annas put one of his sons in office as high priest. This son died, so he put in another son and he also died within a year in office. Then, the Romans put his son-in-law Caiaphas in the office of acting high priest. However, Annas was still officially the high priest and still retained the power of high priest. Remember this is 29 or 30 AD. He has been in this temple bazaar "business" for 15 years.

The Hatred of Annas for Jesus

There were two cleansings of the temple, one at the beginning of our Lord's ministry and one at the end. At the beginning of His ministry, our Lord upset Annas' bazaar in John 12:14-16. Do you think Annas liked that? He was furious. John 2:18-19. This is the very claim that the false witnesses agreed upon in Matthew 26 in the trial of Jesus under Caiaphas.

"And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables; and to those who were selling the doves He said, 'Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a place of business.' " (John 2:14-16, NASB)

"The Jews then said to Him, 'What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?' Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' " (John 2:18-19, NASB)

At the end of His earthly ministry in Matthew 21:12-17, the Monday before Christ was crucified, He cleansed the temple again. How do you suppose this set with Annas? Would this religious political boss give Jesus a fair trial in a few days? Not on your life. Keep in mind that the heat was building up. This was the last week before the Passover on Friday when Jesus Christ really ripped those religious leaders apart. In fact, Matthew 23 was our Lord's last public discourse where He denounces these scribes and Pharisees with His scathing Seven Woes. In Matthew 24-25, our Lord gives the Olivet Discourse which was a private session with His disciples.

Beginning of the Official Movement Against Jesus Christ.

On Wednesday in Matthew 26:1-5, this is an illegal meeting of the chief priests and the Sanhedrin. They were to meet in the temple, but instead, they met in the courtyard of Caiaphas's house. It was a secret meeting and was summoned in the evening. The law said that the Sanhedrin had to meet between sunup and sundown according to the accounts of the four Gospels.

This meeting was called so that the high priest might sanction officially the murder of Jesus Christ. It was illegal since they had judged the case before there was any trial, accusation or defense. However, note Matthew 26:5. They chose to wait until after the Passover feast. It didn't work out that way, however!

"But they were saying, 'Not during the festival, otherwise a riot might occur among the people.' " (Matthew 26:5, NASB)



The Betrayal of Judas

In Matthew 26:14-16, Judas Iscariot went to the chief priests where he received 30 pieces of silver as payment for his betrayal. Then he watched for a chance to betray our Lord. What was behind all this? Why did the religious leaders need a betrayer? They knew who Jesus Christ was. They needed a formal indictment or accusation to enter a Roman court. The Roman court demanded that no man could be brought to trial without an accusation made against Him. They had been looking for the right man for months to do this dirty work.

"Then one of the twelve, named Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, 'What are you willing to give me to betray Him to you?' And they weighed out thirty pieces of silver to him. From then on he began looking for a good opportunity to betray Jesus." (Matthew 26:14-16, NASB)

Judas was willing to make a formal indictment against Christ. He thus agreed to appear in court as the star witness. Mark 14:11 says that they were glad when they saw that this would fill the bill. The chief priests and scribes were plotting to murder our Lord, but also feared how the followers of Jesus Christ might react. Remember the fear of man brings a snare. They wanted to build a case without interference or contradiction. Luke 22:2.

"They were glad when they heard this, and promised to give him money. And he began seeking how to betray Him at an opportune time." (Mark 14:11, NASB)

"The chief priests and the scribes were seeking how they might put Him to death; for they were afraid of the people." (Luke 22:2, NASB)

The Passover Supper

In Matthew 26:17-46, the Passover Supper was prepared. Judas left to round up the band of soldiers. Judas probably left the meal at about 3:00 pm or 9:00 pm. Then, Christ gave the Upper Room Discourse in John 14-17 and this took about two hours. It ended about 10:00 or 11:00 pm. They all left the upper room to go into the garden at about 11:00 pm or 12:00 am and were in prayer for one hour.

Coming Into the Garden

Two military groups were involved in the apprehension and capture of the Lord Jesus Christ. There were Jewish soldiers who were part of the Temple Guard and Roman soldiers. It was the custom of the Roman authorities to station groups or bands of soldiers in the temple area and these were under the control of the high priest to keep order on feast days.

Judas had received a delegated authority to lead the people out from the great high priest. Judas betrayed our Lord with a long kiss of affection. Judas also made a formal accusation of Jesus Christ before the soldiers in the garden. The soldiers then arrested Him and brought Him in for trial. Matt. 26:47-48.

"While He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, came up accompanied by a large crowd with swords and clubs, who came from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now he who was betraying Him gave them a sign, saying, 'Whomever I kiss, He is the one; seize Him.'" (Matthew 26:47-48, NASB)

The Six Trials of Jesus Christ

Our Lord had to stand trial before Annas the political boss of Jerusalem, Caiaphas the son-in-law of Annas, then again before Caiaphas, then before Pilate, then Herod and back to Pilate. The three trials under Annas and under Caiaphas were religious trials. These trials were grossly illegal. Consider who



was putting Jesus on trial - the religious leaders of Judaism, conspiring to commit murder. There were also three civil trials - two held under Pilate and one held under Herod. Matthew 27:1-2 marks the end of the religious trials and signals the beginning of the civil trials.

"Now when morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people conferred together against Jesus to put Him to death; and they bound Him, and led Him away and delivered Him to Pilate the governor." (Matthew 27:1-2, NASB)

Strange, isn't it, that some of the greatest evil deeds in history have been done by religious people. Religion is the worst thing that ever hit this world. There is a tremendous amount of religion and all without Christ. Christianity is not a religion, but a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24.

"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Corinthians 5:21, NASB)

"and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed." (1 Peter 2:24, NASB)

Religion is salvation by works, which is impossible to save. Man can't work for his salvation or even work to keep salvation after he believes in Him. No church can save, no baptismal pool, no golden rule, no ten commandments or even living by the Sermon on the Mount. Others think they will get to heaven on the basis of their sincerity.

The perfectly sinless Jesus Christ was on trial who had no sin nature, therefore, the sin of Adam could not be imputed to Him at physical birth, He had never committed one act of personal sin, He was the first human being to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit, the only human being to be filled by the Holy Spirit 100% of the time, and He had done nothing but absolute good.

The First Trial - By Annas

A high priest was a judge, but since Annas was not performing the function of a high priest, he was not to judge. This made the first trial illegal. A former high priest, Annas was now the religious and political boss in Jerusalem. Since Annas was the wealthiest man in town and the political boss, he ran the show. As the political boss, all matters had to be cleared with him before going to court. What he said was law. He was engaged in organized crime activities in the Jerusalem area and controlled the money changing setup in the temple. Annas hated Christ. His advice was to take Him and get rid of Him! John 18:12-14.

So the Roman cohort and the commander and the officers of the Jews, arrested Jesus and bound Him, and led Him to Annas first; for he was father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. Now Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was expedient for one man to die on behalf of the people. (John 18:12-14 NASB)

The people who brought Jesus to trial in the first cases were all religious people - the Sanhedrin, (chief priests, scribes and Pharisees). It is staggering to realize how great a percentage of evil deeds in mankind's history have been committed by religious leaders and in the name of God. None equal the infamous trials of Christ.

Covered by their sanctimonious veneer of piety, these religious people brazenly and efficiently plotted and secured the death of Jesus Christ. These people would put you to shame when it came to open loud prayer activity so everyone could hear them and understand their great spiritual status before God. John 18:19-24.



"The high priest then questioned Jesus about His disciples, and about His teaching. Jesus answered him, 'I have spoken openly to the world; I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and I spoke nothing in secret. 'Why do you question Me? Question those who have heard what I spoke to them; they know what I said.' When He had said this, one of the officers standing nearby struck Jesus, saying, 'Is that the way You answer the high priest?'" Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify of the wrong; but if rightly, why do you strike Me?" So Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest." (John 18:19-24, NASB)

The result of the first trial was that Annas sent the Lord Jesus Christ bound to Caiaphas. Matt. 26:57.

Those who had seized Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were gathered together. (Matthew 26:57 NASB)

The Second Trial - By Caiaphas

The second trial was held at night, which was contrary to Jewish jurisprudence. Caiaphas, the high priest, recognized the need to find a scapegoat for the anti-Roman activities that were on-going in Israel at the time. He knew Rome would demand that he do something about it. He had already decided that Jesus was guilty and would serve very nicely as the scapegoat. Matt. 26:59.

"Now the chief priests and the whole Council kept trying to obtain false testimony against Jesus, so that they might put Him to death." (Matthew 26:59, NASB)

Caiaphas was not a prophet, but he inadvertently prophesied the death of Jesus Christ in John 11:50-52. He was an evil practical man who saw the need to find a "patsy" for the anti-Roman activities in Israel. In his policy of expediency, he contended that it was better for one man to die than to have the establishment lose all their ill-gotten power and wealth. The Pharisees would therefore use Jesus Christ as the designated "culprit." This is the greatest example of Satan's world system of evil whereby the perfect, sinless Savior was condemned as a master criminal by the master criminals themselves.

"nor do you take into account that it is expedient for you that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation not perish." Now he did not say this on his own initiative, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but in order that He might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad." (John 11:50-52, NASB)

If Caiaphas could show that the anti-Roman culprits had been found by the Jews and that they were cleaning things up, Rome would not need to step in and use a heavy hand to restore order. He was going to finesse the situation.

According to Deuteronomy 19:15, the Jews needed two witnesses to draw an indictment according to the Mosaic Law. They only needed two people to be pressured enough and threatened enough to agree to their lies. We do not know exactly how many false witnesses there were, but there were far more than two.

"“A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed.” (Deuteronomy 19:15, NASB)

One after another, various witnesses stood and told their lies, and though the court tried desperately to get two of them to agree, it was impossible. What would you say or do if you heard lies like this about yourself? You'd say something! This is another proof that He did not have an old sin nature. He didn't



seek to justify Himself. He let the Holy Spirit control Him. Here is a good lesson on when to use the tongue and when not to use it.

Have you ever had anyone gossip about you and try to defame your name? This is a test of your spiritual maturity. Stay in fellowship and don't get bitter. Gossip is liquid hell. The telephone extends it. Many today hate certain ministers of the Word. But look at the Lord. He wasn't disturbed. He wasn't upset.

By the way, what was wrong with this high priest? He was loaded with religion and couldn't see the grace of God. God provided our so great salvation without your help, my help, the help of a baptismal pool, the help of a church roll, without the Golden Rule, without the ten commandments, without keeping the Sermon on the Mount or any system of ethics.

Finally, two witnesses agreed in one area and out of this they tried to form an indictment. Matt. 26:60-61; John 2:21.

They did not find any, even though many false witnesses came forward. But later on two came forward, and said, "This man stated, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to rebuild it in three days.'" (Matthew 26:60-61 NASB)

But He was speaking of the temple of His body. (John 2:21 NASB)

Our Lord was not talking about the actual temple building, but to His coming death and resurrection. He was actually prophesying how they would succeed in bringing about His death, but on the third day He would rise from the dead.

Our Lord's second trial was illegal for a number of reasons. It was held at night, contrary to Jewish Law, but the next day was the Passover and they wanted to get their dirty work out of the way so they could observe the Passover with clean hands. There was no bona fide indictment. He had no defense attorney. The prosecution sought false witnesses against Jesus. It was held during the Holy Days when court is never to meet, according to Jewish law. The court was prejudiced and there was violence in the courtroom. Jesus Christ stayed silent during the trial, which fulfilled a prophecy of Isaiah 53:7.

"He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth." (Isaiah 53:7, NASB)

The Lord Jesus Christ put the whole matter in the hands of the Father. He remained perfectly oriented to the Father's plan. Our Lord's response was emphatic. He also made reference to His coming resurrection, ascension, session, and the Second Advent. Matt. 26:63-64.

"But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest said to Him, "I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God." Jesus said to him, "You have said it yourself; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you will see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN." " (Matthew 26:63-64, NASB)

Under Jewish law, no one can condemn himself by his own statements, apart from a confession of guilt. Jesus did not speak blasphemy and did not make a confession of guilt. He made a clear statement of fact. Caiaphas took a clear statement of fact that did not condemn Jesus, but turned it into a "confession" of blasphemy, which it was not. Matt. 26:65-66.

"Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has blasphemed! What further need do we have of witnesses? Behold, you have now heard the blasphemy; what do you think?" They answered, "He deserves death!" (Matthew 26:65-66, NASB)



The penalty of blasphemy was death. Keep in mind that this was a courtroom under one of the best systems of court procedure ever devised – the Mosaic Law. Matt. 26:67. The Caiaphas court now allowed violence to ensue contrary to Roman or Jewish law. The Jewish leaders left little doubt that they had completely rejected Jesus Christ as their Messiah as prophesied in Isaiah 53:3.

Then they spat in His face and beat Him with their fists; and others slapped Him, (Matthew 26:67 NASB)

He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. (Isaiah 53:3 NASB)

Our Lord remained unmoved as one after another stepped forward without interference from anyone and punched Him and slapped Him repeatedly and spit on Him. Have you even been spit upon by an angry person? How did you feel?

Slapping seems milder than the punching and spitting, however, none of us would appreciate a slap from an angry person. Envision the scene where the learned and dignified reverends of the religious world have started a brawl on the courtroom floor.

Through it all, our Lord did not move away from the blows or react in any way. He simply took the unrestrained beating. Jesus Christ stay focused on the Father's plan through the physical pain and remained sinless while remaining filled with the Holy Spirit. He knew He had yet to complete His work on the Cross where He would suffer spiritual death to pay for the sins of mankind.

If our Lord had lost His temper, there would be no salvation! He remained sinless in spite of the most intense punishment and temptations to stop it all. There was sarcasm and mocking in addition to the physical beating. The religious leaders were in a state of pure hatred toward the very Messiah they had been waiting for. In the most extreme example of irony, their Messiah stood before them taking their beatings. Luke 22:64-65.

"and they blindfolded Him and were asking Him, saying, "Prophecy, who is the one who hit You?" And they were saying many other things against Him, blaspheming." (Luke 22:64-65, NASB)

The Third Trial - By The Council of Elders

This third trial by the religious Council of Elders was held early the next morning and only took 15 minutes. The council, made up of elders, chief priests and scribes suddenly realized that the second trial at night was illegal. So they gathered together and decided to make it a legal third trial during daylight. But this was a Jewish holy day and Jewish law stated that there were to be no trials on feast days, therefore this trial was also illegal. At this third trial, Jesus gave them the supreme sign that He was the Messiah, but they rejected Him. Matt. 27:1; Luke 22:66-71.

"Now when morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people conferred together against Jesus to put Him to death;" (Matthew 27:1, NASB)

When it was day, the Council of elders of the people assembled, both chief priests and scribes, and they led Him away to their council chamber, saying, "If You are the Christ, tell us." But He said to them, "If I tell you, you will not believe; and if I ask a question, you will not answer. "But from now on THE SON OF MAN WILL BE SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND of the power OF GOD." And they all said, "Are You the Son of God, then?" And He said to them, "Yes, I am." Then they said, "What further need do we have of testimony? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth." (Luke 22:66-71 NASB)

Realizing that it was also a feast period of Passover and Unleavened Bread, they could not sentence



someone on a holy day according to their law, so they decided to turn Him over to Pontius Pilate.

During this time, Judas had committed suicide by hanging himself after returning the 30 pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders. The rope broke and he was dashed to pieces on some rocks below. Matt. 27:3-5; Acts 1:18-19.

"Then when Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that He had been condemned, he felt remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, 'I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.' But they said, 'What is that to us? See to that yourself!' And he threw the pieces of silver into the temple sanctuary and departed; and he went away and hanged himself." (Matthew 27:3-5, NASB)

"(Now this man acquired a field with the price of his wickedness, and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his intestines gushed out. And it became known to all who were living in Jerusalem; so that in their own language that field was called Hakeldama, that is, Field of Blood.)" (Acts 1:18-19, NASB)

Notice that before Judas committed suicide, he made a confession, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." Judas knew the Son of God was innocent. The one who was to have been the star witness in the trial tells the religious leaders this. Note their answer! Oh, the hardness of a human heart blinded by sin and religion.

The Fourth Trial - By Pontius Pilate

This was our Lord's first appearance before Pilate. Note that the meeting with Caiaphas was in the morning immediately after 6:00 am and probably took only 15 minutes. They were in a hurry.

Pilate was born in Seville, Spain. He did not live in Jerusalem, but lived in Caesarea, a Roman town. He always went down to Jerusalem on special feast days with a band of soldiers to help keep the order during the feast. Note that if Pilate had not been under investigation by the Roman Senate, he most likely would have railroaded our Lord through as he usually did for a little money under the table. It would have been a gross injustice, but this wouldn't have bothered Pilate. During his time as ruler he had robbed the temple treasury. To gain favor, he had built an aqueduct to bring water into the city of Jerusalem - sort of a public works project.

During his rule, a number of Jewish revolts took place because of his injustice. He squelched this by killing a number of Jews each time. Consequently, he was known for his inhuman cruelty even among the Romans. So, Pilate was under investigation at this time by the Roman Senate. Thus, even if it was the only time in his life, he was going to try to give a fair trial. If he didn't, he might lose his job or neck or both. This is what really baffled the Jews. Pilate usually railroaded their requests right through. Finally, he got so bad that in AD 36, Pilate was banished to Gaul where he too committed suicide.

It's important to understand the relationship of Roman law to this fourth trial. Rome had not given the Jews the right to execute any criminals. Jews could try a man in their courts, but Romans had to try a man when the Jews wanted to put a man to death. Often, the civil trial was for the review and approval of the Jewish accusation. The Roman government was not interested in Jewish ceremonies or rules. They would not examine Jesus Christ according to the Mosaic Law. The Jewish charge was that our Lord was guilty of blasphemy. He claimed to be the Son of God. Matt. 26:63-65.

"But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest said to Him, 'I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God.' Jesus said to him, 'You have said it yourself; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you will see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and



COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN." Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has blasphemed! What further need do we have of witnesses? Behold, you have now heard the blasphemy;" (Matthew 26:63-65, NASB)

However, Roman law could not condemn a man to death for blasphemy. They didn't care if Christ claimed to be the Messiah or not. Their paganism had no use for Jewish trappings. So this charge was thrown out of court. Thus, the Jewish leaders had to think up a new charge. They didn't have much time because He was put on the Cross at 9:00 am. Every part of the trials before Pilate, then Herod, then back to Pilate bordered on the ridiculous.

This was the day the memorial supper would be eaten. They wanted to keep their hands "clean" in order to eat the Passover meal that night. The Passover spoke of the death of Christ on the Cross. Eating the lamb was a picture of believing in Christ, yet they had rejected Him. The Jews took Jesus to the Roman governor in an attempt to sidestep Jewish law concerning the holy days.

Pilate was waiting a few minutes after 6:00 am and went from the Praetorium to meet them. Pilate usually didn't leave the bench. Remember he is under investigation. Pilate had to go outside the Praetorium because the Jews could not come inside a Gentile dwelling on a holy day. He wanted to know what the indictment was. Pilate asked, "What is your accusation?" What was their accusation? The conclusion of the other trial. It was the charge of blasphemy. Did they mention it? No!

The Jews were upset by Pilate's question because they had been unable to frame an indictment. The Jews are trying to get Pilate to pass judgment without investigating the evidence. There was no evidence to establish a charge against Jesus. They wanted to condemn Jesus without a trial. With typical hypocrisy, they posed as righteous men who would never think of arresting an innocent man. They knew the blasphemy charge would not be accepted. In logic, this is called "begging the question." They were trying to railroad Him through. John 18:28-30.

"Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas into the Praetorium, and it was early; and they themselves did not enter into the Praetorium so that they would not be defiled, but might eat the Passover. Therefore Pilate went out to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this Man?" They answered and said to him, "If this Man were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him to you."" (John 18:28-30, NASB)

They do not mention blasphemy because it was a theological problem which would never hold up before a Roman governor. Had blasphemy been included in the accusation, they knew Pilate would have hauled them all into a Roman court. They deliberately lied to Pilate. They knew the Romans had only one type of worship - Caesar worship. The Romans believed that Caesar was God. We know the charge of treason was a lie because of what Jesus said when these same religious people brought Him a gold piece. Luke 23:2; Matt. 22:21.

And they began to accuse Him, saying, "We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, and saying that He Himself is Christ, a King." (Luke 23:2 NASB)

They said to Him, "Caesar's." Then He said to them, "Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's (taxes); and to God the things that are God's." (Matthew 22:21 NASB)

We know from history that the high priests and the other religious leaders were the ones who were trying to get around paying their income tax to Rome. They were professional tax evaders. They were implying that Jesus Christ was setting Himself up as a king and trying to lead in a revolt against Rome. They wanted to convince Pilate that Jesus Christ was a rival to Caesar and a dangerous revolutionary.



Pilate was a shrewd leader and remained calm and in control. Pontius Pilate was the only person who gave Jesus Christ an honest, objective hearing and cross-examination. 1 Tim. 6:13.

I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate, (1 Timothy 6:13 NASB)

Pilate had the discernment to observe the innocence of Jesus, but not the character to free Him. Pilate would not pass a blanket charge on this man so he said, in effect, "If you don't have an accusation, have a trial and get one." This put the Jews on the spot. They had to come up with something in a hurry, so they accused our Lord of treason. How did they spell out the charge of treason? They said Jesus Christ was forbidding others to give tribute to Caesar. They tried to make it look like He was trying to overthrow the power of Rome and establish Himself as King. The charge was, of course, a lie. Luke 20:19-25.

"The scribes and the chief priests tried to lay hands on Him that very hour, and they feared the people; for they understood that He spoke this parable against them. So they watched Him, and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, in order that they might catch Him in some statement, so that they could deliver Him to the rule and the authority of the governor. They questioned Him, saying, "Teacher, we know that You speak and teach correctly, and You are not partial to any, but teach the way of God in truth. "Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" But He detected their trickery and said to them, "Show Me a denarius. Whose likeness and inscription does it have?" They said, "Caesar's." And He said to them, "Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."'" (Luke 20:19-25, NASB)

Now the Jews used the law, but they did not execute the law. Instead of having Him stoned to death (the Jewish form of capital punishment), they decided to use a Gentile (Roman) form of capital punishment – crucifixion. John 18:31.

So Pilate said to them, "Take Him yourselves, and judge Him according to your law." The Jews said to him, "We are not permitted to put anyone to death," (John 18:31 NASB)

Pilate now had the charge and he had to act upon it or be in hot water with the Roman Senate. His first question implied both ignorance and exasperation. His second question was a search for information. This was the question that received an answer. We have only a part of what Jesus said, but it is very important. John 18:32-36.

"to fulfill the word of Jesus which He spoke, signifying by what kind of death He was about to die. Therefore Pilate entered again into the Praetorium, and summoned Jesus and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?" Pilate answered, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered You to me; what have You done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm."'" (John 18:32-36, NASB)

Satan is the ruler of this world. It would be impossible for Jesus to have a kingdom of this world until Satan's defeat at the Cross. This does not mean that Christ will not have an earthly kingdom, but that it would not be established on earth at that time.

The kingdom of Christ on earth awaits the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. In the meantime, He has a kingdom of regenerate people, known as the Church or Body of Christ. For the Church Age, the rulership of Christ is invisible and spiritual. Jesus did not say; "My kingdom is not in this world," for



Jesus does have a kingdom in this world during the Church Age. Believers are in this world, but not of this world. John 17:16-19.

"They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. (John 17:16-19 NASB)

Jesus Christ had a private conversation with Pilate and gave him the Gospel. This was His good confession before Pontius Pilate. Pilate had negative volition. Those who are the recipients of the truth of salvation, become believers in Jesus Christ, and therefore, hear the voice of the Son of God. Today the voice of the Lord is the Bible, the Word of God. John 18:37.

Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." (John 18:37 NASB)

When Pilate asked about truth, he was being sarcastic. Pilate did not desire an answer to the question he had asked, and so indicated it by leaving immediately before an answer could be given. Here was the first unbiased, unprejudiced examination. Here was the only impartial judge. What was Pilate's verdict? This was the first declaration of innocence. The situation was getting too hot to handle so when Pilate heard that Christ was a Galilean, he saw a way to get off the hook. Since Pilate could find no guilt in Him, he sent Him to Herod. John 18:38; Luke 23:5-7.

Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews and said to them, "I find no guilt in Him. (John 18:38 NASB)

But they kept on insisting, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching all over Judea, starting from Galilee even as far as this place." When Pilate heard it, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. And when he learned that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who himself also was in Jerusalem at that time. (Luke 23:5-7 NASB)

The Fifth Trial - By Herod Antipas (Herod the Tetrarch)

Herod Antipas had jurisdiction over this entire area and happened to be in Jerusalem at the time. Some additional background on Herod indicates he was lucky to still be alive. His father had murdered all of his brothers and mother. Getting this case really puffed up Herod's ego. It turned on his ego switch. There was constant competition between Pilate and Herod. However, the difference of their rule was like the mayor of a small town compared to a mayor of a large vibrant city.

Herod was excited at seeing Jesus because he had heard of His reputation for performing miracles. Hoping for entertainment, he attempted to induce Jesus to perform one of His miracles. When Jesus refused, Herod angrily ordered Him tortured. In Luke 23:11, the phrase "treating Him with contempt" means they tortured Him. Herod found our Lord innocent as related by Pilate in Luke 23:15. This is the second declaration of innocence. Herod then sent Jesus back to Pilate for His last trial. Luke 23:8-11.

"Now Herod was very glad when he saw Jesus; for he had wanted to see Him for a long time, because he had been hearing about Him and was hoping to see some sign performed by Him. And he questioned Him at some length; but He answered him nothing. And the chief priests and the scribes were standing there, accusing Him vehemently. And Herod with his soldiers, after treating Him with contempt and mocking Him, dressed Him in a gorgeous robe and sent Him back to Pilate." (Luke 23:8-11, NASB)

""No, nor has Herod, for he sent Him back to us; and behold, nothing deserving death has been done by



Him." (Luke 23:15, NASB)

In the past, Pilate and Herod did not like each other. This mutual crisis involving Jesus Christ and the Pharisees resulted in them becoming friends. Luke 23:12.

"Now Herod and Pilate became friends with one another that very day; for before they had been enemies with each other." (Luke 23:12, NASB)

The Sixth and Final Trial - By Pontius Pilate

This was our Lord's second appearance before Pilate. In Pilate's previous trial of Jesus, Pilate had declared to the princes and rulers of the Jews that Jesus Christ was innocent. In this second time before Pilate, he called Him the "King of the Jews." Pilate declares that he is innocent. This is the third declaration of innocence. Jesus had convinced Pilate of His birth, His status, and the facts concerning Himself. This is a perfect example of negative volition in action. John 19:13; Luke 23:14.

Therefore when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out, and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. (John 19:13 NASB)

"and said to them, "You brought this man to me as one who incites the people to rebellion, and behold, having examined Him before you, I have found no guilt in this man regarding the charges which you make against Him." (Luke 23:14, NASB)

Pilate now made an ingenious attempt to release Jesus on the basis of the custom of the Passover. Realizing that Jesus was innocent, Pilate wanted to make it possible to release Jesus as an innocent person, get himself off the hook, and help the religious leaders save face. However, these Jewish leaders were so filled with hatred that they would not let up until Jesus was executed.

Then Pilate offered a solution where He would have Christ severely scourged and then release either Him or Barabbas, whomever they wanted. As a judge, Pilate declared Christ innocent, but as a politician he worked a scheme to release Christ or Barabbas. Luke 23:16.

"Therefore I will punish Him and release Him." (Luke 23:16, NASB)

Scourging was used as a prelude to crucifixion and as a form of interrogation. Because Jesus had been pronounced innocent by Pilate, this scourging was not for interrogation nor was it as a prelude to crucifixion. Pilate was trying to avert crucifixion and was using the intense scourging to try to convince the Pharisees that that would be enough punishment. Jesus was literally skinned alive with a whip. Legally our Lord should have been released here. Pilate declared that beating was as far as he would go. "I won't put Him to death." This is the fourth declaration of innocence, but the religious mob yelled, "Crucify, crucify!" Pilate then stated that he found no guilt in our Lord. This was the fifth declaration of innocence. John 19:1-6.

"Pilate then took Jesus and scourged Him. And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and put a purple robe on Him; and they began to come up to Him and say, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and to give Him slaps in the face. Pilate came out again and said to them, "Behold, I am bringing Him out to you so that you may know that I find no guilt in Him." Jesus then came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Behold, the Man!" So when the chief priests and the officers saw Him, they cried out saying, "Crucify, crucify!" Pilate said to them, "Take Him yourselves and crucify Him, for I find no guilt in Him." (John 19:1-6, NASB)

In John 18:40, calling Barabbas a "robber" is very tame in the English. The Greek indicates that he was a habitual professional criminal, possibly the number one man of the crime syndicate in that area. He



was vile in every way, yet the religious crowd in their hatred was demanding his release.

So they cried out again, saying, "Not this Man, but Barabbas." Now Barabbas was a robber. (John 18:40 NASB)

The Jewish leaders ordered the crucifixion of Jesus even though pronounced innocent by the highest courts of that day. Acts 3:13.

"The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus, the one whom you delivered and disowned in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him. (Acts 3:13 NASB)

Pilate was determined to release Him, even anxious to do so. Pilate recognized that here was a just Man, an innocent Man, One who was not guilty, and One who should not be crucified. This was the sixth declaration of His innocence. Then Pilate delivers Christ into their hands for the execution. Matt. 27:24-25.

When Pilate saw that he was accomplishing nothing, but rather that a riot was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this Man's blood; see to that yourselves." And all the people said, "His blood shall be on us and on our children!" (Matthew 27:24-25 NASB)

This cry "His blood shall be on us and on our children!" from the mob became the basis of the great dispersion of Israel which began in 70 AD and continues to the present day and will continue until the Second Advent of Christ. But the principle of divine discipline by dispersion can be turned to blessing for Israel through acceptance of the Gospel just as for any human being who has positive volition. This is grace in action. Regeneration converts the wrath of God into love and eternal life, cursing into blessing.

The Jews then abandoned the accusation of treason and brought up the old charge that He made Himself the Son of God. Pilate was superstitious and knew that Jesus was from Galilee, but there was a growing alarm in his consciousness that Jesus was more than a Galilean. This causes him to fear. He wondered where this Jesus came from. The silence of Jesus indicated that Pilate now had enough facts on which to make a decision. John 19:7-9.

The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by that law He ought to die because He made Himself out to be the Son of God." Therefore when Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid; and he entered into the Praetorium again and said to Jesus, "Where are You from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. (John 19:7-9 NASB)

Pilate expressed wounded dignity, but Jesus answered with the true dignity of greatness. John 19:10-11.

So Pilate said to Him, "You do not speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?" Jesus answered, "You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me to you has the greater sin." (John 19:10-11 NASB)

The "greater sin" is the sin of rejection. The trials of Christ shows rejection several ways. Those who sin from conviction, like Caiaphas, thought to do God a favor by destroying Jesus Christ. Those who sin against conviction, like Pontius Pilate, was convinced that Jesus was innocent. This was the third declaration of our Lord's innocence. Pilate's sin was the rejection of vacillation and advantage. Those who sin without conviction, like the Roman soldiers and thoughtless rabble were the tools of those who



ruled or influenced them.

Pilate finally succumbed to the increasing pressure from the mob, religious persecution, and fear of losing his political prestige. The Jewish religious leaders made it clear to Pilate that to release Jesus would place him in the position of being declared the enemy of Caesar. The last thing he wanted was to be charged with unfaithfulness to Caesar. They might just squeeze him out and he had a good position. Pilate was trapped. Pilate would not place himself in a position where he would be accused of opposing Caesar. They said, "Crucify, crucify! We have no king but Caesar." This was final willful rejection and thus Israel accepts full responsibility for the death of Christ.

Pilate, therefore, condemned the King of kings and Lord of lords to the dishonorable death of crucifixion reserved only for the vilest of criminals in the Roman Empire. John 19:12.

As a result of this Pilate made efforts to release Him, but the Jews cried out saying, "If you release this Man, you are no friend of Caesar; everyone who makes himself out to be a king opposes Caesar." (John 19:12 NASB)

Thus He was crucified. Why? 1 Peter 2:24 says it all. Consider the personal application in your spiritual life when other people do not treat you in a good or fair way. Heb. 12:3.

"and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed." (1 Peter 2:24, NASB)

"For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart." (Hebrews 12:3, NASB)

The suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ in the circumstances surround Calvary were unparalleled in human history. Why? Because of who He was and what He was doing. Who was He? The Son of God, the God-man, undiminished deity and true humanity in one person forever. What was He doing? Buying us out of the slave market of sin!