

## WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY: "Six Trials of Jesus" Luke 22-23

Scripture of Lesson: Luke's Gospel 22: 63 – 23: 25

Isaiah 53: 1-12

### 1. **Jewish trials by Annas, Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin**

- a. The multiple trial proceedings were foretold by Lord Jesus to His disciples before they went up to Jerusalem [Matt 20: 18-19]

*Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the high priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death. And shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify Him; and the third day He shall rise again.*

Note that the trial proceedings of the Jewish civil trials followed by the Roman trial went as foretold by Lord Jesus. Furthermore, the groups who took part in the civil trials are specifically mentioned as the high priests and the scribes who condemned Him to death.

- b. The captors first took Lord Jesus to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the current high priest [John 18: 12-14]. Annas was a high priest himself. Annas questioned Lord Jesus on His doctrine but could not prove Him guilty. Annas then sent Jesus to Caiaphas, his son-in-law, who was the high priest of the year. Both Annas and Caiaphas allowed their subordinates to mock and beat Lord Jesus as if He was a common criminal [22: 62-63].
- c. Finally, at daybreak, they took Lord Jesus to stand trial before the Jewish Sanhedrin, more like the Jewish congress consisting of significant Jewish leaders, and they determined Him to be guilty of blasphemy [Luke 22: 66-71]. The basis of their judgment was Lev. 24:16, "*He that blasphemeth the name of the LORD, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him.*" Based on this Mosaic law, they determined that Jesus of Nazareth was guilty of blaspheming the name of the Lord when He admitted that He is the Son of God [22:70]. In their spiritual darkness the members of Sanhedrin completely disregarded the possibility that Jesus of Nazareth could have been the Son of God as He claimed in spite of numerous affirmations and miracles He performed that testified the truth:

### 2. **Roman trials by Pilate, Herod, then Pilate**

- a. The Jewish leaders did not have the authority to put someone to death [John 18: 31]. Only the Roman governor had the authority. So, they took Jesus to Pilate [23: 1-3] and accused Him of three political charges instead of their own religious verdict of blasphemy:
- 1) Jesus perverted the nation;
  - 2) Jesus forbade the people from giving taxes to Caesar; and
  - 3) He claimed to be a king of the Jewish people.
- b. Pilate wanted to avoid judging Jesus because he knew that the Jews had delivered Him to be judged because of envy [Matt 27:18]. He had also been warned by his wife to not have anything to do with this case [Matt 27: 19]. So, Pilate handed Jesus over to Herod who was in town because Herod had the jurisdiction over Galilee. Herod, who had killed John the Baptist, wanted to see some miracles performed by Jesus but was disappointed when Lord Jesus kept silent and would not answer any of Herod's questions or demands. God kept silent to this evil ruler. Herod handed Jesus back to Pilate, thus conceding that Pilate had the supreme authority in Jerusalem.
- c. Pilate announced three times the innocence of Jesus [23: 4, 14, 22]. The crowd, who were the scribes and the servants of the high priests and not the people of Jerusalem who had welcomed Lord Jesus as their King, kept their pressure on Pilate to lay down the verdict of death by crucifixion. Pilate yielded to the public pressure and finally gave out the verdict demanded by the Jewish religious leaders. Thus, the prophecy of Jesus on His own trial and death came to be fulfilled as was the prophecy of Isaiah 53.

- d. Pilate's character is a case of study, which is a contrast to the two other Roman military leaders in Israel at this time; the unnamed centurion in charge of the Capernaum area in Luke 7 and Cornelius, the centurion in Acts 10. While the latter two centurions had great respect of the Jewish religion, the authority of Jesus as the Messiah and put their convictions into positive actions, Pilate deferred and yielded to the political pressure of the Jewish crowd, whom he knew were being connived by the high priests and the scribes. Tradition tells us that he committed suicide while he was serving in today's France years later, much like the fate of Judas.

### **3. *Discussion topics***

- a. Why did the Jewish leaders not see Lord Jesus as their Messiah but wanted to kill Him? Were they not aware of the OT prophecies about the Messiah?
- b. Why did Lord Jesus have to go through such a cruel and unjust judicial process and be condemned for a crime He was not guilty? What did His ordeal have to do with the salvation for the humanity?
- c. When the political majority of our time is turned fully against Jesus Christ and His people, will we stand firm with God and His forces rather than joining "the crowd"? What would help us have the courage and conviction to side with God and Christ?

