

# Journey to the Cross

## (4) Jesus' trials

### Scriptures quoted:

Mt. 26:47-27:31; Mk. 14:43-15:20; Lk.22:47-25; Jn. 18:12-19:16; Phil. 2:5-11.

- Read below the ways that the Jewish trial of Jesus was unjust. What does this tell you about the Jewish leaders?
  - *(1) No decision of the Sanhedrin was valid unless it was given in the Hall of Hewn Stone in the Temple precincts.*
  - *(2) All criminal cases must be tried during the daytime and completed during the daytime. No trial was to be held at night.*
  - *(3) Criminal cases could not be conducted during the Passover season.*
  - *(4) Only if a verdict was "Not Guilty" could a case be finished on the day it began.*
  - *(5) All evidence had to be guaranteed by two witnesses separately examined. Their testimonies needed to agree in every detail.*
  - *(6) Before any trial commenced, all the evidence for the innocence of the accused was laid before the court, before any evidence for his guilt was presented.*
  - *(7) Each member of the Sanhedrin must give their verdict separately, starting with the youngest through to the oldest.*
  - *(8) No person should be asked to condemn himself. As was the case with Jesus, when Caiaphas asked him "Are you the Messiah?"*
  - *(9) The Sanhedrin charged Jesus with blasphemy. It was a religious charge. But before Pilate that charge wasn't even mentioned.*
  - *(10) All witnesses needed to be interviewed first before the accused was interrogated.*

- What was the charge made against Jesus by the religious leaders? (see Matt. 26:62-66). Was this the same charge as they communicated to Pilate? (see Luke 23:1-5). Explain.
- “Prejudice is a great time-saver, as it enables you to form opinions without looking at the facts.” In which way is this true of the religious leaders and in which way is it true of many people today?
- Read John 18:28. What is so ugly about the message of this verse? In which ways might we be guilty of doing something similar? (see Matt 23:24).
- List the ways in which Pilate attempted to ‘get off the hook’ and not be required to make the decision for Christ to be crucified. (see John 18:31; 38-40; 19:1-3; Luke 23:6-7; Matt. 27:24-25).
- Read Phil. 2:5-11 together and praise God for his great love to us all.

### **Prayer:**

Dear Lord,

Grant us insight into all that you went through for us—the treachery of a friend, the betrayal, disloyalty and unfaithfulness of several other friends, the hostility of religious people, people steeped in the Scriptures, trained in theology, yet who missed the truth stood right in front of their own eyes—the One who is the Truth staring them right in the face.

Yet Lord, before we condemn their actions, help us to see those times when we have failed to see you in the eyes of the poor and marginalised; and when we have failed to hear the Spirit speak to us through the pages of Scripture, and those times when we have been deaf and blind, and have had closed minds to the things that you have wanted us to know.

Lord, before we judge Pilate too harshly for his lack of courage and for his compromise, we pray that we will look deeply into our own hearts and seek your grace for those times in our lives when we too have lacked courage and have chosen compromise in place of conviction.

Give us eyes to see what our sin cost you. Grant us sensitive hearts to respond to you, and give us willing spirits to be people of justice, mercy, grace, and compassion. Lord, let us reflect your light in a dark and hostile world.

Amen