

# The Verdict that Saved the World

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Matthew 26:57-68; Mark 14:53-65; Luke 22:63-71

Immediately after Jesus was betrayed and arrested in the garden He was taken to the High Priest to be judged (Mt. 26:57). Jesus was not dragged before Caiaphas unwillingly. He was "*brought as a lamb to the slaughter,*" just as Isaiah prophesied (53:7).

Within the next few hours Jesus would appear before Annas, Caiaphas, the Sanhedrin (Jewish "Supreme Court"), Pilate, and King Herod.

Jesus was tried by a "kangaroo court." The whole judicial process was a farce—From His arrest to the crucifixion every principle of jurisprudence was violated. Habakkuk 1:4 speaks of the injustice Christ was subjected to —"*The law is slacked, and judgment doth never go forth: for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore wrong judgment proceedeth.*" It was a total miscarriage of justice. It was unfair, unethical, and unbelieving.

Yet, Jesus never asserted His legal rights. He made no appeal. Mark 14:16 says, "*He held his peace, and answered nothing,*" thus fulfilling Isaiah 53:7— "*He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.*"

Here is a case when the righteous Judge of the universe is being judged by wicked men—Sinful men sitting in judgment of the Holy God!

## I. The PROCEEDINGS before the verdict.

### A. The INTERROGATION. (Mt. 26:59-63a).

1. **Illegally held at night.** The events following Christ's arrest took place between midnight and six o'clock in the morning.
  - Then, as today, secret trials were illegal. All criminal trials were to be held during the daylight and heard in public. When Jesus was tried by the Sanhedrin, it was done secretly and in a private place. Christ's enemies did not want the common people to know their plans of actions.
  - They loved the darkness because their deeds were evil.

2. **Absence of a civil judge.** Deuteronomy 19:17-18 states civil judges are to make inquisition at trials with the priests present. There were no civil judges present at Christ's trial.
  3. **Prejudiced priests.** A judge must be totally impartial. These priests held a deep seated hatred for Jesus (Luke 22:2). They could not possibly come to a unbiased verdict.
    - ➔ "*Sought false witness*" (Mt. 26:59). The priests did not seek true witnesses. They were as biased as our news media. They only sought witnesses who would lie about Jesus, not tell the truth. Unbelief is like that—it only looks for arguments to attack Christianity. It does not seek to know the truth.
  4. **Lack of reliable witnesses.** The testimony of the witnesses did not agree (Mk. 14:57-59). What they said was false (cf. John 2:19).
  5. **The silence of Jesus.** Jesus would not defend Himself against false witness.
- B. The **INDICTMENT** (Mt. 26:63-66).
1. The **resort** of Caiaphas (v. 63). Caiaphas was getting nowhere with his false witness, so he resorts to "The oath of Swearing." Leviticus 5:1 describes this oath.
 

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If a person was called to bear witness to something they knew to be truth, they were required to speak the truth. If they didn't, it would be the same as if they lied. Today it is called "lying by omission."

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  2. The **reply** of Jesus (v. 64). Jesus was forced to speak the truth under this oath, and He did. In essence, Jesus claimed to be God. **You can imagine how that went over.**
  3. The **reaction** of Caiaphas' (v. 65). He charged Jesus with blasphemy. However, it would only be blasphemy if what Jesus said was untrue. But it was true! Caiaphas' failed to prove that Jesus was not who He claimed to be. Jesus was

condemned on His own unsupported testimony which was against Mosaic Law (Dt. 19:15).

4. The **ripping** of the garments. The Caiaphas defied the Levitical code by tearing his priestly garments (v. 65 cf. Lev. 21:10).

C. The **INJURIES** (Mt. 26:67-68; Luke 22:63-65).

➡ The abusive treatment of Jesus after the verdict was illegal and unmerciful.

1. They spit in His face, implying He was no better than the very ground they spit on.
2. They pulled out His beard (Isa. 50:6).
3. They blindfolded Him and smote Him in the face with their fists.... “Oh, so you’re the Son of God, eh? Well tell us who is punching your face? SMACK! SMACK! SMACK!

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Jesus could have called out the name, rank, and serial number of everyone of them. But *“when he was reviled, reviled not again: when he suffered, he threatened not”* (1 Pet. 2:21-23). He chose to suffer.

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➡ Oh, how they hated the Lord Jesus! He was beaten so brutally that Isaiah prophesied *“his visage was so marred more than any man”* (52:14). His nose was bleeding... His face was swollen. His eyes were blackened. The spit of His accusers ran down His cheeks. He endured this humiliation for you and I.

**II. The PRONOUNCING of the verdict.** (v. 66).

➡ Three things in the pronouncing of the verdict:

- A. **The UNBELIEF of man** (Luke 22:67). When presented with the overwhelming evidence regarding Christ’s claim to be God, men still refuse to believe on Him, as they did 2,000 years ago.
- B. **The PLAN of God**. Although He was tried unfairly and judged unjustly, it was in the plan of God (Acts 2:23).

1. Jesus had to be rejected... condemned... and be crucified. God used the wickedness of man to bring it to pass. Psalm 76:10 says God causes the wrath of man to praise Him.
  - Instead of Jesus playing into the hands of His enemies, they were playing into His hands!
2. Jesus could have stopped the whole ordeal any number of times: In the garden... during the trial... before Pilate... at Calvary. But He didn't, because He came to die for our sins.
  - While the verdict of Christ's trial was unjust, it would be a verdict that would ultimately make salvation possible to those who believe.

C. **The CALL to decide.** It is impossible to remain neutral concerning the identity of Christ: He is either who He said He was—God; or He is a liar. You must decide.

**SUMMATION:** When my daughters were young, sometimes I would challenge them to ask me any questions they wanted. It would appear that they were putting me on trial. However, I was putting them on trial because their questions usually revealed what they were thinking about.

In our Lord's trial, it may have appeared they had Him on trial. But, He was actually not the One on trial. Man was on trial as to what he would do with Jesus. What will you do with Jesus?

I call on you to JUDGE HIM for yourself—Either you will believe on Him as your Lord and Savior, or you will condemn Him. Is He the Son of God, or not? Will you take Him as your Savior?