

"The Trials and the Suffering of Jesus"

Introduction: Today I want to take you on a journey through the trials which our Lord went through hours before He was crucified. It is my desire to help you to see how much our Lord suffered. There is a verse in Hebrews that comes to my mind here.

Hebrews 2:10

¹⁰ *For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.*

I. "The History of the Jewish Justice System"

Now I believe in order to see the suffering of Jesus we need to understand the Jewish Court system and how it was supposed to function.

The justice system of the Jews is based upon Deuteronomy 16:18-20.

Deuteronomy 16:18-20

¹⁸ *Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment.*

¹⁹ *Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous.*

²⁰ *That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.*

The Sanhedrin constituted basically the government over a synagogue community. Now one of them on the councils whether small or large would be called the chief ruler. So in the New Testament gospels, when you read about the chief ruler, he is one who presides over that local council. But all of them served as a court. And whenever you read, such as in [Matthew 5:22](#) or [Matthew 10:17](#) or elsewhere, that you would be brought before the council, that's what it has in view, the local governing group of judges who sit over any given locality, any given synagogue community of Jews.

Now in Jerusalem, the capital city, the great religious center of the life of Israel, there was what was called the Great Sanhedrin...the Great Council. This was composed most likely of 70 men who were elders, 24 chief priests, 24 elders, 23 scribes plus the high priest makes 71. So they got an odd number by including the high priest. They were the final court for appeal. Any person who felt that the judgment made at a lower level was not fair could appeal to the Sanhedrin and the Supreme Court level in Jerusalem and under some conditions, no doubt, gain a hearing. They were the highest and ultimate ruling body in Israel.

Now, the Sanhedrin in terms of criminal procedure, guaranteed to a person who was under prosecution, several things. There were three primary things in relation to criminal procedure that the laws upheld in the Sanhedrin guaranteed to a person.

1. **A public trial.**

In other words, there was to be no hidden secret trials. Everything was to be open and exposed so that no one could be framed and railroaded into some kind of execution, or some kind of penalty without just trial taking place. The judges were always then under the scrutiny of the populace who were able to see and attend and to some extent at least know what was going on. And courts today have maintained the same thing.

2. **The Sanhedrin guaranteed for any one brought in on a criminal procedure the right of self-defense.**

That is there was to be a defender. There was to be someone who provided a defense for the accused. He had the right to bring in defense of himself in the mouth of other witnesses who could participate in the trial.

3. **No one could be convicted of anything unless convicted or proven to be guilty by two or three witnesses.**

It is also very important to know that false witnessing was so serious a crime because their punishments were so swift and so serious that anyone who gave false testimony was punished with the very penalty the false witness sought to bring upon the person he witnessed against. In other words, if you came into the court to witness that someone had committed a murder, and you were giving false witness, you would pay the death penalty yourself. Whatever penalty you sought, you received if your testimony was false. And that comes from Deuteronomy 19 verses 16 to 19. "

Deuteronomy 19:16-19

¹⁶If a false witness rise up against any man to testify against him that which is wrong;

¹⁷Then both the men, between whom the controversy is, shall stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges, which shall be in those days;

¹⁸And the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother;

¹⁹Then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you.

You get rid of false witnesses if they realize that that which they seek falsely is what they're going to get if they're caught because obviously the system of justice depends so much on true witnesses. Each case, also, was to be publicly heard. No unjust act allowed to proceed behind closed doors. And I think it's most interesting to note that in any case where death was prescribed as the sentence, the execution

could not be accomplished until the third day. For example, if today the sentence was rendered, this would be the first day. One whole day, tomorrow would be the second day and not until the morning of the third day could the council reconvene and reaffirm the death sentence and execute the person that same day. And the day in the middle was a day to be sure that all the evidence was in and there was no further need for testimony.

And by the way, the witnesses who witnessed against the person which brought about the death penalty were the ones who had to cast the first stone in the execution. The witnesses were the executioners. So, you wanted to be very certain that your testimony was true or you would not only be guilty of lying, you would be guilty of murder. And so they tended to protect themselves from false witnessing by making the witness himself the executioner. And that would add the last degree of certainty or assist in adding the last degree of certainty to the testimony the person gave.

Now this is based on [Deuteronomy 17:7](#)

Deuteronomy 17:7

⁷The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So thou shalt put the evil away from among you.

"Trial #1-Jesus before Annas"

John 18

They were very care about executing a man if there was any chance that he was not guilty. They always erred on the side of "not guilty". But this was not the case with our Lord as we shall see today. They had a sentence for Him and that was death but they had no crime. So therefore in the trials of Jesus those who try Him will do all they can to find a crime that He was guilty of.

Notice John 18:12-23

This trial was at night with no witnesses. This was completely illegal under the Jewish Court system.

"Trial #2-Jesus before Caiaphas"

Matthew 26

Notice Matthew 26:57-68

Here we see that they had a sentence but they had no crime nor did they have any witnesses.

"Trial #3 - Jesus before the Sanhedrin"

Luke 22

Notice Luke 23:66-71

This is the first trial in the daylight. This was an attempt to make it all legal. It is believed by some that there was about 3 hours between the 2nd and the 3rd trial. If that be the case then what happened in the 3 hours?

It is believed that for 3 hours they beat Jesus.

Isaiah 52:14

¹⁴As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:

Here in this trial we see that the Sanhedrin had no witnesses and so they used Jesus own words against Him. This was completely illegal under the Jewish Court system.

"We hold it as fundamental that no one shall condemn himself. If a man accuses himself before a tribunal, we must not believe him unless the fact is attested by two other witnesses."

"Trial #4 - Jesus before the Pilate"

Luke 23

Notice Luke 23:1-5

Now there is something which happened here that we really need to see. It is recorded in Matthew.

Matthew 27:1-5

When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death:

² And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

³ Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,

⁴ Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that.

⁵ And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

Judas declared the innocence of Jesus and so according to Jewish Law Jesus should have been set free at that very moment.

"The elders sat in the seats in the judgment hall while the man was ushered out toward his place of execution. They placed at the entrance of the judgment hall an officer of justice with a flag in his hand. A second officer of justice got on a horse and rode after that party headed for execution. He followed the prisoner and constantly turned around and looked back at the man with the flag. During this interval, if any person came to announce to the Sanhedrin any new evidence in favor of the prisoner, the first officer would wave his flag and the second one, as soon as he saw it, brought back the prisoner.

"If the prisoner declared to the magistrates that he recollected some reasons which had escaped him, some thoughts that had escaped him, they brought him before the judges no less than five times. If no incident occurred, the procession advanced slowly, proceeded by a herald. And the herald in front of it was in a loud voice addressing the people, ` This man...and stated his name...is led to punishment for such a crime, the witnesses who have sworn against him are...and he named the persons...If anyone has evidence to give in his favor, let him come forth quickly.'" This was heralded all the way so the front of the procession was heralding "If there's any evidence, tell us..." The back of the procession was looking back to see if anyone was coming. And the man with the flag was there ready to wave it, to stop the process.

And finally, if they arrived at the place of punishment, nothing deterred them. "They made the man drink a stupefying beverage in order to render the approach of death less terrible and executed him."

"Trial #5 - Jesus before Herod"

Luke 23

Notice Luke 23:8-12

Herod then sends Jesus back to Pilate. This is because Herod can find no fault in Jesus. He is innocent.

"Trial #6 - Jesus before Pilate AGAIN"

Luke 23

Notice Luke 23:13-25

Jesus was declared to be innocent by Pilate twice and Herod once. According to the Jewish Law Jesus should have been released but that was not God's will. It was the will of the Father that Jesus would go through these 6 trials.

Let us remember that He was made perfect through suffering.

Conclusion: Let me tell you what our Lord experienced in these trials:

1. He was abandoned by His friends.
2. He was treated unfairly.
3. He was misunderstood.
4. He was falsely accused.
5. He was abandoned by His friends.
6. He was declared guilty when He was really innocent.
7. His Words were used against Him.