

**The Final Week (Friday):  
Jewish Trials and Peter's Denials**  
*Looking into the Face of Jesus*  
*The Life of Christ, 2: Pages 464-478, 496-500*  
**Manuscript: Lesson Plan 113**

**Introduction**

Our texts for this lesson are taken from Matthew 26:57, 59-68; Mark 14:53, 55-65; Luke 22:54a, 63-65; John 18:12-14, 19-24 and Matthew 26:58, 69-75; Mark 14:54, 66-72; Luke 22:54b-62; John 18:15-18, 25-27 and Matthew 27:1, 2; Mark 15:1; Luke 22:66-23:1; John 18:28. We will be using each of the Gospel Accounts as we look at the Jewish trials of Jesus. We will start in John 18, though, so please open your Bibles to John 18.

Have any of you done something wrong and then received a look of disappointment from a parent, loved one, or friend? Do you remember the occasion? Do you remember how you felt? It probably happens more than we would like to admit.

How would you feel, do you think, if that person was literally Jesus looking at you? That is exactly what happened to Peter. Luke 22:61 says, "The Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, 'Before a rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times.'"

It is important that we remember what all has happened leading up to these events. Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane, reenergizing and lifting supplications to the Father. Then the mob came (the last lesson), Judas betrayed the Lord, and Jesus was arrested.

It is now time for the Jewish trial of Jesus. It was not much of "trial;" the Jewish leaders have been trying to find a way to get rid of Jesus for some time. They are just simply trying to make themselves feel better about their decision.

The "trial" took place in stages.

**The Jewish Trial: Stage 1 (Prosecuted by Annas)**

Let us look at John 18:12-14, 19-24 (read).

The mob that arrested Jesus took Him to Annas (John 18:13). Who was Annas? He was the father-in-law of Caiaphas. He was the high priest, or, rather Annas was the high priest between AD 6-15. The office of high priest was a lifetime position, but he was removed from office by the Roman procurator Valerius Gratus.

Annas was probably still considered the rightful high priest, even though he was no longer in office. It is uncertain why the mob took Jesus to Annas first. Maybe he simply wanted to see Jesus. Maybe the Jews thought it would be wise to see if Annas could help find a way to frame Him. Maybe they were just buying time until the Sanhedrin gathered.

Caiaphas was the actual high priest (John 18:13, 14). Note, again, John 18:14 (read). When did this happen, and what is meant by the phrase? It was in John 11:49, 50 that we read that Caiaphas made this statement. This is when everything changed because it was when the Sanhedrin decided it was time to eliminate Jesus. Christ had just raised Lazarus from the dead. The Sanhedrin gathered, and

Caiaphas made this very point; he basically said it was better for one man to die (Jesus) than for the whole nation to perish.

Let us take a closer look at what happened during Annas' interrogation of Jesus. He asks Jesus about His disciples and teaching (John 18:19). Jesus told him that He had not been hiding anything (John 18:20, 21). Then the abuse that night began. Jesus was struck by an officer based on His response. Notice that Jesus turned the other cheek, but He did try to defend Himself with His tongue.

At this point, Annas sent Him to Caiaphas (John 18:24). We do not know exactly where Annas' house was located. It is possible that the house of Caiaphas was near that of Annas. Some think their houses shared a common courtyard. However, recent excavations indicate that the two houses were some distance from each other. (See the map in For Further Study on the website to show Jesus' possible path during His final hours.)

We now come to . . .

### **The Jewish Trial: Stage 2 (Condemned by Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin)**

Turn in your Bibles to Matthew 26:57–68 (read).

We now come to Caiaphas' interrogation. It appears a quorum had at least gathered together to try to find fault with Jesus (John 18:57). They were trying to find testimony against Him, but they simply were not able (John 18:59). The reason was that they were looking for "false" testimonies (John 18:59). Mark 14:56 says their testimony "did not agree" or was "inconsistent."

Finally, two men came forward and talked about how Jesus said, "I am able to destroy the temple of God, and rebuild it in three days" (John 18:61). Caiaphas urged Jesus to speak up and answer the "charges" that were being brought against Him (John 18:62). Jesus just remained silent (John 18:63).

Caiaphas with another attempt simply asked Jesus if He claimed to be the Son of God. Jesus could have kept silent; He could not be forced to testify against Himself (similar to "pleading the fifth amendment" in the United States). If so, the Sanhedrin would have had nothing against Him. However, Jesus knew His purpose, and did not want to keep silent in regards to this question.

Jesus confirmed He is the Son of God (John 18:64). Caiaphas put on a show by tearing his robe, acting as if this were a terrible travesty (John 18:65). Caiaphas then requested judgement from the quorum (John 18:66). They wanted Jesus to die. They had all they needed now.

Then the persecution of Jesus intensified. They spit in His face, struck Him, and slapped Him (Matthew 26:67). They blindfolded Him and struck Him, asking Him to testify who slapped Him (Luke 22:63–65). They continued to insult Him (Luke 22:65).

While all of this was going on in an upper room, down below, in the courtyard, another trial of sorts was taking place . . .

### **The Denial of Peter**

Let us now turn to John 18:15–18 and Luke 22:54b–62 (read each).

John got Peter into the courtyard (John 18:15–18). These two disciples had followed Jesus and the mob at a distance. John was known by the high priest, so they let him in. Peter had to stand by the gate. But John then went and talked to the gate keeper and got Peter into the courtyard.

What happened to John when Peter went to warm himself in the courtyard? Since he was known to the household, was he permitted inside the house? Did he sense the danger and leave? We do not know!

Try to put yourself in Peter's shoes. He was confused and vulnerable. Peter had showed courage to this point and how he was not intimidated. But with everything that had just happened, he was having trouble putting it all together.

Luke 22 tells us how Peter denied the Lord. The servant girl by the fire prompted the first denial. Then Peter withdrew to the gate, near the porch; it appears the servant girl followed him and made the same accusation. Another servant girl agreed, and Peter denied Him again. Then an hour passed, and Peter was alone until another man began to insist that Peter had been with Jesus. They used the fact he was a Galilean and the way he talked as evidence. Malchus' relative was there and claimed that he saw him with Jesus in the garden (John 18:26).

We then see Peter's realization (Luke 22:60-62). The rooster crowed (Luke 22:60). Jesus looked at Peter (Luke 22:61). The theme of this year's lessons has been "Looking into the Face of Jesus." Following his third denial, Peter looked into the face of Jesus, and it changed him forever. Likewise, when we look into the face of Jesus, it will change us too. Peter remembered the words of the Lord (Luke 22:61). Peter ran and wept bitterly (Luke 22:62).

We now come to . . .

### **The Jewish Trial: Third Stage (Before the Sanhedrin)**

Let us continue with Luke's account, Luke 22:66-71 (read).

Jesus was sentenced by the Sanhedrin. It was now day (Luke 22:66). The nighttime session of the Sanhedrin had been irregular, if not illegal. With the dawn of a new day, it was time for an "official" meeting.

Mark 15:1 says that the whole council was there (this should have included Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea). They had a purpose; they needed confirmation of the sentence passed on to Him earlier that night. They ask Jesus, "Are you the Christ?"

Jesus said, basically, you will not believe me or allow me to present my case. Jesus then referred to Himself by the Messianic title the Son of Man, and the council pounces on that opportunity; they ask Him if He was the Son of God, and Jesus affirmed His identity. They said they did not need any other testimony; the key point is that they had no other testimony. They needed Jesus to admit to this, or they did not have a case. Again, Jesus knew His purpose and knew what was to happen that day.

However, the Jews had another problem. They knew that they could not put Jesus to death without the Romans. They also knew that the Roman governor would care nothing about the fact that they claimed Jesus was blaspheming.

Luke 23:1, 2 tells how they sought to solve this problem (read). They came up with a political charge that they thought would impress the governor.

There is more to come on this in the next lesson.

### **Conclusion**

Peter's recognition of his sin (denial) can serve as a reminder to us of the Day of Judgment. He recognized the sign (crow). He looked into the eyes of the Lord. He remembered Jesus' words. He recognized his sin.

A few things will happen on the Day of Judgment. We are all going to recognize the sign; the trumpets will sound and Lord will come. We are all going to look into the eyes of Jesus and stand before Him. We are going to remember His words. We are going to remember every deed we performed while living on this earth.

What is still unclear is our reaction to this moment. We do not have to run away weeping. We can actually enter our eternal abode with God forever.

What is going to be your choice today?

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