

## Putting Truth on Trial

John 18:12-27

John 18:12 begins a series of trials for both Jesus and Peter. Jesus faces six trials, three religious and three civil, all of which were illegal. Peter is faced with a different type of trial where his commitment to Jesus is tested. Jesus speaks up while Peter shrinks back. Jesus endures persecution with dignity, grace, and integrity while Peter compromises and crumbles.

### **Trials (12-14)**

Jesus is arrested and bound (12) and taken to Annas, the high priest (13).

The Mosaic Law stated that the high priest served for his lifetime. However, the Romans did not like having so much power concentrated in one person, so they frequently changed high priests.

Annas was appointed by Quirinius, Governor of Syria in A.D. 6, and remained until he was deposed by the Roman Procurator Valerius Gratus in A.D. 15. Five of his sons, one son-in-law, and one grandson succeeded him in office. However, Annas was still considered to be the “godfather,” the power behind the throne.

Caiaphas, Annas’ son-in-law, was placed in office by the Romans in A.D. 18, and remained until A.D. 36. Saying Caiaphas was high priest “that year” meant the year Christ was crucified.

John reminds his readers that Caiaphas predicted Jesus’ substitutionary sacrifice (14; 11:50).

### **Denials (15-18)**

Peter and another disciple (most likely John) follow Jesus from Gethsemane back into Jerusalem (15).

A servant girl, who recognized the other disciple, allowed Peter to enter the courtyard (16).

The servant girl asked Peter if he was not one of Jesus’ disciples (17). It was a rhetorical question assuming a negative answer. Peter gave in to the pressure of the moment and denied his association with Jesus.

Not only did Peter deny Jesus, but he also stood in the courtyard with Jesus’ enemies around a charcoal fire (18).

## **Trials (19-24)**

Annas questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching (19). He probably wanted to get a sense of the size of Jesus' following and what he taught. He seems to want Jesus to incriminate himself.

Jesus affirmed that he taught openly (20). He did not have two types of teaching, one public and harmless for the multitudes, and one private and revolutionary for his disciples.

By asking Annas to interview witnesses, Jesus is asking for a fair trial (21). The testimony of witnesses was an indispensable part of any serious trial in Judaism.

One of the Jewish temple police officers interpreted Jesus' response as discourteous and struck him with the palm of his hand (22).

Jesus again appeals for a fair trial by asking for witnesses against what he said (23).

Since Annas could not produce a charge against Jesus, he sent him bound to Caiaphas (24).

## **Denials (25-27)**

Back in the courtyard, Peter is asked a second time whether or not he was a follower of Jesus (25). This was also a rhetorical question assuming a negative answer. Peter again denies his association with Jesus.

A relative of Malchus, the servant whom Peter attacked in the garden, asked, "Did I not see you in the garden with him?" (26). This question posed the greatest threat to Peter's security as it assumed a positive response.

Peter again denied Jesus (27). Immediately, a rooster crowed fulfilling the prediction that Jesus had spoken just a few hours previously (13:38). John does not include Peter's oaths and curses (Matthew 26:74; Mark 14:71), Jesus' convicting look (Luke 22:61), and Peter's bitter tears of remorse (Matthew 26:75; Mark 14:82; Luke 22:62). John places his emphasis on the fulfillment of prophecy.

***Speak Up or Shrink Back: How will you respond when the trials come?***

### Jesus' Religious Trials

Trial	Officiating Authority	Scripture	Accusations	Legality	Result
1	Annas, former high priest from A.D. 6-15	John 18:12-14, 19-24	No specific charges brought	Illegal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No jurisdiction</li> <li>Held at night</li> <li>No charges</li> <li>No witnesses</li> <li>Abused during trial</li> </ul>	Found "guilty" of irreverence and sent to Caiaphas
2	Caiaphas, high priest from A.D. 18-36, and the Sanhedrin	Matthew 26:57-68 Mark 14:53-65 Luke 22:54, 63-65	Claimed to be the Messiah, the Son of God, which they deemed blasphemy	Illegal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Held at night</li> <li>False witnesses</li> <li>No formal charge</li> <li>Abused during trial</li> </ul>	Declared "guilty" of blasphemy and held for sentencing until morning
3	Sanhedrin	Matthew 27:1 Mark 15:1 Luke 22:66-71	As a continuation of the earlier trial before the Sanhedrin, the charges remained the same	Illegal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accusation changed</li> <li>No witnesses</li> <li>Improper vote</li> </ul>	Sentenced to be turned over to Romans for execution

### Jesus' Civil Trials

4	Pilate, governor of Judea from A.D. 26-36	Matthew 27:2, 11-14 Mark 15:1-5 Luke 23:1-5 John 18:28-38	Charged with treason and sedition against Rome	Illegal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Found "not guilty" yet kept in custody</li> <li>No defense representation</li> <li>Abused during trial</li> </ul>	Declared "not guilty" and pawned off on Herod Antipas to find a loophole
5	Herod Antipas, governor of Galilee from 4 B.C. – A.D. 39	Luke 23:6-12	No specific charges brought; questioned at length by Herod	Illegal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No jurisdiction</li> <li>No specific charges</li> <li>Abused during trial</li> </ul>	Mistreated, mocked, falsely accused, and returned to Pilate without a decision made
6	Pilate	Matthew 27:15-26 Mark 15:6-15 Luke 23:13-25 John 18:39-19:16	As a continuation of the earlier trial before Pilate, the charges remained the same	Illegal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Declared "not guilty," yet condemned</li> </ul>	Declared "not guilty" but sentenced to be crucified to mollify the angry mob; simultaneously, a man guilty of murder, treason, and sedition was released