



Jesus' Arrest and Trials Luke 22:52-23:25

Introduction

As Jesus rose from prayer beneath the old olive trees, He saw the light of the torches as the band led by Judas came for Him. The sleepy disciples were thrust into a volatile situation. They saw Judas approach the Master to give the kiss of betrayal, heard Jesus speak directly to Judas, and witnessed armed guards lay hold of Jesus. This was all too much for them, as Jesus knew it would be. Before Peter could be restrained, he had lopped off Malchus' ear. Jesus' quick action, touching the ear and healing it, spared a skirmish in which the disciples were certain to be hurt. So Jesus fulfilled His own saying, *"Of those whom You gave me I have lost none"* (John 18:9; see also John 17:12).

Outline of Luke 22:53 - 23:25

- I. The Arrest of Jesus - Luke 22:52-53
- II. The Jewish Religious Trials - Luke 22:54-71
- III. The Roman Civil Trials - Luke 23:1-25

I. The Arrest of Jesus - Luke 22:52-53

- A. Control in Crisis - Matthew 26:52-53; Mark 14:48-52; John 18:2-11
 - 1. Calming Peter - Matthew 26:52-54

Jesus quickly addressed the agitated Peter, who held the bloody sword. *"Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?"* Subdued, Peter stashed his sword and stepped back into the group.

- 2. Submitting to arrest - John 18:11-12

"Then the detachment of troops and the captain and officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him. These were Temple police and a cohort of Roman soldiers" (The Life and Times of Jesus, Herschel Hobbs).

- 3. Questioning His arrest - Luke 22:52-53, Matthew 26:55

Now a bound prisoner, Jesus questioned His unexplained arrest. *"Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs? When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize Me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness."*

"But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled" (Matthew 26:55).

- B. Deserted by the Disciples - Matthew 26:56; Mark 14:50-52

- 1. All fled - Matthew 26:56

Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled. Restrained from resisting, outnumbered, and confused, the disciples panicked.

- 2. One fled naked - Mark 14:50-52

A young man had followed the posse to the garden. He had either been asleep or ready to retire when he heard them go by his house, so he grabbed a linen cloth and hastily threw it around himself, counting on the cover of darkness to shield him until he returned. However, when a guard tried to hold him, the young man fled, leaving the cloth. Who but young John Mark would have known of the incident to report it? Still, what could have been a massacre of the disciples ended with only a case of embarrassment, thanks to the actions of Jesus mediating between His men and the guards.

II. The Jewish Religious Trials - Luke 22:54-71

- A. First Trial: Taken Bound to Annas - John 18:12-24

- 1. Father-in-law of the High Priest - 18:13

They led Him away to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. That crafty old rascal had been deposed as high priest, but had put five of his sons and now his son-in-law into the office. He made sure that he still held the power. This was the worst chapter in the long history of the Aaronic high priesthood.

- 2. John's account - John 18:15

Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple who was known to the high priest. The two went with Jesus into the courtyard of the palace of Annas. John alone was able to recount this first trial because he had access through kinship or acquaintance with the high priest.

3. Annas' artful interrogation - John 18:19-24

To determine a charge to bring against Jesus, Annas began simply by asking about His disciples and doctrine. Jesus answered, *"I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet, and in secret I have said nothing. Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have heard Me what I said to them. Indeed they know what I said."* At that a soldier struck Jesus with his open hand saying, *"Do you answer the high priest like that?"* But Annas was not the high priest! Jesus spoke again, *"If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you strike Me?"* But the interrogation was over. Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas. Perhaps he knew he was outclassed.

B. Second Trial: Taken Bound to Caiaphas -
Luke 22:54, 63-65; Matthew 26:57-68;
Mark 14:53, 55-65; John 18:24

1. Peter's denials - Matthew 26:69-75; Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:55-62; John 18:15-27

All four gospels record Peter's denials of Christ. They took place in the courtyard while Jesus was inside, shuffled from Annas to Caiaphas for the first and second trials. A servant girl and two men noticed him sitting miserably by the fire, trying vainly to warm himself, and asked if he was one of Jesus' disciples. Their questions, probably out of idle curiosity, threw Peter into an agony of conflict.

a. First denial

When a servant girl said, *"This man was also with Him,"* he responded, *"Woman, I do not know Him."*

b. Second denial

When someone asked, *"You also are of them (His disciples)?"* Peter replied, *"Man, I am not!"*

c. Third denial

A little later, another bystander, taking note of Peter's accent, confirmed, *"Surely this fellow was also with Him, for he is a Galilean."* Then Peter began to curse and swear, *"I do not know the Man"* (Matthew 26:74).

At that very moment the cock crowed as Jesus was being moved to Caiaphas' quarters. For a second His eyes met Peter's with a look of compassion and love that broke Peter's heart. He went out and wept bitterly.

2. Caiaphas and council members - Matthew 26:59

With him (Caiaphas) were assembled all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes. Runners, scurrying around in the middle of the night, assembled a few council members as they hurriedly tried to gather the full Sanhedrin. All this was, of course, illegal. Lawyers say that at least thirty-three points of both Jewish and Roman law were broken in the hours preceding the crucifixion of Jesus!

3. Search for witnesses - Matthew 26:59-61; Mark 14:55-60

Witnesses were gathered, all of whom were false. But no two witnesses agreed. Finally, two remembered that Jesus had said, *"I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days."* Caiaphas asked Jesus to respond but He remained silent.

4. Witness of Jesus as Son of God - Matthew 26:63-64; Mark 14:61-62

Frustrated, Caiaphas asked Him, *"Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?"* Jesus answered, *It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."* In this climactic moment of the Jewish trials, Jesus made a clear declaration that He was the Messiah prophesied by Daniel. (See Daniel 7:13.) The Jewish leaders were compelled to accept or reject Him.

5. Charge of blasphemy - Matthew 26:65-66; Mark 14:63-64

The high priest tore his clothes, charged Jesus with blasphemy, and proclaimed that they had no further need of witnesses. He asked the council members, *"What do you think?"* They answered, *"He is deserving of death!"*

6. Jesus mocked and struck - Matthew 26:67-68; Mark 14:65; Luke 22:63-65

Matthew, Mark, and Luke record the next shocking event. *The men who held Jesus mocked Him and beat Him.* They spit on Him, blindfolded Him, and hit Him, saying, *"Prophecy to us, Christ, who is the one who struck You"* (Matthew 26:68)? As Isaiah had prophesied of the Messiah, *He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid as it were our faces from Him* (Isaiah 53:3). The nation officially despised Him, and His disciples hid their faces from Him.

C. Third Trial: Formal Condemnation by Sanhedrin - Matthew 27:1; Mark 15:1; Luke 22:66-71;

1. The Council of the Sanhedrin

As soon as it was day, the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, came together and led Him into their council, saying, "If You are the Christ, tell us." But He said to them, "If I tell you, you will by no means believe." Again He said, "Hereafter the Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God." They could not ignore His claim but were forced to respond.

2. Condemned to die

"What further testimony do we need? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth." With this the Council was determined to put Him to death. The entire procedure was illegal, prompted by vengeance not justice: false witnesses were knowingly produced, Jesus was arrested without charge, struck when uncondemned, tried at night, and condemned to death the same day He was charged. All this was against the Jewish law and carried out by those sworn to uphold the law.

III. The Roman Civil Trials - Luke 23:1-25

A. First Time Before Pilate - Matthew 27:2, 11-14; Mark 15:1-5; Luke 23:1-5; John 18:28-38

1. Delivered by Jewish leaders

When they had bound Him, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor. Nearby another drama was ending.

2. Judas Iscariot's suicide - Matthew 27:3-10; Acts 1:18-19

Matthew and Luke record how Judas died, even before the Savior he had betrayed. Judas had remorse over betraying innocent blood but he had no true repentance as did Peter. The word Matthew used (*remorseful*) means "regret" not "repentance". Judas had no change of heart or mind. He tried to give back the money he had accepted, but then went out and hanged himself. Suicide is not an easy way out, it is a terrible way out and nothing to play with or to contemplate.

3. In the Praetorium

Soon after dawn, Pilate met the Jewish leaders outside the judgment hall of the Roman Praetorium, or palace. They could not go inside for they would be defiled and unable to eat the Passover if they entered Gentile territory. Under Roman rule, the Sanhedrin could try

cases involving civil and religious matters, but only the Romans could try cases of capital punishment. That is why the Jews had to find an appropriate charge against Jesus. It is ironic that on the very day of Passover which commemorated their deliverance from foreign bondage, the Jews disrupted their religious preparations to appeal to a foreign power to carry out their wishes. Pilate was already annoyed by the picayune Jewish restrictions that made no sense to him. As a pagan, he did not think religion impacted reality.

4. The accusation

Pilate asked what accusation they brought against "this Man" (John 18:29). They side-stepped the question by saying, *"If He were not an evildoer we would not have delivered him up to you."* Pilate refused to play their game and retorted, *"You take him and judge him according to your law..."* The Jews said to him, *"It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death,...."* signifying by what death He would die. Rome executed by crucifixion, the Jews by stoning. They quickly gave him three accusations. Pilate could take his pick. We found this fellow 1.) *"perverting the nation,"* and 2.) *"forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar,"* and 3.) *"saying that He Himself is Christ, a King."*

5. Was Jesus a king? - John 18:33-38

Pilate went back inside and asked the bruised and bound Jesus, *"Are You King of the Jews?"* Jesus answered, and entered into dialogue with this pagan who had no spiritual light. *"Are you speaking for yourself, or did others tell you this about Me?"* Jesus wanted Pilate to think for himself about the One standing before him. But Pilate was flippant. *"Am I a Jew?"* What did it matter to him who this man was? *"Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me; what have you done?"* Jesus let Pilate know He was not a threat: *"My kingdom is not of this world."* Pilate wondered aloud, *"Are you a king then?"* Jesus answered the third question, *"You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice."* He was giving Pilate light in the revelation of who He is. But Pilate did not respond to that light. *"What is truth?"* He asked cynically. With that he turned his back on Jesus, went out to the Jews, and told them, *"I find no fault in Him at all."*

6. Persistence of the chief priests and elders

But the chief priests and elders persisted. *"He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea beginning from Galilee to this place"* (Luke 23:5). When Jesus answered nothing, Pilate marveled. He also noted that Galilee was a province under Herod, who happened to be in the city just at that time.

B. Tried by Herod - Luke 23:6-12

Only Luke tells us of this second civil trial before Herod, an evil petty king who was, nonetheless, curious about Jesus. He had wanted to see Him for some time and was glad for the opportunity. Herod was the last of the Edomites and also had some Jewish ancestry. So the lines of Jacob and Esau faced each other in their ultimate representatives. But Jesus had not one word for this dissolute tyrant who had beheaded John the Baptist. Herod was not a pagan needing light. He had heard the preaching of John the Baptist and made no response.

Disappointed, Herod allowed his soldiers to mock Jesus, and sent Him back to Pilate. Luke reveals that Herod and Pilate became friends that day.

C. Second Time Before Pilate - Matthew 27:15-26; Mark 15:6-15; Luke 23:13-25; John 18:39

1. A Passover custom

The Romans prided themselves on their relationships with the peoples they conquered. They worked with them, allowing a small measure of self-rule. In this vein, each year at Passover the Roman governor pardoned one prisoner. The crowd gathering in front of Pilate's palace began to ask who that prisoner would be this year. There was a notable prisoner called Barabbas. As a dangerous insurrectionist, robber, and murderer, he was kept bound.

2. Declaration of Jesus' innocence

Pilate assembled the chief priests and rulers of the people and announced for the second time that he found no fault in Jesus. Pilate knew that Jesus had been accused out of envy (Matthew 27:18).

3. A warning from Pilate's wife

Pilate took his official position, sitting down on the judgement seat. He was about to give his decision, when a message came from His wife. *"Have nothing to do with that just man. I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him"* (Matthew 27:19). Pilate should have listened to his wife.

4. Jesus scourged - John 18:40-19:5

The chief priests had stirred up the crowd to demand the release of Barabbas. Feeling trapped, Pilate began to compromise. If he scourged Jesus it might satisfy the Jews. Scourging was a Roman way of weakening condemned men so they would die faster. Many died under the scourging, for leather whips were used which

had bits of iron or bone tied into the ends. These could tear a man's back to ribbons. It was against the law to scourge an uncondemned man.

5. "*Behold the Man!*" - John 19:5

For the third time, Pilate announced, *"I find no fault in Him."* Then he brought Jesus out and presented Him to the crowd saying, *"Behold the man!"* Perhaps he hoped the sight of Jesus, bloody, with a cruel crown of thorns and a purple robe, put on Him by the mocking soldiers, would win their sympathy.

6. "*Crucify Him!*" - Luke 23:21; Matthew 27:22; Mark 15:13; John 19:6-11

Instead, as all four gospels testify, the crowd, swayed by the leaders, shouted, *"Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"* Pilate kept trying to release Jesus, and the Jews kept demanding His death, *"We have a law, and according to that law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God."* This was news to Pilate and he felt afraid. He took Jesus inside and asked, *"Where are you from?"* But Jesus was silent. *"Do you not know that I have power to crucify You and power to release You?"* Jesus replied, *"You could have no power at all against Me, unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin"* (John 19:11). There was grace in Jesus' answer.

7. Pilate's fatal vacillation - Luke 23:23-25

Pilate tried with all his well-known negotiating skill to release Jesus. But the Jews knew they had their man, *"If you let this man go you are not Caesar's friend."* Pilate asked them, *"Shall I crucify your King?"* The Jews replied, *"We have no king but Caesar"* (John 19:15).

Pilate even took a basin of water to wash his hands. *"I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it."* And all the people answered and said, *"His blood be on us and our children"* (Matthew 27:24-25). Pilate gave in and decided that they should have what they wanted. He released Barabbas and gave them Jesus for crucifixion. Six trials were over, three religious and three civil. Not one charge against Jesus was ever proven!

Pilate had to specify a charge against Him. Although he desperately tried to remain neutral, in the end he found it impossible. In the final reckoning, no one can be neutral about Jesus. If you are not for Him, you are against Him.

"Jesus is standing in Pilate's hall,
Friendless, forsaken, betrayed by all:
Hearken! what meaneth the sudden call?
What will you do with Jesus?"

What will you do with Jesus?
Neutral you cannot be.
Someday your heart will be asking,
"What will He do with me?"
(A.B. Simpson, 1908)

Applications

1. Are you a true disciple of Jesus? In what ways might your actions be denying Him? Will you repent of these and turn to follow Him fully?
2. Do you publicly acknowledge Christ as King of your life? Silence simply shouts, "Crucify Him!" Jesus Christ died on the cross so your sins could be forgiven. Will

you not speak up for Him and witness to others that He is your King, personal Savior, and Savior of the world?

3. Are you like Pilate who tried to compromise when He should have taken a stand for Jesus? What stand do you need to take for Jesus? What will you do about it?

4. When crisis comes, are you prepared through prayer to face it calmly? Do you put yourself into God's hands and take care of others? How much time do you spend daily in prayer? Will you resolve to spend more time? What changes will you make to prioritize that time?

5. What embarrassment will you endure in order to follow Jesus and make your life a testimony to Him?

QUESTIONS

Questions are based on the New King James Version of the Bible.

DAY ONE: Read lesson notes and references.

1. a. In the arrest of Jesus, who was in control? Give reasons for your answer.

b. With Jesus as a model, how can you be calm and controlled during a crisis?
2. a. Name the three Jewish religious trials.

b. In what ways did Jesus suffer in each?
3. a. Name the three Roman civil trials.

b. In what ways did Jesus suffer during those trials?
4. a. How did Jesus give Pilate an opportunity to know Him?

b. How did Pilate respond to the opportunity?

c. In what way are you like Barabbas?

DAY TWO: Read Luke 23:26-33; Matthew 27:31-34; Mark 15:20-23; John 19:16-17.

5. a. Who was made to bear Jesus' cross?

b. For whom should the Jerusalem women have wept rather than Jesus? Why?

c. Who was also led away with Jesus (Luke 23:32)?
6. a. What was offered to Jesus that He refused?

b. Why do you think He refused it?

c. How was this prophesied in Psalm 69:21?

7. Find a few verses in Psalm 69 which describe Jesus' suffering leading up to His crucifixion.
List the verses and the suffering.

DAY THREE: Read Luke 23:34-43; Matthew 27:35-38; Mark 15:24-28; John 19:18-22.

8. How was Psalm 22:18 fulfilled at the cross?
9. a. What were Jesus' first words from the cross?
- b. How did these words fulfill Isaiah 53:12?
10. a. Reckoning from dawn, when was Jesus nailed to the cross? (Mark 15:25)
- b. What "accusation" did Pilate order set up over Jesus' head?
- c. In what three languages was it written?

DAY FOUR: Read Luke 23:35-43; Mark 15:29-32.

11. a. In Mark 15:29-32, how was Jesus ridiculed by:
The crowd?
- The chief priests?
- The soldiers? See also Luke 23:36.
- b. How did these fulfill Psalm 22:7-8?
12. a. According to one of the two thieves, how were they different from Jesus?
- b. According to 1 Peter 3:18, why was this happening?

c. Can you put your name anywhere in 1 Peter 3:18? If so, write the verse below with your name.

13. a. What did the dying thief think Jesus could do for him?

b. What did Jesus promise him?

DAY FIVE: Read Luke 23:44-45; Matthew 27:47-49; Mark 15:33-36; John 19:23-27.

14. a. Name those who were standing around the cross (John 19:25-27).

b. To whom did Jesus speak? What words did He speak to them?

15. What happened during the last three hours of the crucifixion?

16. What words did Jesus speak which were prophesied in Psalm 22:1?

17. How is the physical suffering of crucifixion described in Psalm 22? Give verses.

DAY SIX: Read Luke 23:45-56; Matthew 27:50-56; Mark 15:37-41; John 19:28-30.

18. From the following Scripture passages, give Jesus' final words on the cross:
John 19:28-29

John 19:30

Luke 23:46

19. According to the Scriptures, did Jesus die of physical causes or was it His voluntary choice to die?
See above passages and John 10:18.

20. Who showed respect and special care for the body of Jesus? In what ways?