

Bible Stories for Adults

Jesus Before the High Priest

Matthew 26:57-68

Opening

- Gathering: What kinds of things do people put before God?
- Today's Focus: Jewish leaders went through the motions of a trial to find a reason to execute Jesus rather than to find the truth.
- Key Verses: *You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish.* John 11:50
- "If you are the Christ," they said, "tell us."*
Jesus answered, "If I tell you, you will not believe Me." Luke 22:67

Opening Prayer

Lesson

Jerusalem Attitudes Towards Jesus (*John 12:12-19, 37-43*)

How did people in Jerusalem feel about the Galilean rabbi who came to celebrate Passover?
John 12:12-13

What event preceding Jesus' arrival helped His fame spread in Jerusalem?
John 12:17-18

How did the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem feel about Jesus' popularity?
John 12:19

Why didn't the Jewish leaders believe in Jesus even after seeing His miraculous signs?
John 12:37-40

Certainly a few leaders believed. Did any of them try to convince the others?
John 12:42-43

The *Sanhedrin* - The highest leadership council of the Jews

70 select leaders (chief priests, scribes and elders) plus high priest appointed for life
Numbers 11:16-17

Given civil powers from Rome; Final court of appeal for Mosaic law
Power to execute until 30AD; Death sentence then needed Roman okay (John 18:31)

Better That One Man Die for the People (*John 11:47-53*)

Were the Jewish leaders afraid that Jesus would upset God and bring His wrath?
John 11:47-48

What did the leader of the Sadducees say in selfishness that prophesied of Jesus' purpose?
John 11:49-50

How could Caiaphas coincidentally say something so pointing?
John 11:51

Did John feel anything needed to be added to Caiaphas' prophesy for the Jewish nation?
John 11:52

Did anything result from this meeting of the Sanhedrin?
John 11:53

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We've Got Him! (*John 18:1-12*)

How were the Jewish leaders finally able to find Jesus without having a crowd around?

John 18:1-3

Was Jesus expecting them?

John 18:4-5

Knowing what lay ahead for Him, what was Jesus most concerned about?

John 18:8-9

Since Jesus was so cooperative, did the soldiers just ask Jesus to come with them?

John 18:12

Annas, the High Priest Emeritus (*John 18:12-14*)

Where did the temple police take Jesus?

John 18:13

Why did they take Him to the High Priest's father-in-law instead of the High Priest himself?

Luke 3:2

Annas - High priest from 6 to 15 AD

Considered by Jews as true high priest since appointment was for life by Jewish law

Acts 4:6

Romans auctioned the High Priesthood

Found it more profitable to direct the high priest than to be the high priest

Had Romans appoint his 5 sons, a son-in-law (Caiaphas) and a grandson as HP

Lived in the palace of the high priest - large building with central courtyard

Extremely wealthy - Owned famous Bazaars of Annas

Had monopoly on sale of sacrifice animals and on stalls for moneychangers

Jesus' cleansing of the temple would have been seen as a threat to Annas

Given great power by Romans because he gave money to key Roman leaders

Used by later Jewish historians as example of a corrupt high priest

Would Annas have any trouble getting his son-in-law to get rid of this Jesus?

John 18:14

Preliminary Hearing Before Annas (*John 18:19-24*)

What kind of information did Annas want from Jesus?

John 18:19

What secret ideas did Jesus reveal to Annas?

John 18:20-21

What was significant about Jesus' response?

Isaiah 45:19; 48:16

How did the Jewish leaders feel about Jesus standing up for His truth before Annas?

John 18:22

How did Jesus use this violent action to further demonstrate His truth?

John 18:23

What did Annas do when it became obvious that Jesus was too wise for Him to handle?

John 18:24

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Witnesses (*Matthew 26:57-59*)

Would Jesus find justice and protection of the innocent before the Sanhedrin?

Matthew 26:57, 59

Couldn't the Sanhedrin make any ruling they wanted? What kind of evidence did they need?

Deuteronomy 17:6

As active as Jesus had been, how many sets of witnesses came forward with stories?

Matthew 26:60a

By pushing hard for anything that could convict Jesus, what commandment did they break?

Exodus 20:16

A Convicting Threat (*Matthew 26:60-61*)

Was the Sanhedrin ever able to find two people who agreed on incriminating evidence?

Mark 14:56-59 (*Matthew 26:60b-61*)

Had Jesus made such a threat?

John 2:18-20

Was Jesus even speaking of the same temple?

John 2:21-22

Had the Jewish leaders just misunderstood what Jesus had said?

Matthew 27:62-63

Let's Try This (*Matthew 26:62-64*)

Knowing that the leaders really understood what He had said, how did Jesus respond?

Matthew 26:62-63a

What prophesy did Jesus' response begin to fulfill?

Isaiah 53:7

Realizing this twisted evidence didn't really stand up, what did Caiaphas try?

Matthew 26:63b

What was the purpose of Caiaphas saying, *I charge you under oath by the living God?*

Leviticus 5:1

How did Jesus point out that they already knew and had rejected His answer?

Luke 22:67-68

How did Jesus then answer Caiaphas' question even deeper than they expected?

Matthew 26:64

What prophesy would they immediately connect with what Jesus said?

Daniel 7:13-14 (*Psalm 110:1*)

Guilty! (*Matthew 26:65-68*)

How did the Sanhedrin react to Jesus' reply?

Matthew 26:65-66

How serious was a charge of blaspheme by calling one's self God?

Leviticus 24:14-16

How did Caiaphas show he was trying to convict Jesus rather than keep God's Law?

Leviticus 21:10

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The Waiting Room (*Luke 22:63-65*)

After finding Jesus guilty of blasphemy, what was the next step to have Him executed?

Matthew 27:1-2

How did Jesus and His guards pass time while waiting to get an audience with Pilate the governor?

Luke 22:63-65 (*Matthew 26:67-68*)

What passion prophesy did this begin to fulfill?

Isaiah 50:6

The Illegal Trial (*Matthew 26, Mark 14, Luke 22, John 18*)

Innocent until proven guilty?

Mark 14:1-2

Religious leaders carefully screen witnesses to ensure justice

Mark 14:55-57

Capital cases must begin with reasons for acquittal

Luke 22:66-67

In capital cases, all can argue for acquittal but not all can argue for conviction

Mark 14:55

Capital trials must be held in the daytime and verdicts reached in the daytime

John 18:28

Capital verdicts for acquittal could come the same day, conviction not until the next day

Mark 14:64; 15:1

Serious charges are to be tried only in the Sanhedrin's regular temple meeting place

Luke 22:54

Defendants are not required to incriminate themselves

Matthew 26:63-65

Closing Prayer

Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. Am I a Christian because people around me are Christian or because of my relationship with Jesus? How would my relationship with Jesus be different if those around me were not Christians?
(*John 18:19; Genesis 6:5-9; 1 Kings 19:9-10; Isaiah 51:2; Daniel 6:6-11*)
2. How openly do I speak to others about Jesus?
(*John 18:20-21; Matthew 10:32-33; Acts 4:18-20; 18:24-28; 2 Timothy 4:5; 1 Peter 3:15*)
3. When have I allowed Satan to frustrate me so much that I did something I later regretted?
(*John 18:22-23; Numbers 20:2-13; Job 2:7-10; Matthew 26:69-75; Luke 22:3-6*)
4. When have I given false testimony against my neighbor?
(*Matthew 26:59-62; Exodus 20:16; Job 13:4; Psalm 5:9; 28:3; 55:20-21; 109:1-5; Jeremiah 9:3-6; Ezekiel 13:3-9*)
5. When have I wanted something so bad that I resorted to sin to get it?
(*Matthew 26:59-68; Genesis 3; 27; 2 Samuel 11-12; 1 Kings 11:1-13*)