

The Trial of Jesus

Jesus stands trial before the Jewish Sanhedrin and the Roman governor Pilate, is falsely accused, mocked, and condemned to death despite Pilate finding no fault in Him, while Barabbas the criminal is released.

Matthew 26:57-68 • Matthew 27:11-26

CHARACTERS: Jesus, Caiaphas, The Sanhedrin, Pontius Pilate, Barabbas, The Crowd

THEMES: Injustice, Christ's Suffering, Fulfillment of Prophecy, Substitutionary Death, Human Sinfulness

AFTER HIS ARREST in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus was led away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and elders were assembled. The religious leaders sought false witness against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. Though many false witnesses came, their testimonies did not agree. The high priest demanded, 'Tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.' Jesus answered, 'Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.' The high priest rent his clothes, crying, 'He hath spoken blasphemy!' They answered, 'He is guilty of death.' Then they spat in His face and buffeted Him.

Since the Jewish council lacked authority to execute, they brought Jesus before Pontius Pilate. Pilate asked Him, 'Art thou the King of the Jews?' Jesus replied, 'Thou sayest.' When the chief priests accused Him, Jesus answered nothing, causing Pilate to marvel. Now at the feast, the governor was accustomed to release one prisoner. They had a notable prisoner called Barabbas, a robber and murderer. Pilate asked, 'Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?' The chief priests persuaded the multitude to ask for Barabbas. Pilate

asked, 'What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?' They all said, 'Let him be crucified.' Pilate asked, 'Why, what evil hath he done?' But they cried out the more, 'Let him be crucified.' Pilate took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, 'I am innocent of the blood of this just person.' He released Barabbas and delivered Jesus to be crucified. Thus the innocent Son of God was condemned in place of a guilty criminal.

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