

PASSION WEEK: FRIDAY; JESUS ARRESTED AND JUDGED

Matthew 26:36 - 27:31; Mark 14:32 - 15:20; Luke 22:39 - 23:25; John 18:1 - 19:16

STRUCTURE

Key-persons: Jesus, Peter, the Priests, Pilate, Herod

Key-location: Jerusalem

Key-repetitions:

- In Gethsemane, Jesus prayed the same prayer three times (Mt 26:36-46; Mk 14:32-42; Lk 22:39-46).
- Three times it is mentioned that the disciples slept while Jesus prayed (Mt 26:36-46; Mk 14:32-42; Lk 22:39-46).
- Jesus was judged by: Annas (Jn 18:13-23); by Caiaphas (Mt 26:57-68; Mk 14:53-65; Lk 22:54, 63-65; Jn 18:24); Pilate (Mt 27:2, 11-14; Mk 15:1-5; Lk 23:1-6; Jn 18:28-39); Herod (Lk 23:7-12); again by Pilate (Mt 27:15-26; Mk 15:6-15; Lk 23:13-25; Jn 18:39-19:16).
- Three times, Peter denied he knew Jesus (Mt 26:58, 69-75; Mk 14:54, 66-72; Lk 22:55-62; Jn 18:15-18, 25-27).
- Pilate resisted condemning Jesus: he said that he found no basis for a charge against Jesus (Lk 23:4); he sought to pass Jesus on to Herod (Lk 23:7-12); when Herod sent Jesus back, Pilate said that neither Herod nor himself found basis for charges against Jesus (Lk 23:13-17); Pilate repeated for the third time that he found Jesus not guilty (Lk 23:22); Pilate washed his hands of being responsible for Jesus' death (Mt 27:24).
- Jesus was mistreated: members of the Sanhedrin spit on Jesus; blindfolded him, and hit him. Guards beat him (Mk 14:65). Herod and his soldiers treated Jesus with contempt (Lk 23:7-12); Pilate's soldiers made fun of him, spit on him and beat him (Mt 27:27-30; Mk 15:16-20).

Key-attitudes:

- Jesus' anguish while in the Garden of Gethsemane.
- Judas' betrayal.
- The disciples' despair when Jesus was arrested.

- During Jesus' judgments: the silent confidence of Jesus; the jealous resentment of the priests; the manipulative attitude of the Jewish leaders and of Pilate; the cowardliness of Peter and the other disciples; the insecurity of Pilate; the sarcasm of Herod; the mockery and cruelty of the soldiers.
- Judas' remorse after Jesus' condemnation.

Initial-situation:

At the end of Jesus' third year of public ministry, he went to Jerusalem for the Passover Feast. On Sunday he experienced his Triumphal Entry into the city. On Monday, Jesus cleansed the Temple by expelling those who were buying and selling. On Tuesday, Jesus had confrontations with the religious leaders. On Tuesday evening, Jesus was honored at a banquet at Lazarus' home where Mary anointed him with perfume. After the banquet, Judas bargained with the chief priests to betray Jesus. On Wednesday, Jesus rested in Bethany.

On Thursday, Jesus celebrated the Paschal Meal with his disciples and established the Lord's Supper. He predicted that Judas would betray him, Peter would deny him and all the disciples would abandon him.

Jesus and disciples left the room when they celebrated the Paschal meal and about midnight on Thursday, Jesus entered an olive grove with eleven of his disciples.

Initial-problem:

Jesus and his disciples arrived at the Garden of Gethsemane about midnight, and Jesus took Peter, James and John with him to pray.

Final-situation:

Pilate handed Jesus over to the Jewish people to be crucified.

BIBLE STORY

In Gethsemane Mt 26:36-56; Mk 14:32-52; Lk 22:39-54; Jn 18:1-12

Jesus and his disciples went to the Mount of Olives on Thursday night (Mk 14:26).

About midnight on Friday morning, they arrived at a place called Gethsemane. Jesus took Peter, James and John with him to pray. He felt an agonizing distress, and told them, "My soul is so overcome with sorrow that it is almost killing me. Wait here and keep watch."

Jesus fell facedown to the ground and prayed, "Father, everything is possible for you. Take

this cup of suffering from me. Yet do what you want, and not what I want" (Mt 26:36-39; Mk 14:32-36).

Jesus was in such anguish, and he prayed so hard that his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground (Lk 22:44).

Jesus returned to his three disciples and found them sleeping. He told them, "Can't you keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray so that you won't fall into temptation. Your spirit wants to do what is right, but your body is weak."

Again Jesus went away and prayed the same prayer, "Father, everything is possible for you. Take this cup of suffering from me. Yet do what you want, and not what I want." Returning the second time, Jesus found them sleeping. He left them again and prayed the same words as before.

Returning the third time, Jesus told them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Get up! Let's go! Here comes my betrayer!" (Mt 26:40-46; Mk 14:37-42).

Judas, the betrayer, led a detachment of soldiers, and some officials from the high priests and Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons (Jn 18:2-9).

Judas had arranged a signal with them, "Arrest the man I kiss." Judas went to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Teacher!" and kissed him (Mt 26:48-49).

RELIGIOUS JUDGMENT

Annas (Emeritus High Priest); **Peter's First Denial** Jn 18:12-23

The Roman soldiers and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus, tied him up and took him to Annas who was the emeritus high priest (Jn 18:12-14).

Simon Peter and John followed Jesus into the high priest's courtyard.

The girl at the gate asked Peter, "Aren't you one of that man's disciples?"

Peter replied, "No, I'm not." A rooster crowed (Jn 18:15-18).

Meanwhile, Annas questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching.

Jesus replied, "I have always spoken in public. I always taught in synagogues or at the Temple, where our people come together. Why question me? Ask those who heard me. They know what I said" (Jn 18:19-23).

Caiaphas (Active High Priest); **Peter's Second and Third Denials** Mt 26:57-68; Mk 14:53-72; Lk 22:54-71; Jn 18:24

Annas sent Jesus, still bound, to Caiaphas the high priest (Jn 18:24).

Peter followed Jesus at a distance into the high priest's courtyard. Peter sat with the guards and warmed himself at the fire (Mt 26:58).

The religious leaders and teachers of the Law of Moses met together. The high priests and the whole Jewish Sanhedrin Council tried to find evidence against Jesus so they could sentence him to death. They found nothing. Many testified falsely against him, but their statements did not agree (Mk 14:53-59).

Then Caiaphas, the high priest, asked Jesus, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed God?"

Jesus answered, "Yes, I am."

The high priest ripped his clothes and yelled, "Why do we need any more witnesses? You've heard him blaspheme and claim to be God. What's your decision?"

They all condemned him to the death sentence. Some spit on Jesus; they blindfolded him, hit him with their fists, and said, "Prophecy! Tell us who hit you." The guards took charge of him and beat him (Mk 14:60-65).

The servant girl, who had questioned Peter earlier, saw him warming himself. She said to those standing around, "This fellow was with Jesus from Nazareth!"

Peter denied it, "That's not true!"

After a little while, those standing near said to Peter, "Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean."

Peter called down curses on himself, and swore, "I don't know this man you're talking about."

Just then, a rooster crowed the second time. Peter remembered Jesus' words, "Before the rooster crows twice you will deny that you know me three times." Peter broke down and started crying (Mk 14:6-72).

Sanhedrin Council Condemned Jesus Mt 27:1; Mk 15:1; Lk 22:66-71

At daybreak the Sanhedrin council of the religious leaders met together, and Jesus was led before them. The council formally condemned Jesus (Lk 22:66-71).

Suicide of Judas Mt 27:3-10

When Judas, the traitor, learned that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse. Judas took the thirty silver coins he had received for betraying Jesus, and threw them into the Temple. Then Judas went away and hanged himself (Mt 27:3-10).

POLITICAL JUDGMENT

Pilate Mt 27:2, 11-14; Mk 15:1-5; Lk 23:1-6; Jn 18:28-38

It was early morning when the Jewish leaders led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Roman governor's palace. The Jewish authorities did not enter the palace, because they wanted to remain ceremonially clean so they could eat the Passover meal. So Pilate came outside and asked, "What crimes do you accuse this man of?"

They replied, "If he were not a criminal, we would not have brought him to you."

Pilate said, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law."

The crowd objected, "We don't have the right to execute anyone."

Pilate returned inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

Jesus answered, "You are right in saying that I am a king. I was born into the world so that I could tell the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

Pilate asked, "What is truth?" He then went outside and said, "I find this man innocent of all charges" (Jn 18:28-38).

When the high priest and religious leaders accused him, Jesus did not reply to a single charge, to the great amazement of Governor Pilate (Mt 27:12-14).

Herod Lk 23:5-12

Pilate learned that Jesus was from Galilee, which came under King Herod's jurisdiction. Pilate sent Jesus to King Herod, who happened to be in Jerusalem at that time. Herod was delighted to see Jesus. He wanted to see Jesus perform some miracle. Herod asked him many questions,

but Jesus gave him no answer. Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked Jesus. They dressed him in an elegant robe, then sent him back to Pilate (Lk 23:5-12).

Pilate Mt 27:15-26; Mk 15:6-15; Lk 23:13-15; Jn 18:39 - 19:16

Pilate called together the high priests, the rulers and the people. He told them, "You brought me Jesus and accused him of inciting the people to rebellion. I've examined him in front of you and have found him not guilty of your charges. Herod found him not guilty, for he sent him back to us. This man doesn't deserve the death sentence" (Lk 23:13-16).

The crowd shouted, "Crucify him! Nail him to a cross!"

Pilate asked, "Why? What crime has he committed?"

But they yelled all the louder, "Crucify him! Nail him to a cross!"

Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere; instead a riot was starting. Pilate took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd and said, "I'm innocent of this man's blood. You are guilty of his blood!"

The people answered, "Let his blood be on us and on our children!" (Mt 27:15-26).

Soldiers twisted together thorn branches into a crown, and put it on Jesus' head. They clothed him in a purple robe and went up to him again and again, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" They also slapped him in the face (Jn 19:1-3).

Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews, "Look, I am bringing him out to you again to let you know that I find him not guilty of your charges."

The high priests and their officials shouted, "Crucify! Crucify! Nail him to a cross!"

Pilate answered, "You take him and crucify him. I find him not guilty of all charges!"

The Jews insisted, "We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God."

When Pilate heard this, he was even more terrified. He tried to set Jesus free, but the crowd kept shouting, "If you let this man go, you are no friend of the Emperor Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king is an enemy of Caesar."

Pilate heard this and he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judge's seat. It was about noon on the day before the Jews celebrated Passover.

Pilate said to the Jews, "Here is your king."

But they shouted, "Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him! Nail him to a cross!"

Pilate asked, "Shall I crucify your king?"

The high priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar."

Finally Pilate handed Jesus over to them to be crucified (Jn 19:4-16).

GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

1. What catches your attention in the story?
2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand?
3. Who are the main characters in the story?
4. What problems did the characters face?
5. How did the characters face their problems?
6. How have you faced similar problems?
7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you?
8. What does the story tell about God?

SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What prayer did Jesus pray in the Garden of Gethesemane?
2. How did the disciples fail Jesus during the time he was praying, and during his arrest and judgement?
3. What prevented Jesus from getting a fair trial?
4. Why didn't Pilate do what he knew was right?
5. When are you tempted to avoid doing what you know is right?

LIFE-LESSONS

1. The way to overcome temptation is to keep watch and to pray. In the garden, Jesus ordered his disciples to watch and pray so they would not enter into temptation (Mt 26:41; Mk 14:38). Jesus prayed and resisted the temptation to flee from the cross. The disciples slept instead of praying; they yielded to temptation and abandoned Jesus (Lk 22:45, 57). Vigilant prayer is necessary to win the battle over temptation (1 Pe 5:8).
2. When God's answer to prayer is different than what a person requests, one should accept God's will. In Gethsemane, Jesus asked to be freed of the "cup" of the cross (Lk 22:39-46). Afterwards, he submitted to God's will and faced the cross. Paul asked to be freed from a thorn in the flesh; God's answer was the "grace" to live with the thorn (2 Cor 12:7-10).
3. When those responsible for executing the law have their own agenda, they will disobey the law they promise to protect. Jesus' judgment before the Sanhedrin was illegal:
 - The judges were not impartial; they participated in arresting Jesus and were hostile toward him (Mt 26:62-63).
 - Even before the trial began, the judges had determined that Jesus must die (Jn 11:50; Mk 14:1). Jesus was not considered innocent until proven guilty.
 - No defense for Jesus was allowed (Lk 22:67-71).
 - The law required that trials be conducted in the Sanhedrin's regular meeting place. Jesus' judgment began in the high priest's palace (Mk 14:53-65).
 - They judged Jesus at night. Night sessions were illegal according to the religious leaders' own laws. In criminal judgments, all sessions should have been initiated and executed during the daytime.
 - They condemned Jesus based on witnesses with conflicting testimony (Mk 14:59). The search for hostile testimony was illegal (Mt 26:59; Mk 14:56; Jn 11:53). Perfect agreement between two or three witnesses was a requirement for the death penalty (Nm 35:30; Dt 17:6; 19:15).
 - They forced Jesus, the defendant, to testify under oath. The Jewish judicial system didn't allow the accused to be forced to give a declaration that would be self-incriminating; however, they forced Jesus to answer questions that resulted in his condemnation (Mt 26:63-66; Jn 18:19). Jesus judged the questions of the high priest as being illegal, because they pressured him to condemn himself (Jn 18:21).
 - They mistreated the defendant. It was totally illegal for the members of the Sanhedrin to mock Jesus when they were judging him (Mt 26:67-68).
 - They gave the guilty verdict on the same day they concluded the judgment. Jewish law required that the verdict be given the day following the judgment.
 - They didn't seek justice. The debate in the Sanhedrin pondered the threat that Christ presented to the political and religious world instead of his guilt or innocence.
 - They condemned Jesus without legal evidence. No valid legal evidence was presented against Jesus.
4. The fall of a Christian into sin may be the consequence of a series of mistakes. See the preliminary mistakes of Peter's defeat:
 - He was proud and self-confident. Peter trusted in himself (Mt 26:33; Lk 22:33);
 - He disbelieved Jesus' words. Peter contradicted Christ (Mt 26:34-35; Lk 22:34);
 - He compared himself to others (Mt 26:33);
 - He disobeyed Jesus' order to watch and pray (Mt 26:40-44). Sleep substituted for prayer and resulted in the denial of Jesus (Lk 22:45,57);
 - He attempted to struggle against Christ's enemies with carnal weapons (Lk 22:50);
 - He forgot Jesus' words (Mt 26:75 with 34);
 - He followed Jesus from a distance (Lk 22:54);
 - He had fellowship with Christ's enemies. He joined them at the edge of the bonfire, maintaining communion with them (Lk 22:55).
5. Crowds flip-flop and can not be trusted. The crowds loved Jesus on Sunday when he entered Jerusalem on a donkey. They thought he was going to inaugurate his kingdom (Mt 21:9-11). The crowds hated him on Friday when his power appeared broken (Mt 27:20-25).

6. Sometimes a person must make a right decision, or circumstances beyond his control will make the wrong decision for him. When Pilate refused to

make the decision to free Jesus, he allowed the crowds to crucify him (Mt 27:24). Washing his hands didn't cancel his guilt.