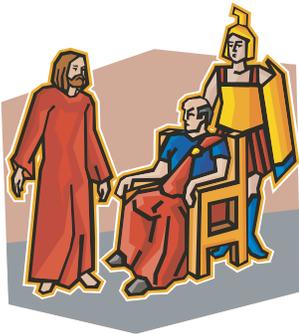




Jesus on Trial & Peter's Denial

FAMILIES IN TRUTH

Matthew 26:57-27:26; Mark 14:53-15:15; Luke 22:54-23:25; John 18:12-19:16



For a handful of silver coins, Judas handed Jesus over to His enemies. The One who had come to willingly give His life was taken by force. Because the disciples had failed to pray that night, they ran away in fear. Jesus was taken to the Roman officials to be judged. Incredibly, He held back His power so that God's plan would be accomplished.

Day #1: Unexpected Events

Do you know what a **plot twist** is in a book or movie? It is when the story takes an unexpected turn. If you are watching a movie with a plot twist, you might gasp and think, "I never saw that coming." The night Jesus was arrested, His disciples might have muttered similar words. Jesus being arrested by a band of armed soldiers was not the way the disciples thought things would happen.

Decades before any of the disciples were born, the Romans took over the land where the Jewish people lived. The Romans ruled over God's people, the Jews. The Jews hated being ruled by, and paying taxes to, the Romans. The disciples (who were all Jews) had waited all of their lives for God to send a Deliverer for His people, the Jews. They believed that Jesus was the One sent by God, but they expected Him to be a King who would take back power from the Romans. Never in their wildest dreams did they picture a King who would hang on a cross.

Until Jesus was arrested, the disciples thought things were going their way. After all, just a few days before, all the people in Jerusalem were welcoming Jesus, and shouting praises to Him. They yelled out, "Hosanna! Save us now!"

But now, things had taken a horrible turn. It seemed that the events of the evening had spun out of control. But, in fact, things were not out of God's control. These events were no surprise to God! This was the very reason Jesus had come to earth. In fact, just days before, Jesus foretold all these events to His disciples. He said:

† As you know, the Passover Feast is two days away. The Son of Man will be handed over to be nailed to a cross. - Matthew 26:2

***** Many times we are surprised by events that take place in our lives. But don't imagine that just because you didn't see it coming, that God didn't either. God knows all things, and He is in control! (Isaiah 46:10) Take comfort knowing that there are NO surprises for God.

Day #2: Peter's Denial

Jesus warned His disciples that they would all fall away. But, Peter was sure that he would stay by Jesus' side.

† Peter said, "All the others may turn away. But I will not."
"What I'm about to tell you is true," Jesus answered. "It will happen today, this very night. Before the rooster crows twice, you yourself will say three times that you don't know Me."

But Peter would not give in. He said, "I may have to die with You. But I will never say I don't know You." And all the others said the same thing. - Mark 14:29-31

After Jesus was arrested, the guards led Jesus to the house of the Jewish High Priest. Here, in the middle of the night, a group of Jewish leaders, called the Sanhedrin, were going to put Jesus on trial. Peter followed, but he stayed far enough behind so that no one would notice him. Very cautiously, he entered the courtyard near where Jesus was.

Three different people recognized that Peter was one of the disciples. Each time, Peter said he was not a disciple (Luke 22:55-60). Peter said he did not even know Jesus!

And immediately, while (Peter) was still speaking, the rooster crowed. At that moment the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Suddenly, the Lord's words flashed through Peter's mind: "Before the rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will deny three times that you even know Me." And Peter left the courtyard, weeping bitterly. - Luke 22:60b-62 (NLT)

Peter sinned because he feared the people around him. He feared being arrested and possibly killed. The Bible tells us that we should not be afraid of what men can do to us. Instead, we must greatly respect and honor God, because He is much more powerful than any man is (Luke 12:4-5).

***** Think about what you would do if a group of kids on the playground were making fun of Christians. Would you join in the joking, would you say, "I am a Christian," or would you remain silent, hoping no one would ask you what you believe? It is not always easy to proclaim that we trust in Jesus. Sometimes we fear what people will think. This is why Jesus commanded that His disciples pray to God for strength! We have the same need. Pray for God's power to give you the strength to freely proclaim your faith in Jesus.

Day #3: Mock Trial

A trial is supposed to be held in order to find the truth. But the trial of Jesus was NOT about finding the truth. It was about finding a way to get rid of Jesus. Remember, ever since Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, the Pharisees and chief priests had been looking for a way to get rid of Jesus (John 11:53).

Day #3 continued:



The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for something to use against Jesus. They wanted to put Him to death. But they did not find any proof. Many witnesses lied about Him. But their stories did not agree. - Mark 14:55-56

Jesus remained quiet. Finally, the high priest, Caiaphas, asked Jesus, "Are You the Christ? Are You the Son of the blessed One?"

"I am," said Jesus. - Mark 14:62a

Notice the wording of Jesus' answer. Where have we heard these words before? **I AM** is the name that God proclaimed for Himself when He spoke to Moses through the burning bush. Upon hearing these words, Caiaphas said that Jesus was guilty of blasphemy, or lying about God. Caiaphas said that Jesus should be put to death for saying that He was the Son of God.

Caiaphas put on a big show by tearing his clothes, as if he were very upset that Jesus would blaspheme against God. But, Jesus was NOT lying! Who were the ones that were truly guilty of blasphemy? Caiaphas and the chief priests were. They had encouraged people to lie about of Jesus - God in human form. Then they spit in Jesus' face. They hit Him and slapped Him. And Jesus allowed it.



Jesus was called a liar, but He is actually the opposite of a lie. The Bible calls Jesus "the ___ ___ ___ ___" (John 14:6). God wants all people to know His Son, the Truth (1 Timothy 2:3-6).

Day #4: Before Pilate

Has anyone ever made up a lie about you? Have you ever been falsely accused? How does it feel to be accused of something you have not done? People continued to lie about Jesus, but He did not say a word to defend Himself.

The Pharisees and chief priests would settle for nothing less than seeing Jesus killed. While they were ruled by the Romans, the Jewish leaders were not allowed to kill someone for a punishment. It was up to the Roman government to carry out such a serious punishment. So, the chief priests took Jesus to the Roman governor, named Pilate, to convince him to kill Jesus.



Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you the King of the Jews?"

"Yes. It is just as you say," Jesus replied. - Luke 23:3

Pilate knew that Jesus had not done anything wrong. He knew that the chief priests only brought Jesus to him because they were jealous of Him (Mark 15:10). The Jewish leaders made up more lies about Jesus, but Jesus remained silent. Pilate was amazed that Jesus refused to defend Himself against these lies (Matthew 27:11-14).

Pilate felt completely torn between doing the right thing and doing what other people wanted him to do. Pilate

Day #4 continued:

asked Jesus more questions, but Jesus was silent.

"Do you refuse to speak to me?" Pilate said. "Don't you understand? I have the power to set you free or to nail you to a cross."

Jesus answered, "You were given power from heaven. If you weren't, you would have no power over Me." - John 19:10-11a

Pilate did not understand what he was saying! Jesus was the One with all the power! Pilate only had power over Jesus for this short time, because Jesus **allowed** him to have it.



Jesus is perfect, yet He stood silently, allowing people to lie about Him. He was determined to accomplish God's plan of salvation. Why? He was motivated by His love for you (2 Thessalonians 2:16). Take time right now to thank Jesus for holding back His might, and allowing all the events to take place so that you could be made right with God.

Day #5: A Way Out

Word spread throughout Jerusalem that Jesus had been arrested. A large crowd gathered outside of Pilate's court. Over and over, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the religious leaders would not agree to it.

Every year, at the time of the Passover, it was the custom for the governor to release one prisoner. The people were allowed to choose whom they wanted to be released. Pilate offered to release Jesus. But, the chief priests and the leaders persuaded the people to call for a prisoner named Barabbas to be released instead (Matthew 27:20). Barabbas was in jail for rebellion and murder (Mark 15:7).



With one voice the crowd cried out, "Kill this Man! Give Barabbas to us!"...Pilate wanted to let Jesus go. So he made an appeal to the crowd again. But they kept shouting, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"

Pilate spoke to them for the third time. "Why?" he asked. "What wrong has this Man done? I have found no reason to have Him put to death. So I will just have Him whipped and let him go."

But with loud shouts they kept calling for Jesus to be crucified. The people's shouts won out.

Pilate finally gave in. He let Barabbas go, and agreed to put Jesus to death.



There are times when we find ourselves in a situation where we must choose to side with God or side with people. The Bible says not to be afraid of people, but instead, have respect for God. He is immeasurably more powerful than any person (Matthew 10:28). We should put obeying God and following His plan above anything else in our lives. We can only do this when we tap into His power. Tap into His power right now! Go to God in prayer and ask Him to help you to keep your focus on knowing Him and doing His will.