

A. Luke 22:66-23:1 – The third trial: Jesus’ formal arraignment and the Sanhedrin

1. Luke 22:66 – *When it was day, the Council of elders of the people assembled, both chief priests and scribes, and they led Him away to their council chamber, saying...* This would be the **formal** arraignment of Jesus by the national leaders of Israel. John did not mention this trial in his Gospel.
 - a. First thing in the **morning**, Jesus was taken from the house of Caiaphas to the Sanhedrin council chamber, where Caiaphas presided.
 - b. In this process, they leveled formal charges against Him, charges that could be brought to Pontus Pilot to get him to order the **death** penalty.
2. Luke 22:67-68 – *“If You are the Christ, tell us.” But He said to them, “If I tell you, you will not believe, and if I ask a question, you will not answer.”* Their first question was, “Are you the Christ?” Jesus avoided giving an answer. He knew they only wanted to use His answer to **condemn** Him. They did not genuinely want to know so they could believe in Him.
3. Luke 22:69 – *“But from now on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God.”* Jesus answered their question with a reference to the book of **Daniel**. The prophet Daniel described an event where the Son of Man was glorified and given dominion over all creation (Dan 7:13-14). Jesus was that person and He would indeed reign.
4. Luke 22:70 – *And they all said, “Are You the Son of God, then?” And He said to them, “Yes, I am.”* Jesus had just stated He was the Son of Man but now He added forthrightly that He was also the Son of God. This declaration was the final straw for them. The national leaders of Israel regarded this **declaration** grounds for the death sentence.
5. Luke 22:71-23:1 – *Then they said, “What further need do we have of testimony? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth.”* Then the whole body of them got up and brought Him before Pilate. The entire **assembly** of leaders from Israel rose up and took Jesus to Pilate.
 - a. Israel’s leaders **rejected** their long-promised and long-awaited Messiah. This was a sad and dark day in Israel’s history.
 - b. The religious leaders wanted the **death** penalty for Jesus. In Matthew 23:29-37 Jesus told the Pharisees they were no better than their forefathers who killed the prophets and He predicted that they themselves would persecute, kill and crucify the prophets and those Jesus would send to them in the future.

B. John 18:28-38 – The fourth trial: Jesus first trial before Pilate, 1 Timothy 6:13

1. John 18:28-32 – After illegally trying Jesus at Caiaphas’ house and then before the Sanhedrin, the religious leaders brought Jesus into the Praetorium, Pilate’s palace, for **Pilate** to hear their accusations.
 - a. John 18:28 – *Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas into the Praetorium, and it was early; and they themselves did not enter into the Praetorium so that they would not be defiled, but might eat the Passover.* The religious leaders would not enter the compound of the Gentile Roman governor.
 - 1) Entering the home of a Gentile during the week of Passover would disqualify Jews from participating in this feast. As is typical of phony legalists, the religious leaders insisted on keeping the **minor** details of the Law while overlooking the weightier matters like, “*You shall not murder* (Ex. 20:13).” Matthew 23:23
 - 2) The twofold mandate to all Roman governors was to maintain **peace** and collect taxes. Any governor that did these two things well was considered a good leader by Rome regardless of personal character or worth.
 - 3) Pilate ruled in Jerusalem for nearly 20 years and for the most part he successfully fulfilled these two mandates. This was probably due in part to his cruelty. According to Philo of Alexandria, Pilate was known to be extremely **cruel** and hateful.
 - b. John 18:29 – *Therefore Pilate went out to them and said, “What accusation do you bring against this Man?”* Jesus was inside with Pilate, and the Jewish leaders were outside; thus, Pilate went outside and asked a reasonable question about the **facts** of the case.
 - 1) He asked the chief priests and scribes (*the Council of elders of the people*) what the **man** they brought to him had done.
 - 2) Luke 23:2 says, “*And they began to accuse Him, saying, “We found this man misleading our nation and*

*forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, and saying that He Himself is Christ, a **King** .”* Matthew 27:11-14,
Mark 15:1-5

c. John 18:30 – *They answered and said to him, “If this Man were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him to you.”* Since they had no **concrete** evidence against Jesus, they answered Pilate with an evasive question.

1) Jesus was not an evildoer at all, and they knew it! Jesus had healed the sick, helped the poor and fed the hungry. He was the living picture of **love**. He came to save Israel from their sins and from their enemies. They rejected Him and labeled Him a fraud and a criminal.

2) The truth was they had no **legitimate** charges. They only wanted Jesus dead. In Matthew 27:18 we find that it was out of envy they wanted Jesus crucified and 1 Corinthians 2:8 shows that Satan and his demons were the ones behind it all.

d. John 18:31-32 – *So Pilate said to them, “Take Him yourselves, and judge Him according to your law.” The Jews said to him, “We are not permitted to put anyone to death,” to fulfill the word of Jesus which He spoke, signifying by what kind of death He was about to die .* Jesus was about to **willingly** die as a sacrifice for the people. John 3:14, 12:32

1) After listening to their grievances, Pilate suggested they deal with Jesus according to their laws. In an attempt to get out of the **mess** in which he found himself, Pilate tried to put the entire issue back on the shoulders of the Judean leaders. But they did not have the power to execute anyone and they wanted Jesus dead.

2) Pilate did not want to have **anything** to do with their internal affairs. In Pilate’s mind, at its worst, this was a religious or civil matter; it was definitely not a capital crime deserving of death. All of this, of course, was prophecy being fulfilled. Psalm 2:1-12, John 15:25, Acts 2:22-24

2. John 18:33-38 – So Pilate went ahead and investigated Jesus himself. It is a travesty that Jesus was not given this kind of fair trial by the people of God, the Jewish nation. After examining Him, Pilate decided He was **innocent** of crimes of rebellion against Rome. Evidently, even this hardened ruler was somewhat impressed by Jesus.

a. John 18:33 – *Therefore Pilate entered again into the Praetorium, and summoned Jesus and said to Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?”* When they asked for the death penalty, he went back in to where Jesus was to do some personal **investigation** on the subject.

1) Pilate asked Jesus straight up if He was the **King** of Israel. It was a legitimate question.

2) Depending on Jesus’ answer, He could be accused of **insurrection**.

b. John 18:34 – *Jesus answered, “Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?”* Jesus asked Pilate a clarifying question. Asking in this way focused the light on Pilate’s **personal** opinion of Him as King of the Jews. Jesus asked this to get Pilate to think; He did not need him to answer.

c. John 18:35 – *Pilate answered, “I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered You to me; what have You done?”* Pilate’s response, that he was not a Jew, showed his **apathy** toward Jewish theological squabbles. He was not concerned for Jewish internal affairs unless they created a revolt. Jesus immediately calmed his fears.

d. John 18:36 – *Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm .”* Since Jesus’ right to rule was granted by His Father, Jesus explained that His Kingdom was of a different **realm**.

1) Jesus answered Pilate in a way that would not be taken as an immediate threat to Pilate’s reign or Rome’s sovereignty. Jesus did not deny being the King of the Jews, but He stated it **indirectly**. He said His kingdom was not an earthly kingdom but one that originated somewhere outside of this world.

2) Pilate was surprised to hear Jesus claim rights to a kingdom. Jesus’ answer must have puzzled Pilate, but he certainly did not see it as **grounds** for the death penalty.

e. John 18:37 – *Therefore Pilate said to Him, “So You are a king?”* Jesus answered, *“You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”* Jesus said He was **born** to rule.

1) Pilate’s question turned into a pronouncement: *“So You are a king?”* Jesus said Pilate had just **declared** Him to be a King, and Jesus did not deny it.

2) He came into this world to rule and to testify concerning the **truth**. Everyone who believes the truth, believes Jesus.

- 3) But intellectuals always love to **debate** the truth. They didn't believe in Jesus. They did not nor do they readily receive Him. They only ask, "*What is truth?*" Of course, Jesus is truth. John 8:32, 3 John 1:3-4
- f. John 18:38 – *Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews and said to them, "I find no guilt in Him."* Pilate basically scoffed at Jesus. He made this **sarcastic** remark because he did not believe there is absolute truth.
- 1) Without wanting to know the answer, Pilate asked, "What is truth?" Even though Pilate did not believe in absolute truth, He had the objectivity to declare Jesus **innocent**, but he lacked the integrity to save Him. Sadly, the religious leaders of the day had neither objectivity nor integrity.
 - 2) But Pilate had heard enough. He did not need to investigate the matter any further; Jesus was **not** guilty, at least by his standards. This did not mean, however, that Pilate was a pushover or merciful.
 - 3) It was **convenient** for the Jews that Pilate happened to be the Roman governor since he was known to be cruel and capricious, able and willing to take a bribe and even execute the innocent. Pilate had remained in power for several years, not because of diplomacy, but because of an iron fist.