

Twelve Reasons Why Jesus' Trial Was ILLEGAL

If Jesus were tried in many of today's courts He would be found guilty and executed!—even though He were innocent! Read WHY.

by Herman L. Hoeh

Part I

THE TRIAL of Jesus was ILLEGAL. He was fraudulently convicted by Jewish and Roman courts. He was executed by crucifixion even though His judge found Him innocent! Why?

It is time we understood what was behind Jesus' crucifixion and learned the twelve outstanding reasons why the arrest, trial and conviction of Jesus was illegal.

Modern Courts Would Execute Jesus

A COMMUNIST CONSPIRACY is afoot today to prove that Jesus was *legally* crucified. Here are surprising statements from a book unconsciously influenced by this conspiracy. The book, entitled *The Prosecution of Jesus*, is by Richard Wellington Husband. Concerning the trial of Jesus he charges on page 281: "The arrest was legal . . . The hearing by the Sanhedrin was legal . . . The course of trial in the Roman court was legal . . . The conviction was legal, and was justified."

This man, a lawyer, is undoubtedly sincere in his convictions. He has been a professor of classical languages at Dartmouth College!

Mr. Husband is not the only man who has been unconsciously influenced by communist propaganda. But his contentions are better written than most. Here is how Mr. Husband justifies his shocking beliefs: "The arrest" of Jesus "was legal, for it was conducted by the proper officers, acting under instructions from the Sanhedrin. There was no illegality in the circumstances under which the arrest was affected. *The hearing by the Sanhedrin was legal*, for it was merely a preliminary hearing, and was not a formal trial. The course of trial in the Roman court was legal, for it harmonized with the procedure shown in the sources to be pursued by governors of provinces in hearing criminal cases."

Pilate conducted himself as other judges did, contends Mr. Husband. That made it legal! It is a strange way of reasoning. But that is the point of view of many who have been *unconsciously influenced with Communist propaganda*.

Now here is his final conclusion. "The conviction was legal, and was justified provided the evidence was sufficient to substantiate the charges, and the records," he writes, "do not prove the contrary!"

Just imagine! A professor in one of America's leading colleges—Dartmouth—spouting out that there is *insufficient evidence* in the Bible to show that any reversal of Jesus' conviction was justified. Here is a man, who, if he had sat on the Sanhedrin, might have sincerely said, "He is guilty."

Why? What makes supposedly Christian lawyers believe Jesus was guilty?

The Jewish Point of View

I have another book before me. It contains the Jewish point of view. The book is entitled *The Trial of Jesus of Nazareth*, by Max Radin. He has been a professor of Law in the University of California. This book was published by The University of Chicago Press. From page 229, I quote the following: "If he [Jesus] had said only a tithe (tenth) of the things credited to him it was enough to make an indictment."

Imagine! If Jesus said only a tenth of the things credited to him, that was worthy of "an indictment." So states Max Radin.

In this same book on page 109, I would like to quote the following about the trial of Jesus. Mr. Radin, who has been taught from childhood to believe what he does, says there is "no clear statement of how the knowledge of the trial came to those who reported it." Radin has been taught to believe that neither Matthew, Mark, Luke nor John

had any personal evidence because the trial was private, a secret affair.

What he neglected to say, of course, was that Jesus Christ, who was condemned, rose from the dead and is alive today. The One who heard everything, who was there on trial, rose from the dead and told the disciples what occurred so that they could report it to us that we might know today.

But let us continue with the Jewish point of view. On page 231 you will discover the following statement as to what a normal Jewish trial was like in Jesus' day: "We are, most of us, familiar with the procedure of criminal investigations. The accused person is arrested, arraigned before a committing magistrate, specifically accused, and formally tried. He may, and he generally does, appeal to a higher court, if he is convicted. All these things take time, and there is almost necessarily an interval of weeks and months between the later stages of the procedure. But above all the procedure is strictly regulated by law, and any serious deviation is not merely an irregularity but will probably prevent punishment from being inflicted."

Notice that most trials involving criminal procedure take weeks, if not months. Did you know that Jesus' trial was completed *in less than nine hours* after His arrest? And it was all done in private, secretly, *so that there would not be any witnesses who could testify on his behalf?*

How does Mr. Radin reconcile these facts?

On page 241, he reasons: "'Mark's' version, even by his own testimony, cannot be more than a guess. Instead of a hurried night meeting, a harsh and brief interrogatory, a disregard of established rules of evidence and procedure, *the trial may have been formally correct, and the judgment even from the point of view*

of an upright judge *just though severe.*"

Do you see how these men reason? He assumes that Mark was guessing. Then he assumes it could have been conducted as *he* thinks. His conclusion is that even "an upright judge" may consider Jesus' condemnation a "just" decision though a bit severe! The only evidence of the trial comes from the Bible. There is no other historical record to justify the Jewish point of view or the point of view of atheistic communist propaganda.

Could the Jews Have Executed Christ?

What power did the Jews have to convict and to execute Jesus Christ?

"According to the common view," reports Mr. Husband in his book, page 210, "the right to try capital cases," that is, cases involving death penalties, "and even the right to pronounce sentences, still rested with the Sanhedrin, but the actual penalty could not be inflicted until the governor" that is, the Roman governor—in this case Pilate, "had given his sanction."

But this view is not true. The Jews not only had the power to try certain crimes, but they had the power to convict and the power to execute in all but cases of treason or sedition.

The assumption that the Jews had no power to execute is incorrectly based on John 18:31-32. Here the Jews had said that, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." Lifting it out of its context, critics have assumed that the Jews had no lawful right whatsoever to put anyone to death. But this does not happen to be the case.

Have we forgotten how Stephen died? The Jews said, "He blasphemeth," and they stoned him to death. The Romans didn't disapprove. When Jesus first preached his sermon the day of Pentecost in Nazareth in Galilee, the Jews sought to stone Him to death. If it were illegal, they wouldn't have dared try it. The Romans would have pounced on them.

The Jews brought to Jesus a woman who was committing adultery. They said, "Moses wrote in the law she ought to be stoned to death. What do you say?"

If they had no right to stone any to death, Jesus could have said very simply, "Don't you know under what law you are living?" And what would they have

felt like before the Romans—if that would have got to Pilate's ears? But Jesus didn't say any such thing. Jesus accepted the fact that they had the right to execute adulteresses and other criminals. He told the guiltless to cast the first stone!

Paul was stoned in Asia. Not only in Judea, but in other areas of the Roman world, wherever the Jews were settled it is plain the Jews had the legal right to execute the penalty of their law.

Here is what Mr. Husband himself admits in his own book, page 19: The Romans agreed that "the high priests should enjoy the same privileges which they had possessed before the coming of the Romans." And on page 29, he admits almost the same thing: "We learn that the Romans allowed to the subject nations all the rights that were consistent with an adequate administration, and did not conflict unduly with Roman interests." And page 33: "The ecclesiastical law of the Jews was allowed to stand unchanged." Josephus even bares testimony to the fact that the Jews could execute criminals and enforce punishment for any violation of the Mosaic law.

But why did the Jews make the statement that we find recorded in John 18:31 and 32?

Here is the answer: "From the earliest period the Roman governor took cognizance of all matters that had any relation to the public security or the majesty of the Empire. Consequently there was no time at which the Roman magistrate would not step in when a *charge of treason* was made, or a *sedition movement begun*. The case against Jesus is one especially in point, for the charge against him [treason] could under no circumstances be tried by any tribunal except that of the governor."

Only when it came to treason, civil disobedience, excitement to revolution, attacks against the majesty, that is, Caesar, did the Roman government decide that it was proper that its governors or representatives should intervene. Otherwise, all local administration was carried on by the people and the regular constituted courts of the conquered nations, of the provinces, or the allies of Rome.

The Jews accused Jesus of blasphemy.

But they did not want to execute Him. So they charged Him with treason before the Romans.

What the Jewish religious leaders had to do was to trump up charges of treason against Christ in order to bring it up to Pilate so that they would appear not to be responsible for His death.

Summary of Events

After the Passover service, which must have lasted to nearly midnight, Jesus went out and prayed. Then Judas came with a mob. In that mob were the High Priest, and the judges and all the jury, inciting the mob as they went out to arrest Him.

After He was arrested, Annas examined Him alone. He was ex-High Priest. They next took Him to Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin, before sunrise while it was yet night, where He was informally condemned.

After sunrise, the Sanhedrin quickly condemned Him formally to justify their previous conduct. Then, they took Him to Pilate *on different charges*. Pilate wanted to wash his hands of the whole affair. When Pilate found Jesus was of Galilee, he sent Him to Herod. After Herod saw Jesus and could not get anything but silence from Him, Herod decided to let Him go back to Pilate. Then, at the second time before Pilate, the Roman governor, under heavy pressure from the Jews, gave sentence—even against his own will, after he washed his hands of it!

These are the six steps through which Jesus went from after midnight to nearly 9 o'clock. And at 9 o'clock He was crucified. At 3 o'clock that afternoon, He was speared in the side and killed (Matthew 27:49, Moffatt translation). Shortly before sunset, He was buried. That's how quickly the Jews got rid of their Savior!

Now let us examine the illegal bases of the trial of Jesus.

Judas' Betrayal

"Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might BETRAY him unto them. And they were glad, and

(Please continue on page 27)

Jesus' Trial

(Continued from page 8)

covenanted to give him money. And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude."

Judas' treachery developed as a result of Jesus' rebuke to Judas for having condemned the woman who anointed Him with oil. Judas had said to Jesus, "Why didn't you give that to the poor." Judas wanted that money himself. He would have taken the oil, gone out and sold it, then claimed he gave it to the poor, and pocketed the money. That is what he wanted to do for he was a thief (John 12:1-9). Judas felt he was about to be discovered.

So he went to the chief priests and the captains who bribed him to deliver Christ in the absence of the crowds who listened to Jesus. The idea was to have Jesus seized privately, so the public, especially the Galileans would not know until it was over!

The Galileans, remember, kept the Passover on the eve of the 14th of Nisan. The Judeans did not. They incorrectly kept it one day later. Many Galileans were up as late as midnight.

They probably slept late the next morning. Many may not have arisen next morning until the time Christ's crucifixion was over.

The priests' plan was to get Jesus at night, try Him at night, sentence Him just after sunrise, to make it look legal, take Him to Pilate, excite a mob to get Pilate to condemn Him, have Him crucified, if possible, even before 9 in the morning, before those favoring Him would be up.

Who made up the mob which arrested Jesus? The answer to this question brings us to the first error in Jesus' conviction.

We should now examine, point by point, the twelve primary reasons why the arrest, trial and conviction of Jesus Christ was illegal.

First Reason

The principle on which any trial may be considered illegal is the fact that it is prejudicial against the man who is tried—that it is not fair—that it does not allow him to have full recourse of

law so that he might present his part of the case.

Now notice the illegal steps in Jesus' arrest, trial and conviction. The first point is that JESUS WAS ARRESTED ILLEGALLY. His arrest was contrary to the law of those who arrested him.

Consider John 18:2-8: "And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place"—where Jesus was after that Passover night—"for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples. Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons. Jesus therefore . . . went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him" by a kiss "stood with them. As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground. Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way."

Now continue with Luke 22:52, "Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders, WHICH WERE COME TO HIM, Be ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves? . . ."

Those who went to have Christ arrested included the priests and elders—His judges! They were also the very ones who bribed Judas!

Jesus was arrested secretly, gestapo-like by night. He was *not arrested on the formal charge of any crime*. There was no charge presented here! There was no warrant for His arrest, no statement of what He had done. They just simply took Him.

Contrary to what Mr. Husband said in his book *The Prosecution of Jesus*, THERE WAS NO LEGAL BASIS on which Jesus was arrested. Nobody had presented testimony or evidence of guilt to the Sanhedrin whereby they could have requested His arrest.

Here is what the Jewish law declares on this point. Mendelsohn says in his *Criminal Jurisprudence of the Ancient Hebrews*, page 274: "The testimony of an accomplice," that is, Judas, "is not permissible by Rabbinic law . . . and no

man's life, nor his liberty, nor his reputation can be endangered by the malice of one who has confessed himself a criminal."

The very fact that Judas took a bribe from the judges was certainly proof that Judas was a criminal!

Second Reason

The first step in Jesus' trial was a preliminary examination in a PRIVATE NIGHT PROCEEDING before Annas (John 18:12-14, 19-23). Notice the Jewish law on this point from Dupin's book, *Jesus Devant Caiapha et Pilate* (a French work): "Now the Jewish law prohibited all proceedings by night." Salvador in his *Institutions de Moise*, pages 365, 366 declares: "An accused man was never subjected to private or secret examination . . ." Yet Jesus was! From the Jewish *Mishna* (Pirke Aboth IV, 8) we read the following command: "Be not a sole judge, for there is no sole judge but One."

According to Jewish law, as stated in the Jerusalem Talmud, the Sanhedrin sat from the close of the morning sacrifice to the time of the evening sacrifice. And Lemann says in his book, *Jesus Before the Sanhedrin*, page 109, "No session of the court could take place before the offering of the morning sacrifice." No night meetings were permitted!

The Jews permitted such an investigation only upon daylight.

Third Reason

The INDICTMENT against Jesus was itself illegal.

According to the law of the Jews, declares Edersheim in *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Volume I, page 309: "The Sanhedrin did not, and could not originate charges."

But in Jesus' case, it did!

Here was the proper Jewish procedure, as stated by Innes in his book, *The Trial of Jesus Christ*, page 41: "The evidence of the leading witnesses constituted the charge. There was no other charge; no more formal indictment." In Jesus' case there at first had been no witnesses presented. The Jews simply arrested Him and started to accuse Him.

Continuing: "Until they [the witnesses] (Please continue on next page)

nesses] spoke, and spoke in the public assembly, the prisoner was scarcely an accused man. When they spoke, and the evidence of two agreed together, it formed a legal charge, libel, or indictment, as well as the evidence for its truth."

Next consider what Mendelsohn writes in his book, *The Criminal Jurisprudence of the Ancient Hebrews*, page 110: "The only prosecutors known to Talmudic criminal jurisprudence are the witnesses to the crime. Their duty is to bring the matter to the cognizance of the court, and to bear witness against the criminal"—after he is arrested. "In capital cases, they are the legal executioners also. Of an official accuser or prosecutor there is nowhere any trace in the laws of the ancient Hebrews."

In the case of Jesus there were no witnesses who presented their evidence to the court. The court took it upon itself to secretly arrest Jesus; then they had to find false witnesses.

Fourth Reason

The Sanhedrin court illegally proceeded to hold its trial of Jesus before sunrise.

Notice that the preliminary investigation before Annas brought forth no evidence whatsoever! Instead of dismissing the case they proceeded to hold an illegal court.

Why was it illegal? Mendelsohn states: "Criminal cases can be acted upon by the various courts during day time only, and by the Lesser Sanhedrins from the close of the morning service till

noon, and by the Great Sanhedrin till evening" (page 112).

The trial of Jesus was begun *at night* without any witnesses to defend Jesus!

Here is what Maimonides writes in *Sanhedrin III*: "The reason why the trial of a capital offense could not be held at night is because . . . the examination of such a charge is like the diagnosing of a wound—in either case a more thorough and searching examination can be made by daylight." An interesting way of putting it, but nevertheless true!

The *Mishna* says, *Sanhedrin IV, 1*: "Let a capital offense be tried during the day, but suspend it at night." Once more the Jews violated their own law in order to get rid of Jesus and His teachings.

(To be continued)

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

(Continued from page 18)

had been no minister of this church in Oregon, except for occasional visits by the minister from Idaho, and the one from Texas of whom I had inquired about water baptism during his visit to Oregon in 1927. But there were at that time perhaps 35 to 50 members of the church in Oregon, from Salem to Eugene.

And, with the beginning of my speaking before these people in Oregon—and with my articles being featured in their church paper—no time was lost in sending a minister to Oregon to take charge. He was a young man—I believe about 28 or younger—who, I believe, had come from Arkansas or Missouri. He came to see me in Portland. His attitude appeared cordial and friendly. But very soon after his arrival publication of my articles in the *Bible Advocate* was stopped.

Soon I learned the reason. Probably the most influential member in the state at the time was elderly G. A. Hobbs, of Oregon City. He was past 80 years of age, but very alert, aggressive and active. He had received a letter from the editor in Stanberry, Missouri, explaining that my articles were being discontinued at

the request of the young minister newly arrived in Oregon. The grounds were that I was not a member of the Church and it was dangerous to give me this much standing and prestige before the brethren there. I might gain influence and become their leader and lead them astray.

This had aroused the fiery indignation of Brother Hobbs. Immediately he sent a scorching letter back to Stanberry, a copy of which he let me read. It resulted in reinstating my articles for publication.

First Regular Preaching

As soon as I had heard of this Brother Hobbs, and the little group at Oregon City, I had visited him a few days after my first "sermon." I found a very small group of brethren who met together in a little church building at the top of the hill, on the Molalla road, in Oregon City.

There were only around 8 to 12 of them, but they habitually met on Sabbath afternoons to study the "Sabbath-school lesson," using the "quarterlies" from the Stanberry publishing house.

On discovering this little group, I began going to Oregon City to meet with them regularly. Almost immediately they asked me to be their leader in the study of the lesson. And soon I was delivering them a "sermon" every Sabbath.

These were days of extreme financial hardship in our home. We often went hungry. Several times there was not enough car-fare for my wife and family to accompany me to Oregon City—in fact it was seldom that they were able to go. At least three times, during the next couple of years or so, I had barely enough for car-fare to Oregon City on the electric line—with no car-fare to return home. I even lacked bus fare from down-town Oregon City out to the little church house at the top of the hill on the outskirts of town. It was probably two or three miles, up a steep hill all the way, but I walked it, carrying my brief-case with Bibles, concordance, etc.

But in every instance when I had come without car-fare to return home, someone would "happen" to hand me a dollar or two of tithe money. And, strangely, no one ever handed me any money on those Sabbaths when I had enough to get back to Portland. And, of course, I never made the need known. But God always had a way of supplying every NEED!

My First Son!

I believe I have recounted in earlier chapters that, following the birth of our second daughter, three doctors—one an eminent obstetrician of international reputation—had warned Mrs. Armstrong

Twelve Reasons Why Jesus' Trial Was ILLEGAL

A Communist conspiracy is afoot today to prove that Jesus was legally crucified! It is time you became aware of what really happened at Jesus' trial!

by Herman L. Hoeh

Part II

IN THE previous issue we learned the shocking events surrounding the arrest of Jesus.

We also discovered that many prominent writers have been unconsciously influenced by Communist propaganda into believing that Jesus' arrest, his trial and conviction were legal and just!

We learned the Jewish point of view—and the devious means by which they try to deny that their own religious leaders bribed Judas to betray Jesus!

First Four Reasons Summarized

Then we learned the first four reasons why Jesus' arrest and trial were absolutely illegal.

First, Jesus was arrested illegally. He was arrested secretly, by night, on no formal charge of any crime, by those who were to be His judges.

Second, Jesus was illegally subjected to a secret preliminary examination by night, contrary to Jewish law.

Third, the indictment against Jesus was illegal because the judges themselves brought up a false and secret charge against Jesus without any prior testimony by witnesses.

Fourth, the trial of Jesus began illegally before sunrise in order that no one could testify on Jesus' behalf.

Now to continue with the second installment:

Fifth Reason

In the case of Jesus, the Sanhedrin was illegally convened to try a capital offense *on a day before an annual Sabbath.*

Notice why: "They shall not judge on the eve of the Sabbath, nor on any festival," says the *Mishna*, "Sanhedrin" IV, 1. In Wise's *Martyrdom of Jesus*, page 67, we read the following conclusive evidence: "No court of justice

in Israel was permitted to hold sessions on the Sabbath or on any of the seven Biblical Holy Days. In cases of capital crime, no trial could be commenced on Friday or the day previous to any Holy Day, because it was not lawful either to adjourn such cases longer than over night, or to continue them on the Sabbath or Holy Day."

The Jews even violated their law by arresting Jesus on the day before an annual Sabbath. They arrested Him on Wednesday in 31 A.D.; the annual Sabbath was Thursday.

Sixth Reason

The trial of Jesus was illegal *because it was concluded in one day.*

We read from Jewish law: "A criminal case resulting in the acquittal of the accused may terminate the same day on which the trial began. But if a sentence of death is to be pronounced, it cannot be concluded before the following day" (*Mishna*, "Sanhedrin" IV, 1). This was to allow sufficient opportunity for any witnesses in support of the accused to present themselves.

The Jews did not want to allow Jesus this opportunity.

Seventh Reason

The sentence against Jesus was illegally pronounced by the Sanhedrin *because it was founded upon Jesus' uncorroborated statement.* The Jewish Court pronounced sentence on Jesus with no supporting evidence whatever!

Consider! The only evidence presented by witnesses to the Court was given by two false witnesses. *But their testimony was not even used by the Court in sentencing Jesus to death.* Here is what happened.

The Jews obtained two false witnesses who testified that Jesus said, "I will destroy this temple *that is made with*

hands, and in three days, I'll build another made without hands" (Mark 14:58).

The Jews used this statement as an indictment against Jesus. But this piece of evidence was *not* what Jesus said. He never said the words "that is made with hands." Jesus was not referring to the physical temple erected by human hands, but to His body (John 2:19, 21) which would be raised in three days.

Then "the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God" (Matthew 26:62).

The question the High Priest asked Jesus had nothing to do with the indictment! Jesus was indicted on the false charge that He would destroy the physical temple, and rebuild it in three days' time.

But they condemned Him on another matter altogether. Notice! They asked, "Tell us plainly if you are Christ, the Son of God?"

"Jesus saith unto him, 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. Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, *He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye?* They answered and said, *He is guilty of death.*"

Do you see how quickly the trial was over? Upon the sole testimony of the One who was being tried, the judge said: "What do we need of any more witnesses? What do you all say?" The jury responded: "He's guilty."

Jesus was indicted on one charge,

tried on another, and condemned on His own testimony without any witnesses!

Jesus was not condemned because He said, "Within three days I will build this temple." He was condemned on the false charge of *blasphemy!*

Here is what Maimonides wrote in his book, *Sanhedrin IX, 2*. "We have it as a fundamental principle of our jurisprudence, that no one can bring an accusation against himself. Should a man make confession of guilt before a legally constituted tribunal, such confession is not to be used against him unless properly attested by two other witnesses" ("Sanhedrin" IV, 2).

Notice what the high priest said: "What further need have we of witnesses?"

Jesus was condemned on His own testimony, even though His testimony was not proved blasphemous!

The Jews didn't even examine Him according to the law to see whether His statement was blasphemy! They only demanded: "Are you the Son of God?" And He responded: "You're going to see the son of man seated at the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven . . ."

Was this blasphemy? Of course not! Jesus did not even refer directly to Himself. He merely said "the son of man." The Jewish Court did not seek to prove who the "son of man" was.

They knew, of course, that Jesus meant Himself. For all through His ministry, they came and purred in front of Him, and asked, "How long dost thou make us to doubt? If you be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not" (John 10:24,25). What hypocrites they were!

But as soon as Jesus even gave an indirect statement at the trial, they did not doubt whom He meant by the "son of man"!

On this testimony Jesus was condemned.

Even Mr. Radin admits that Jesus' testimony was not blasphemy. On pages 248 and 249 he says: "The 'blasphemy' which the Pentateuch mentions is a literal cursing of God or a direct defiance of him. The only pentateuchal reference makes this clear. It is in Leviti-

cus, chapter 24, and the incident which gave rise to the statute indicates the character of the offense of blasphemy in Jewish law. The half-Egyptian had cursed God—the Israelitish God—as under the circumstances of the quarrel there described he would have been likely enough to do. *No such thing could have been charged against Jesus by his most inveterate enemies.*"

Yet the Jewish religious leaders did this very thing!

Now consider another violation of Jewish law in extracting this testimony from Jesus: "No attempt is ever made to lead a man on to self-incrimination. Moreover, a voluntary confession on his part [on the defendant] is not admitted in evidence, and therefore *not competent to convict him*, unless a legal number of witnesses minutely corroborate his self-accusation." (Mendelsohn, *Criminal Jurisprudence of the Ancient Hebrews*, page 133.)

Eighth Reason

The condemnation of Jesus was illegal because the merits of the defense were not considered.

When they heard Jesus' statement, the high priest shouted: "He blasphemes." But the law in Deuteronomy 13:14 says, "Then shalt thou inquire, and make search, and ask diligently."

The Jewish law in the Mishna says: "The judges shall weigh the matter in the sincerity of their conscience" ("Sanhedrin" IV, 5).

Ninth Reason

The condemnation of Jesus BY PART OF THE SANHEDRIN was illegal because those who would have voted against

the condemnation of Jesus were not there!

Notice what took place at Jesus' trial before dawn according to Mark 14:64. "You have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they ALL condemned him to be guilty of death." It was unanimous. There was no investigation, no examination, to see if He did or did not blaspheme. They just used His testimony against Him without any proof, without any witnesses. They all did it immediately, instantaneously, simultaneously. It was *mob spirit* that condemned Jesus!

Here is what Mendelsohn states of such a procedure: "A simultaneous and unanimous verdict of guilt rendered on the day of the trial has the effect of an acquittal."

The verdict against Jesus was simultaneous and unanimous, although the Jewish law required at least one of the Council to serve as a defense counsel.

The proper method of voting was to have "the judges each in his turn absolve or condemn" (*Mishna*, "Sanhedrin" XV, 5). "The members of the Sanhedrin were seated in the form of a semicircle at the extremity of which a secretary was placed, whose business it was to record the votes. One of these secretaries recorded the votes in favor of the accused, the other against him," states the *Mishna*, "Sanhedrin" IV, 3.

"In ordinary cases the judges voted according to seniority, the oldest commencing; in a capital case, the reverse order was followed. That the younger members of the Sanhedrin should not be influenced by the views or the arguments of their more mature, more experienced colleagues, the junior judge was in these cases always the first to pronounce for or against conviction," says Benny, in *Criminal Code of the Jews*, pages 73-74.

Furthermore the high priest rent or tore his clothes at the trial (Mark 14:63 and Matthew 26:65).

In Leviticus 10:6 and 21:10 the high priest is forbidden to do so. "And he that is the high priest among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil was poured, and that is consecrated to put on the garments, shall not uncover his head, nor rend his clothes." They tore their outer garment to stir up emotion.
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UND JETZT INS DEUTSCHE ÜBERSETZT!

„Die Kindergeschichte der Bibel“

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give than to receive. She reaped that greater blessing. But I reaped the spiritual blessing of being humbled a little further—having to swallow more pride, and see the hand of God in it!

And so the year 1929 had come and gone. 1930 was to be another of the "lean years"—as indeed were several others to follow. We were at rock bottom financially. We had learned what it is to go hungry. But these were, nevertheless, years of spiritual growth.

These were the years in which Jesus Christ, the *living* Head of His Church, was instructing me in His Word, preparing me for His ministry, humbling me, rooting out the *self*-confidence, the cocky conceit, the vanity and egotism.

But He was replacing these *self*-trusting attributes with reliance and dependence on GOD. Instead of *self*-confidence, He was giving me painful but valuable lessons in FAITH. He was granting us a few miraculous answers to prayer. Some far more astonishing answers to prayer were to follow in the year 1930.

In the next installment you will read of the birth of our second son, Garner Ted, as a direct result of a miracle-answer to prayer, and the year ending with my first evangelistic campaign, along with other events I hope you will find interesting.

Jesus' Trial

(Continued from page 14)

tion, to prejudice others.

The high priest should have remained calm so that no mistake in judgment would be made.

In Jesus' trial none of these requirements were followed.

Let Wise's book, *Martyrdom of Jesus*, page 74, explain the law on this point: "If none of the judges defend the culprit, i.e., all pronounce him guilty, having no defender in the court, the verdict guilty, *was invalid* and the sentence of death could not be executed."

Yet Jesus was executed contrary to the law!

Now notice which members of the Sanhedrin were missing during the trial. Take the case of Joseph of Arimathaea. After Jesus was crucified, we read from

Luke 23:50: "And, behold, there was a man named Joseph, a counsellor; and he was a good man, and a just"—the word "counsellor" is admitted by all hands to represent a member of the Sanhedrin. "*The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them*"—and neither had Nicodemus.

In Mark's account we learn that ALL those present condemned Jesus instantaneously and unanimously. But since the night meeting was illegal, Joseph of Arimathaea was not present. The Jews wanted to make sure he could not defend Jesus.

Think of the utter lack of any fairness in this trial!

Tenth Reason

The sentence against Jesus was pronounced in a place forbidden by law. After the mob seized Christ, they led Him away, after having been at Annas', and brought Him into Caiaphas, the high priest's, house. The trial of Jesus wasn't held in court! Read Luke 22:54: "And they seized him, and led him away, and brought him into the high priest's house."

The court building wasn't legally to be opened until after sunrise.

According to Jewish law, "A sentence of death can be pronounced *only so long as the Sanhedrin holds its sessions in the appointed place*," says Maimonides, in his book, Section XIV.

The Talmud says: "After leaving the hall Gazith (the court) *no sentence of death can be passed upon anyone so ever*." (From Bab. Talmud, "Abodah Tarath" or "Of Idolatry," Ch. 1, fol. 8.)

A sentence of death may be passed only in a legal court, not in some private home, as the Jews were doing.

Eleventh Reason

Most Sanhedrin members themselves were legally disqualified to try Jesus.

According to Mendelsohn, *Hebrew Maxims and Rules*, page 182, "The robe of the unfairly elected judge is to be respected not more than the blanket of the ass."

Some of the judges were elected unfairly. We have the names from the Bible and from Josephus of most of the men who were on the Sanhedrin at the time of Christ. Such men as Caiaphas,

Eleazar, Jonathon, Theophilus, Mathias, Ishmael, Simon, John, Alexander, Ananias and many others were, according to Josephus, recipients of bribes, appointed by members of the family who themselves had no right to sit on it, bought their offices, and were disrespected by their people. There were 12 ex-high priests living at this one time, all part of the Sanhedrin. The Bible expressly requires a man to be high priest *throughout his lifetime*, at the end of which another took his place. But the Jews permitted high priests to be voted into office year by year. The whole official arrangement—the whole choice of offices—was wrong.

But there was another reason which disqualified almost all Christ's judges. It is this: "Nor must there be on the judicial bench either a relation, or a particular friend, or an enemy of either the accused or the accuser," writes Mendelsohn, page 108.

Many of the judges were Jesus' enemies. They even paid bribe money to betray Him.

In Benny's work, *Criminal Code of the Jews*, page 37, this surprising statement is found: "Nor under any circumstances was a man known to be at *enmity with the accused person* permitted to occupy a position among his judges." Everybody knew that the Sadducees and Pharisees were at outs with Jesus. Yet they were permitted to try Him.

Twelfth Reason

The Jewish Court illegally switched the charges against Jesus from blasphemy to sedition and treason before Pilate. Observe how it was done!

The next step in Jesus' trial was to take Him to the legal court for a mock, private trial at sunrise.

"And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council"—now that they *had already condemned Him of blasphemy*, they are going to take Him to court for a mock trial!—"saying, Art thou the Christ? tell us."

Notice that they are repeating the same questions over again.

"And he [Jesus] said unto them, If
(Please continue on page 31)

"This is not good," one of them said. "It could be a plot to arrest you for not paying for the grain."

"They could arrest all of us if they could prove that one of us is a thief," said another. "I can't help feeling that God is beginning to deal harshly with us because of the wrong things we have done especially for what we did to Joseph!" (Verses 25-28.)

The rest of the trip was not a happy one, because with each step the brothers feared that Egyptian soldiers would appear on the horizon behind them. But they returned to their father safely.

Jacob was happy to receive the grain. But he was most unhappy to learn, when his sons told him what had happened, that Simeon was being held prisoner and that the Governor of Egypt demanded to see Benjamin.



When the brother looked in his travel sack, he found a bag of coins—the exact amount he had paid for his grain!

(To be continued in next issue)

Jesus' Trial

(Continued from page 22)

I tell you, ye will not believe: and if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go. Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God."

They had to make this trial look legal. So they all said, "Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am. And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth. And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate" (Luke 22:66-71 and 23:1).

This meeting probably didn't last any more than two minutes! Now their trial, which was illegally conducted in the private home of Caiaphas, was now outwardly legalized. But instead of taking Jesus out to be stoned for blasphemy, they switched the charges after the Court was dismissed! They took Him to Pilate, and here is what we read in John 18:28: "Then led they Jesus

from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover." The Jews were eating the Passover on an improper day, one day late as they still do today.

"Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man? They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee. Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law" (John 18:31). Pilate was difficult to convince. He didn't want to be bothered at this hour in the morning. But the Jews replied: "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." Why wasn't it lawful? Let Luke give the surprising answer:

"And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow *perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King*" (Luke 23:2).

Notice that the Jews did not charge

Jesus with blasphemy. Had they done so, Pilate would have told the Jews not to bother him, but to execute Christ according to their own law by stoning. The Jewish leaders were afraid of their own people! So they trumped up *other and new charges against Jesus before Pilate.*

Pilate now had reason to be surprised. The only cases for which the Jews could not try a man involved sedition or treason. "Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews?"

Jesus said, "Did others tell it thee of me? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew?" He didn't like the Jews, did he? "Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants [the disciples], fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence"—not of this time, not of this world order.

"Pilate therefore said unto him, Art

thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth?" (John 18:33-38.) Jesus didn't even answer that.

Pilate Finds Jesus Innocent

"And when he had said this, he [Pilate] went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, *I find in him no fault at all.*"

When Pilate heard that Jesus was from Galilee, he told the Jews to take Him to Herod (Luke 23:6-7). "And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time" for the Passover. After an interview with Jesus, Herod sent Him back to Pilate. To frighten the Roman governor, the Jews stirred up the mob outside.

Pilate began to see there was trouble brewing. He had a mob on his hands.

This was trial by mob rule!

So Pilate took Jesus, terribly scourged Him, let the soldiers plait on Him a crown of thorns and array Him in purple.

Pilate brought Jesus out again and shouted to the mob: "Behold, I bring him forth to you, that you may know that I find no fault in him."

"When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate said unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him."

The Jews answered and said, "We have a law, and by the law he ought to die"—and now for the first time they reveal to Pilate why they condemned Him—"because he made himself the Son of God" (John 19:7). They were getting very angry!

Pilate became frightened. He didn't want to have anything happen for which he would be held responsible by the Roman gods! Upon this, Pilate definitely sought to release him (John 19:12), for there were no witnesses whatever in this trial before Pilate. The Jews had commenced accusing Jesus without proof, without witnesses, without testimony.

Then the ignorant mob cried out:

"If you release this man, you're not Caesar's friend." They were threatening Pilate with loss of his office.

Matthew 27:24 picks the story up: "When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and *washed his hands* before the multitude, saying, *I am innocent of the blood of this just person: SEE YE TO IT.*"

The ignorant mob of Jews responded: "*His blood be on us, and on our children.*" What they were really saying is, "We accept wholly, fully, the responsibility for His execution, only *you* execute Him. We don't want to stone Him; we want *you* to execute Him."

Then Pilate "scourged Jesus, [and] delivered him to be crucified." The purpose of scourging was to prepare a criminal for death.

But notice—Pilate did not even give a formal decision against Jesus Christ. He just turned Him over to the soldiers to do what the Jewish mob wanted.

Jesus Deliberately Crucified Though Found Innocent

That is where the trial of Jesus abruptly broke off. No justice here! An innocent man condemned by mob violence! The dastardly act of crucifixion followed. Yet some would still *falsely* claim, in the face of all this evidence, that Jesus' trial was legal, and His crucifixion justified!

Most of us have never really examined the trial of Jesus before. Just look at this trial. What a mockery of justice it was! Can you imagine what it would be like if *you* had been on trial, to be spitefully treated as these thrill-seeking soldiers treated Jesus? What consideration, what fairness would have been given you?

All this suffering Jesus endured to pay the penalty of sin *for you!* Yet not you *only*, but to pay the penalty of the sins of the WHOLE WORLD. It is time you personally were *made to look* at the last hours of Jesus in mortal flesh to see what a miscarriage of justice led up to the crucifixion—what a mockery was made of trial; and to understand the 12 reasons why the conviction of Jesus was an *utter fraud*—all voluntarily endured by Christ to pay the penalty of *your sin in your stead!*

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