



World Christian Fellowship

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Legal Judgement in Israel!

Matthew 26:57

Matthew 26:57, *And those who had laid hold of Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.*

Now we stand at the sacred moment when our Lord lays down His life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of humanity.

Today we will lay a foundation to understand the nature of the judicial system in Israel. So that **we will understand the trial of Christ was how illegal and unjust.** Despite that, Jesus demonstrates His holy and perfect majesty.

The Jews have always prided themselves on their sense of fairness, equity, justice, and rightly so.

The Jews have basically a foundation of justice that has benefited the whole world. The sense of justice and legal philosophy that we have, even in United Kingdom, finds its origins in the Judaic justice system, as do all equitable systems around the world.

God is the source of justice, and His people are called to reflect His character in their governance.

Justice is not optional—it is a covenantal requirement tied to Israel’s flourishing.

Leadership must be accountable, impartial, and incorruptible.

The Jewish system of legal philosophy, law and judgment was predicated on one Old Testament passage.

Deuteronomy 16:18-20, *“You shall appoint judges and officers in all your gates, which the Lord your God gives you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with just judgment. ¹⁹You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show partiality, nor take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous. ²⁰You shall follow what is altogether just, that you may live and inherit the land which the Lord your God is giving you.*

God’s standard for judgment and justice.

- God commands the establishment of a judicial system in every town.
- These leaders are to judge with “righteous judgment”—a standard rooted in God’s own justice.
- The decentralized structure (“in all your towns”) ensures local access to justice.
- Local judges, judging the people with fairness and righteousness.

Three prohibitions:

- **Perverting justice** – twisting or distorting the truth.
- **Showing partiality** – favouring individuals based on status, wealth, or relationship.
- **Accepting bribes** – which blinds even the wise and undermines fairness.

These reflect God's concern for equity and impartiality.

- Never distorting what is true,
- Not being partial,
- Never taking a bribe,
- Justice rendered to all.

You pursue it in order that you may live and possess the land which the Lord your God is giving you.

Throughout the history of the Jewish people, there has been that undergirding sense of justice and judgment as a standard for their system of legal philosophy.

As they began to work out the practical application of **Deuteronomy 16**, in any area or region or locality where there were **120 men as heads of families**, there was to be a local council in that place.

Wherever you had at least **120 men** who were heads of families, you had enough people to constitute a local council.

It was a synagogue community.

Then that community was large enough to have a synagogue, which is a local council.

The councils became known as **Sanhedrin**, in **Hebrew**.

It is being transliterated of a **Greek term** which means "*sitting together.*"

They were a group of men who came and sat together to make judgments, to decide issues of civil and criminal aspects.

In any group of 120 men who were head of families, any locality, they would have a Sanhedrin, a sitting together council.

The council would be made up of **23 men**. Always an odd number, so that in any voting there would always be a majority.

These **23 men** would be taken from the **elders of the village**. They acted as judges and jury in all matters.

When the village or a town had **less than 120 men** who were heads of families, there would be a group of either **3 or 7 elders**, chosen to rule over those smaller villages.

They would make the judgments and render the verdicts in the cases of conflict or criminal activity.

These councils or Sanhedrin constituted basically the government over a synagogue community.

One of them on the councils, whether small or large, would be called the chief ruler.

In the gospels of the New Testament, when we read about the **chief ruler**, he is one who **presides over that local council**. But all of them served as a court.

Matthew 5:22 or **Matthew 10:17** or elsewhere, that they would be brought before the council.

The local governing group of judges who sit over any given synagogue community of Jews.

In Jerusalem, which of course was the capital city, the great religious centre of the life of Israel, there was what was called the **Great Sanhedrin**.

The Great Council was composed most likely of **70 men**.

24 elders,

24 chief priests,

23 scribes

70 Total

The high priest makes 71.

So that they got an odd number by including the high priest. They were the final court for appeal.

Any person who felt that the adjudication made at a lower level was not fair could appeal to the Sanhedrin and the Supreme Court level in Jerusalem, and under some conditions, no doubt, gain a hearing.

- They were the highest and ultimate ruling body in Israel.
- The men who were on that group were chosen because of their wisdom.
- They were chosen from the lesser councils.
- They did their apprenticeship work by serving a lesser council, and if they proved themselves to be uniquely wise, were brought to the Sanhedrin level.

Also, people were invited to sit on the Sanhedrin who became aware of their duties and who grew to understand the function by being pupils who sat at the feet of other Sanhedrims.

It was made up of students and pupils of the group itself, as well as those taken from local groups, brought to that point because of their high esteem, and their proven track record of wisdom and impartiality.

Deuteronomy 1:13-17, *Choose wise, understanding, and knowledgeable men from among your tribes, and I will make them heads over you.*¹⁴ *And you answered me and said, ‘The thing which you have told us to do is good.’*¹⁵ *So I took the heads of your tribes, wise and knowledgeable men, and made them heads over you, leaders of thousands, leaders of hundreds, leaders of fifties, leaders of tens, and officers for your tribes.*¹⁶ *“Then I commanded your judges at that time, saying, ‘Hear the cases between your brethren, and judge righteously between a man and his brother or the stranger who is with him.*¹⁷ *You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small as well as the great; you shall not be afraid in any man’s presence, for the judgment is God’s. The case that is too hard for you, bring to me, and I will hear it.’*

The Sanhedrin in terms of criminal procedure, guaranteed to a person who was under prosecution several things.

There were three primary things in relation to criminal procedure that the laws of jurisprudence upheld in the Sanhedrin guaranteed to a person.

a) Public trial:

There was to be no hidden, secret, and clandestine trials.

Everything was to be open and exposed, so that no one could be framed into some kind of execution or penalty without just trial taking place.

The judges were always under the scrutiny of the people, who were able to see and attend. They also will know what was going on. Courts today have maintained the same thing.

b) Self defence.

The Sanhedrin guaranteed for anyone brought in on a criminal procedure the right of self-defence. There was to be a defender.

There was to be someone who provided a defence for the accused.

He had the right to bring in defence of himself in the mouth of other witnesses who could participate in the trial.

c) 2 or 3 witnesses.

No one could be convicted of anything unless convicted or proven to be guilty by two or three witnesses.

Basically, those three things public trial, the right of defence, and a solid case based upon the evidence of more than one witness.

Those things remain with us even today under the basic guarantee of courts in our own society.

It was in place by the time of our Lord.

It is very important for us to know as we get through this trial, because we will see how they violated all these things.

False witness:

False witnessing was so serious a crime, because their punishments were so swift and so serious.

Anyone who gave false testimony was punished with the very penalty the false witness sought to bring upon the person he witnessed against.

If anyone came into the court to witness that someone had committed a murder, and they were giving false witness then they would pay the death penalty by themselves.

Whatever penalty you sought, you received, if your testimony was false.

Deuteronomy 19:15-19, *“One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established. ¹⁶ If a false witness rises against any man to testify*

against him of wrongdoing, ¹⁷then both men in the controversy shall stand before the Lord, before the priests and the judges who serve in those days. ¹⁸And the judges shall make careful inquiry, and indeed, if the witness is a false witness, who has testified falsely against his brother, ¹⁹then you shall do to him as he thought to have done to his brother; so you shall put away the evil from among you.

- A single witness is not enough to convict someone of a crime or sin.
- A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.

This safeguards against false accusations and ensures fairness.

- If a witness falsely accuses someone, both parties must appear before the Lord and the appointed judges.
- The case is to be thoroughly investigated by the judges.

This emphasizes due process and discernment in judgment.

- If the accuser is found to be lying, they must receive the punishment they intended for the accused.

It reinforces the seriousness of bearing false witness and protects the integrity of the judicial system.

The way to eliminate false witnesses is to ensure they suffer the exact fate they tried to inflict upon others. Because

obviously the system of justice depends so much on true witnesses.

Each case was to be publicly heard. No unjust act allowed to proceed behind closed doors.

Interesting to note that in any case where death was prescribed as the sentence, the execution could not be accomplished until the third day.

For example, if today the sentence was rendered, this would be the first day.

One whole day, tomorrow, would be the second day, and not until the morning of the third day could the council reconvene and reaffirm the death sentence, and execute the person that same day.

The middle, second day was a day to be sure that all the evidence was in, and there was no further need for testimony.

The witnesses who witnessed against the person which brought about the death penalty were the ones who had to cast the first stone in the execution. The witnesses were the executioners.

Deuteronomy 17:5-6, *Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness. 7The hands of the witnesses shall be the first against him to put him*

to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So you shall put away the evil from among you.

So, you wanted to be very certain that your testimony was true, or you would not only be guilty of lying, but you would also be guilty of murder.

The legal custom was to secure the accuracy of testimony by assigning the witness the role of executioner. This practice was intended to **add the final degree of conviction** to the evidence provided, thereby safeguarding against perjury.

Remember when the people accused of a **woman caught in adultery**, **Jesus** said to them, “You are the witnesses against her, then let he that is without sin cast the first stone.”

In other words, that would have been the normal procedure.

If she is guilty, then we are going to execute her, and you that have witnessed against her will cast the stones.

The only thing He said is if you haven’t done the same thing, then you have a right to cast that stone.

The implication there is that the witnesses were the executioners, and that was the system.

Sanhedrin trial procedure:

On the day of the trial, the **executive officers of justice** brought the accused person into the council chamber. At the feet of the elders sat men known as **auditors or candidates**, who regularly observed the council's sessions.

The council's proceedings were **audited** by a group of **objective observers** who meticulously scrutinized everything to ensure it conformed to **justice and equity**. Following this, the **case files** were read aloud, and the witnesses were called in one by one.

The president addressed this exhortation to each witness. Forget **speculation** and whatever **rumours** you have heard. We are asking for facts. Recognize the **weighty responsibility** upon you; this is not a financial case where any damage inflicted could be undone.

“If you cause the condemnation of a person unjustly accused, his blood and the blood of all the posterity of him, of whom you will have deprived the earth, will fall on you, and God will demand of you an account, as He demanded of Cain an account of the blood of Abel. Now speak.”

Now, that sort of filtered down to us through the years as, *“Put your hand on the Bible and swear before God to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.”*

This comes right out of that Jewish concept.

If you pronounce a guilty sentence that means death, his blood is going to be on you, and not just his blood, but all the blood of all the unborn future generations that will never reach this earth because you have taken his life, and you would be blood guilty before God. Now that you know that, speak.

In the Sanhedrin process a woman could not be a witness, because she would not have the courage to give the first blow to the condemned person.

Nor could a child, that is irresponsible, nor a slave, nor a man of bad character, nor one who has infirmities that prevent the full enjoyment of his physical and moral faculties.

Neither the **individual's confession** against himself nor a declaration, no matter how influential, could by itself result in a condemnation.

Jewish law said no person can himself testify against himself, and on the basis of that single testimony, be held guilty.

We have that same kind of thing today as gained from this basic perception. We hold it as fundamental that no one shall prejudice himself.

If a man accuses himself before a tribunal, we must not believe him unless the fact is attested by two other witnesses.

The witnesses are to attest to the identity of the party, to depose to the month, day, hour, and circumstances of the crime.

In other words, it can't be hearsay or generalities.

After an examination of these proofs, the judges who believe the party innocent stated their reasons. Those who believed him guilty spoke afterwards, and with the greatest moderation.

If one of the auditors was entrusted by the accused with his defence, or if he wished in his own name to present any explanations in favour of innocence, he was allowed to do that.

He could address the judges and the people. But this liberty was not granted to him if his opinion was in favour of condemnation. They really leaned on the merciful side.

Other than a judge could speak only if he was speaking on behalf of the innocence of the party, not if he was speaking on behalf of the guilt, because they didn't want to start a crowd an emotional response that could bring about guilt by fervour and emotion.

When the accused person himself wished to speak, they gave the most profound attention, and when the discussion was

finished, one of the judges recapitulated the case and they removed all the spectators.

Two scribes took down the votes of the judges.

- One of them noted those who were in favour of the accused.
- Another, those who condemned him.

The great synagogue **23 was a quorum**, the minimum number of members of an assembly or society that must be present at any of its meetings to make the proceedings of that meeting valid.

Eleven votes out of 23 was sufficient to acquit, it required 13 to convict.

If a majority of votes acquitted, the accused was discharged instantly.

If he was to be punished, the judges postponed pronouncing sentence until the third day.

During the intermediate day, they could not be occupied with anything but the cause, and they abstained from eating, they had to fast.

A very important note, because that indicates to us that they could never have this kind of trial the day before a feast day,

or they would be fasting on a feast, and violating their Jewish law.

Another violation of the trial of Christ.

They were to abstain from food, from wine or liquor or anything that might render their minds less capable of reflection. Then on the morning of the third day they returned to the judgment seat. Each judge who had not changed his opinion said, 'I continue of the same opinion and condemn.' Anyone who had first condemned might at this sitting acquit, but he who had once acquitted could not change his mind to condemn.

If a majority condemned, two magistrates immediately accompanied the condemned person out to the place of punishment. In other words, they executed him on the same day they sentenced him.

This, of course, is consistent with the Old Testament passage in **Ecclesiastes 8:11**, *Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.*

Swift punishment ensures decreasing crime.

The elders sat in the seats in the judgment hall while the man was ushered out toward his place of execution. They placed at

the entrance of the judgment hall an officer of justice with a flag in his hand.

A second officer of justice got on a horse and rode after that party headed for execution. He followed the prisoner and constantly turned around and looked back at the man with the flag.

During this interval, if any person came to announce to the Sanhedrin any new evidence in favour of the prisoner, the first officer would wave his flag, and the second one, as soon as he saw it, brought back the prisoner.

If the prisoner declared to the magistrates that he recollected some reasons which had escaped him, some thoughts that had escaped him, they brought him before the judges no less than five times.

If no incident occurred, the procession advanced slowly, preceded by a herald. And the herald in front of it was in a loud voice addressing the people, 'This man is led to punishment for such a crime, the witnesses who have sworn against him are – and he named the persons – If anyone has evidence to give in his favour, let him come forth quickly.'

This was heralded all the way, so the front of the procession was heralding "If there is any evidence, tell us." The back of the procession was looking back to see if anyone was coming,

and the man with the flag was there ready to wave it, stop the process.

Finally, “If they arrived at the place of punishment,” nothing deterred them, “they made the man drink an incredible beverage in order to render the approach of death less terrible and executed him.”

When we look at that whole scene, we would say, if we were in the Sanhedrin’s hands, we would be in pretty good hands. These people have a tremendous sense of justice, mixed with a sense of mercy.

They have built in some safeguards here that are going to make it pretty good for someone who is innocent, because you have got all kinds of opportunities to come back in with testimony.

The tremendous crime of false witnessing is a good preventative, too.

The care of fasting and reflecting for one whole day and all these things, make it sound like it would be a safe place to be.

But it didn’t turn out to be so for Christ.

In the Jewish trial of Jesus Christ, they violated every single law of justice and legal philosophy known to them.

They violated every single one of them wilfully, so that the trial of Jesus Christ is the most unjust trial in human history.

It must be, for this court condemned to death the only truly innocent person who ever lived.

It is a mockery of justice.

It is a violation of everything in their system of law.

The proverb of the Sanhedrin was this: ***the Sanhedrin is to save, not destroy life.***

That wasn't true in this case. No criminal trial could be carried through the night, but this one was.

The judges who condemned a criminal had to have a day in between before the execution, and they had to fast all day, but they didn't. They killed Jesus the same day.

- There had to be witnesses who witnessed against Him, but there were none.
- There had to be defence, but there was no defence.
- There was not even any indictment, there was no arraignment, there was no nothing, there was no crime.

Many other compile a list of things they did to violate the laws that they themselves affirmed.

Jesus had two major trials:

- A Jewish ecclesiastical religious trial, and
- A Roman secular political trial.

The reason:

- Jews were an occupied people.
- Rome was in authority and control over them.

Moreover, the Jews did not have the right of execution.

They couldn't kill a criminal. They didn't have the right of capital punishment.

The Romans reserved that right.

The Jews could condemn Jesus to death, but they couldn't execute Him. Whatever they could accomplish in their religious trial, they had to sell the Romans on, because the Romans were the ones that would have to kill Jesus.

This is the reason why Jesus faced two major trials.

A trial before the Jews, and then the evidence and the supposed crime is carried to the Romans.

The Romans must see this as a viable crime and the reason for execution and then carry out the execution.

The Jewish trial and the Gentile trial each have three phases.

They each have three phases. In total six different trials Jesus was involved in.

The Jewish trial began when Jesus was taken to Annas, Annas sent Him to Caiaphas and Caiaphas sent Him to Sanhedrin in the middle of the night. Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin met again in the morning, after dawn, to try to legitimize their evil deed.

The Jewish trial

- Annas,
- Caiaphas and the
- Sanhedrin.

After they had finished their work, they pushed Him off to the Romans.

- First, He went to Pilate,
- Pilate sent Him to Herod,
- Herod sent Him back to Pilate, and
- Pilate condemned Him to death.

There are the three phases of the Roman trial.

Both the Jews and the Romans violated all of justice, truth, fairness, and committed horrendous crimes against an innocent man.

- From Gethsemane, He was taken to Annas, for what was to be an accusation.
- Annas was to function like the grand jury, coming up with an indictment.
- From Annas, He was sent to Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin for the main Jewish trial.

They did what they wanted to do. In the morning after daybreak that they could make it legal, it had to happen in the day. They had a very brief meeting in the morning lasted ten minutes or so, and they reaffirmed their condemnation of Jesus Christ.

Then from there, He was sent to Pilate, and then Pilate sent Him to Herod, because Pilate knew He was innocent. Then Herod sent Him back to Pilate, and Pilate, under the pressure the Jews put on him that they would tell Caesar that he was an inadequate ruler, decided to condemn Jesus to death.

This is the sequence.

All this series of trials leads to the execution of Jesus Christ.

- It is not that they found something out about Him and therefore they killed Him.
- It is that they wanted Him dead, and they had to invent means to bring about His death.

The sentence was already determined. It was the crime they didn't have.

V 57, *And those who had laid hold of Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.*

Matthew just goes right into the main trial.

To get the first phase of it, we must go to **John 18**, to find a very important portion of this event.

In **John 18**, we come to the first part, the illegal, unjust confrontation.

John 18:12, *Then the detachment of troops and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him.*

The **Speira**, the Roman cohort, could have been as many as 600 soldiers of Rome.

The captain and the officers of the Jews, who would be the temple police.

The word "took" is a technical word, sometimes used for arrest.

John 18:13, *And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was high priest that year.*

John then helps us here to fill in the whole story.
First, He was led to Annas. He is bound.

Psalm 118:27, *God is the Lord, And He has given us light; Bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar.*

The sacrifice was tied to the horns of the altar.
Christ is bound almost as a fulfilment of the typology of sacrifice.

He is bound, even as Isaac was bound to be sacrificed.
He comes like a criminal, bound to be offered as a sacrifice, and He is led away to Annas.

The idea of taking Him to Annas is that Annas is the brains behind everything.

Annas despises Jesus Christ.
Jesus is a threat to his security, power, prestige, and everything.

Annas resents Jesus' holiness because he was so utterly unholy.
Annas resents Jesus' perfection because he was so utterly vile.

Everything about Jesus causes him anger, and he is under the direction of the great choreographer Satan himself.

Luke 22:53, *When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize Me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.*

Annas is one of the cast of characters manipulated by hell itself, and he has a venomous hatred for Jesus Christ.

There are reasons for it.

They send Jesus to annas house, which is illegal.

It is illegal because it is at night, and the place is his house.

No such procedures were to occur like that.

Annas

Annas had been high priest from **6-15 A.D.**

He was dismissed by **Governor Quirinius 15 years before** this.

Caiphas was the existing High Priest.

John 18:13, *And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was high priest that year.*

God has ordained high priests were high priests for life. They were not appointed every year.

But under the Roman rule the position of High Priest becoming a political position, and it was bought and sold. It was so

connected with being able to bow the knee to Rome that high priests came and went rather rapidly.

The Romans had dismissed Annas out of the office of high priest because he was amassing so much power. He was a cunning and clever man.

Annas had been pushed out as high priest, but still carries the name, because a high priest was to be a high priest for life.

But when Annas went out as high priest, five of his sons and one son-in-law, Caiaphas, who married his daughter, succeeded him, so he maintained control.

It was “in the family.” Annas maintained this title of high priest, and he was the boss.

He was the head of racketeering.
He was behind everything.

All the money changers and the selling and the buying in the temple, all of that was called **“the bazaars of Annas.”**

He got a piece of all that action. He was the big boss in the temple mafia, the temple criminal proceedings of extortion. He controlled it all.

When you as a Jew would come to the temple, you would never come empty-handed.

When a Jew came, he would bring either a sacrifice or an offering.

If you brought an offering, he would bring some coins to put in those bell-shaped receptacles that were up on the wall where he gave his offering. The problem was he couldn't put pagan coinage in there, because pagan coinage often was inscribed with an image. An image to a Jew is an idol.

They had to exchange of his coinage for temple coinage, which was acceptable. The Jews came in with his money and made the exchange, he was taken. It was exorbitant, and the money changers were charging the people way more than they should for a temple currency.

What happens when a Jew came in with his lamb?

If he had brought a lamb out of his own flock, and he came to offer it to the Lord, or a turtledove, depending on his economic capability, and he came in there. The first thing he would have to do is take his animal to a screening group of priests, and those priests would examine the animal to see if it was without blemish.

If you didn't buy it in the temple then it was blemished. You could avoid all of that by coming with nothing, going to the temple stockyard, and buying an already approved animal at about three times the price.

But what choice did you have if your animal was turned down?

They extorted from the people.

The whole business is the bazaar of Annas.

Annas is getting rich and influential.

The first thing Jesus did when He came to the city of Jerusalem was cleansed the temple.

John 2:13-17, He went in and overturned the tables and threw everybody out. Now, that was Jesus initial contact with Annas and his operation.

Now we get a little idea of why Annas didn't like Jesus.

Again, when Jesus came back, in the passion week went into the temple and cleansed it.

Mark 11:15-18.

Mark 11:16, *And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple.*

Jesus overturned the tables of the money changers, wouldn't let anybody carry anything out of there.

The Jews then met together to discuss how they could kill Him. He was disrupting everything.

He was disrupting their religious teaching.
He was disrupting their power and authority.
He was disrupting their business.
He was really a problem.

He said at that time that, “How is it that My Father’s house is to be a house of prayer, and you have made it into a den of thieves?”

Jesus called Annas and all his cohorts a bunch of thieves.

So, Annas wanted to be rid of Jesus.
The Jews knew that he was the brain behind everything.
They figured that’s a good place to start. Annas will act like a grand jury. He will come up with an indictment. We will get that indictment against Jesus, bring Him into the Sanhedrin, condemn Him and execute Him.

John 18:19, *The high priest then asked Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine.*

Annas said, “I want to know what You teach, and I want to know about Your followers. How widespread is Your movement, and who are Your followers?”

Annas asked about disciples and doctrine.

Who follows You?

How many follow You?

What is Your range of influence?

What is it that You teach?

Annas violates right here all sense of justice.

If you bring a person in for a prosecution, you tell them what they have done, you don't ask them.

You don't ask them to talk in generalities, hoping you can uncover a crime for which you have already given a sentence.

This is illegal.

This is unjust, and Jesus' answer indicates it.

John 18:20-21, *Jesus answered him, "I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet, and in secret I have said nothing. ²¹Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have heard Me what I said to them. Indeed they know what I said."*

Jesus says to him that if you have got a case, present it.

Ask them who heard Me what I have said unto them.

If you have got a case, let us see your witnesses, Annas. Don't ask Me. I can't incriminate Myself. If you have a case, show it.

Jesus calls for proper legal procedure. Jesus shows the evil, ugly injustice of Annas.

Jesus wasn't to give evidence against Himself.

Jesus wasn't to convict Himself as His own witness for prosecution.

Call your witnesses, Annas. Everything I have said, I have said openly and publicly, people have heard it, there are plenty of people, you can bring them in, they will tell you. If you want justice, it is out there. If you want testimony, it is out there. Call your witnesses. Annas was embarrassed. He was frustrated. He was unmasked.

Annas was no match for the infinite mind of Jesus Christ.

John 18:22, *And when He had said these things, one of the officers who stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, "Do You answer the high priest like that?"*

Slapped Jesus across the face.

Jesus had cornered Annas and unmasked him as a man who was violating the laws of justice.

This man, wanting to defend his master who had lost face, slapped Jesus across the face. The Lord basically offered no emotional retaliation.

Paul was brought before the same Sanhedrin, and he gives testimony of how he lived with a clear conscience before God.

Acts 23:2-3, *And the high priest Ananias commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth. ³Then Paul said to him, "God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! For you sit to judge me according to the law, and do you command me to be struck contrary to the law?"*

Jesus' reaction was very different from Paul.

1 Peter 2:23, *who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;*

Jesus never reacted that way.

This was the hour of His death, He was resolute, He was ready, He would go through it, He had settled that in the garden, in the Father's will.

He was moving to the cross.

There was nothing to say in regard to an angry retort.

John 18:23, *Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you strike Me?"*

He answered him in one of the most marvellous responses.

If I have done something evil or said something evil, bring your witnesses.

If I have spoken well, why did you hit Me?

There was no answer for that except to say, “I hit You because You embarrassed the high priest,” who should have been embarrassed.

Jesus, always the master of response; if you’ve got a case, give it. If you don’t, why are you hitting Me? If I’m guilty, prove it. If I’m innocent, why are you hitting Me?

What did Annas do?

Nothing! The only thing he could do is send Jesus to Caiaphas.

John 18:24, *Then Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.*

What could Caiaphas do?

In the middle of the night between 12 to 3 am.

The cock hasn’t crowed, which crows at three. Cock crow is from twelve to three, so it isn’t even the end of the cock crow period when the cock crows to mark the end of that time, around three o’clock.

We know that it isn’t three o’clock, because Peter hasn’t quite yet denied Him, so it’s earlier than three o’clock. It’s the middle of the night.

Annas is in his own house in the dark, clandestine night, trying to pull off an arraignment but can't do it, winds up embarrassed.

Must have his servant slap Jesus in the face, and then says, "Get Him out of here, take Him to Caiaphas."

Jesus goes to Caiaphas with no indictment and no arraignment at all.

No crime.

Is this an illegal and unjust confrontation with Annas?

It is.

It is in the middle of the night that is illegal.

It was without witnesses that is illegal.

There was no crime.

There was no charge.

Annas had no legal authority.

He wasn't even an official prosecutor, in any sense.

His home was an improper place to have such a thing.

But don't be startled, that's just one of many illegalities. They just mount and mount.

V 57, And those who had laid hold of Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.

The chief priests, the temple police, the elders, the soldiers, take Jesus, bound from Annas to Caiaphas, and Caiaphas is equally wretched, equally evil.

Of course, anything Annas likes, he likes.

Anything Annas hates, he hates.

- He is equally the manipulated tool of Satan.
- He is threatened.
- He is possessive.
- He is power hungry.
- He is greedy.
- He hates truth.
- He hates righteousness.
- He hates holiness.
- He hates Jesus Christ.

In the dark of night, Jesus is transported from the house of Annas to the house of Caiaphas, somewhere near the temple.

The scribes and elders are all gathering.

They were getting them together when He was at the house of Annas.

Annas allowed them the time to get everybody together.

Mark 14:53, *And they led Jesus away to the high priest; and with him were assembled all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes.*

However at least one that wasn't there, and that doesn't violate the idea of all meaning "all of them," in the sense that a great number of them were there.

Luke 23:50-51, *Now behold, there was a man named Joseph, a council member, a good and just man. ⁵¹He had not consented to their decision and deed. He was from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who himself was also waiting for the kingdom of God.*

Joseph of Arimathea was not there.

Joseph was a good and righteous man.

He did not consent to the death of Christ with them.

He wasn't there to vote on that.

Apart from him most of them, perhaps even all the remaining ones were there, ready to do their foul deed to Christ.

I am sure some of them didn't even realize what was going on they were so totally the pawns of Satanic possession and influence.

No public trial here,
No defence,
Nobody to give testimony for Christ.

They are in Caiaphas' house, illegal.

Conclusion:

Standing Alone for God.

Joseph of Arimathea reminds us that true faith often requires quiet courage. Though a member of the Sanhedrin, he did not consent to their decision to crucify Jesus.

In a moment when fear silenced many, Joseph stepped forward—asking Pilate for Jesus' body, preparing it with dignity, and laying it in his own tomb. He stood alone, but he stood for God.

This kind of solitary faith echoes throughout Scripture:

- **Noah** built the ark in a corrupt generation, trusting God's word when no one else did (**Genesis 6–9**).
- **Daniel** prayed openly despite a royal decree, choosing the lion's den over compromise (**Daniel 6**).
- **Esther** risked her life to speak for her people, declaring, "*If I perish, I perish*" (**Esther 4:16**).
- **Stephen**, the first martyr, stood alone before the council, his face shining like an angel (**Acts 6–7**).

And in our own time:

- **Dietrich Bonhoeffer**, a German pastor, opposed the Nazi regime and paid with his life.
- **William Wilberforce** laboured for decades to abolish the slave trade, often against political tide.
- Countless believers today stand alone in workplaces, families, or nations—choosing integrity, compassion, and truth over convenience.

These lives whisper the same truth: **God honours those who stand alone for Him.**

Their courage becomes a testimony, their obedience a seed, and their faith a light in the darkness.

So let us not fear isolation.

Like Joseph of Arimathea, may we be willing to step forward when others step back knowing that even one faithful heart can carry the fragrance of heaven into the tombs of this world.