

Point #1: No trial was to take place at night

"A capital offense must be tried during the day and suspended at night".

"Criminal cases can be acted upon by the various courts during the day time only."

Jesus' trial is given a few timestamps to attest the timing of which it occurred

Joh 18:3

3 Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.

Joh 18:27

27 Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew.

Point #2: No sole judge could be the sole examiner

Jesus before Caiaphas was illegal because the Law stated, *"Be not a sole judge, for there is no sole judge but One."*

"An accused man must never be subjected to private or secret examination, let in his perplexity, he furnish damaging testimony against himself."

Joh 18:13

13 And led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year.

Joh 18:24

24 Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.

Point #3: Due process

The indictment against Jesus was illegal because the Law stated, *"The entire criminal procedure of the Mosaic Code rest upon four rules: certainty in the indictment; publicity in the discussion; full freedom granted to the accused; and assurance against all danger of errors of testimony".*

"The Sanhedrin could not originate charges; it could only investigate those brought before it".

"The only prosecutors were the witnesses in the crime. The witnesses constituted the charge. There was no formal indictment until these witnesses spoke in the public assembly. When they spoke, and the evidence of two agreed together, it formed the legal charge, libel, or indictment."

Point #4: Court times were limited to the hours between the morning and evening sacrifices

The Law stated, *"The Sanhedrin was to set from the close of the morning sacrifice to the time of the evening sacrifice."*

"The morning sacrifice is offered at the dawn of day. The Sanhedrin is not to assembly until the hour after that time."

Joh 18:28

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.

Point #5: No court proceedings could be convened on a Holy Day or day proceeding a Holy Day

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

"They shall not judge on the eve of the Sabbath, nor on that of any festival"

Refer to John 18:28 above (Passover)

Point #6: Capital crime cases could not conclude within one day

The Law stated, *"A criminal case resulting in the acquittal of the accused may terminate the same day on which it began. But if a sentence of death is to be pronounced, it cannot be conducted before the following day."*

This point of the law allowed the judges to rest, pray, fast, or any other method of allowing clarity of thought before condemning the accused.

Point #7: No sentence of death could be levied by a unanimous decision

To ensure the condemned had received a fair, unbiased trial, it was required that someone present argue for the accused.

The Talmud stated, *"any simultaneous and unanimous verdict rendered on the day of trial has the effect of an acquittal"*.

"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."

Mar 14:63-64

63 Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses?

64 Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death.

Point #8: The accused could not be condemned by personal, uncorroborated testimony

The Law stated, *"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 said against him unless properly attested by two witnesses."*

"No attempt can be made to lead a man on to self-incrimination. Moreover, a voluntary confession on his part is not admitted in evidence, and therefore, not competent to convict him, unless a legal number of witnesses minutely corroborate hisself-accusation."

Mar 14:59-62

59 But neither so did their witness agree together.

60 And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee?

61 But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?

62 And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

Point #9: A sentence of condemnation could only be pronounced in the Hall of Hewn Stones at the Temple

The law states, *"After leaving the hall Gazith no sentence of death can be passed upon anyone soever".*

"A sentence of death can be pronounced only so long as the Sanhedrin holds its sessions in the appointed place".

Mat 26:57-58

57 And they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.

58 But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end.

Point #10: The judge or judges could not be impartial or prejudiced against the accused

"There must not be on the judicial bench either a relation, ora particular friend, or an enemy of either the accused or the accuser".

"Nor under any circumstances was a man known to be at enmity with the accused person permitted to occupy a position among his judges".

Joh 11:49-53

49 And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all,

50 Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

51 And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation;

52 And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

53 Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.

Point #11: The accused was allowed defense

The law stated, *"The primary object of the Hebrew judicial system was to render the conviction of an innocent person impossible. All the ingenuity of the Jewish legist was directed to the attainment of this end".*

Point #12: Clear charges were to be presented to the accused

Jesus was first accused of sedition as He was stirring the people against the traditions of the fathers. After this, Caiaphas charged Him with blasphemy as His testimony put Him sitting at the right hand of the Father. Later, when appearing before Pilate, the charge was changed once again to high treason.

Mat 26:60-65

60 But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses,

61 And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.

62 And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee?

63 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.

64 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.

65 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.

Luk 23:2

2 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.

Jesus endured two trials – one illegal and one legal. In the mock trial instigated by the Sanhedrin, Jesus is found guilty, however, in the legal Roman trial, He is found innocent.

Luk 23:4

4 Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man.

Secular history provides a dossier on the cast of characters involved in Jesus' arrest and sentencing. Most of the Sanhedrin were corrupt, self-serving, and ambitious to gain power. Pilate was violent, calculating, and desperate to maintain some level of control in his territory. Herod was motivated solely by his passions. History is littered with accounts of these men being bought and sold to satisfy their own lusts and ambitions, yet, Jesus died equally for them as for us today.

