

The 7 Unjust Trials of Jesus

Seeing the Slanted System Our Savior Suffered

Dr. Chris Williamson, March 20, 2024

Opening Thought: Why is it so hard for some people to believe that unjust legal systems still exist in the United States? Can you give a modern-day example of a corrupt system? How did Jesus describe the judge in the parable He told in **Luke 18:1 – 8**? What does **Proverbs 11:1** say about “**unjust scales?**” Who benefits from these scales? Who doesn’t?

Those who benefit from titled legal systems rarely see, feel, or know what that same system does and does not do for those who are oppressed by it. **Ecclesiastes 5:8** says, “*If you see the oppression of the poor, and the violent perversion of justice and righteousness in a province, do not marvel at the matter; for high official watches over high official, and higher officials are over them.*” Notice the levels of power mentioned in this verse. See **Eccl. 4:1**.

Why is it usually hard to see the systems that benefit the rich and oppress the poor?

We must do justice (**Micah 6:8**) by stirring the pots of society to keep people on the bottom from being burned. Confronting systemic injustice can be extremely dangerous. This is why the late civil rights leader and Rep. **John Lewis** called it getting into “**good trouble.**”

Jesus, however, got into “**God trouble**” as the Lamb of God. He suffered under an unjust religious system and an unjust Roman government to save the world. Jesus faced a Jewish “**kangaroo court**” and a weak Gentile governor. Both parties expressed their contempt for Christ through violence. We know that prophecy, as well as politics, played major factors in Jesus undergoing seven unjust trials, all of which happened Thursday night and into Friday.

Unjust Trial #1: From Gethsemane to Annas’ House (Jn. 18:12 – 14, 19 – 24)

- Annas, the former high priest, asked Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine.
- Jesus answered by telling Annas to ask others about His teaching.
- An officer slapped Jesus in the face.

Unjust Trial #2: From Annas’ House to Caiaphas’ Court (Matt. 26:57 – 67)

- The high priest and the council sought false testimony against Jesus but found none.
- Two false witnesses came and said that Christ was going to destroy the temple.
- Jesus kept silent until He plainly stated He was the Christ, the Son of God.
- The high priest tore his clothes and said Jesus spoke blasphemy.
- They said Jesus deserved to die. They struck Him, spat in His face, and mocked Him.
- Peter denied the Lord three times that night in the courtyard of the high priest.

Unjust Trial #3: From Caiaphas’ Court to the Sanhedrin (Mark:15:1)

- The chief priests had a meeting with the whole council. This whole council or “ruling council” was known as the Sanhedrin.

- The Sanhedrin was made up of 23 or 71 men, which were almost exclusively Sadducees. Led by the high priest, the Sanhedrin served as a court of Jewish law.
- According to **Luke 22:66 – 71**, they asked Jesus if He was the Christ and if He was the Son of God. Jesus affirmed that He was the Christ and the Son of God.

Unjust Trial #4: From the Sanhedrin to Pilate's Hall (Luke 23:1 – 4)

- The council was so “holy” that they refrained from going inside of Pilate’s court, so he came out to them (**John 18:28 – 32**).
- Pilate asked Jesus if He was the King of the Jews. Jesus said, “It is as you say.”
- Pilate said, “I find no fault in this Man.”

Unjust Trial #5: From Pilate's Hall to Herod's Palace (Luke 23:5 – 12)

- Pilate sent Jesus to Herod, who happened to be in Jerusalem at the time.
- Herod was glad to see Jesus because He wanted to see Him perform a miracle.
- Jesus kept silent while being strongly accused by the chief priests.
- Herod’s men mocked Jesus, put a gorgeous robe on Him, and sent Him back to Pilate. Once enemies, Pilate and Herod ended up becoming friends that day.

Unjust Trial #6: From Herod's Palace to Pilate's Hall (Luke 23:13 – 25)

- Pilate offers to chastise Jesus and release Him based on their custom.
- The Jews asked for Pilate to release Barabbas and to crucify Jesus.
- Pilate tried to “wash his hands” of this execution, but he was still guilty (**John 19:11**).
- **Matthew 27:26** says Pilate had Jesus **scourged** and delivered over to be crucified.

Unjust Trial #7: From Pilate to the Praetorium Court (Matt. 27:27 31)

- The Praetorium was the commander’s office or tent in a Roman military base.
- A garrison of Roman soldiers was anywhere from a dozen to hundreds of men.
- These men stripped Jesus, put a scarlet robe on Him, twisted together a crown of thorns, and put it on His head. They put a reed in His hand, mocked Him, and bowed before Him saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!”
- They spat on Jesus and struck Him on the head with the reed. After they mocked Jesus, they took the scarlet robe off Him and put His own clothes back on Him.
- They led Jesus out to Calvary to crucify Him on the cross.

Closing Thought: By going through **Seven Unjust Trials**, Jesus shows us how to suffer righteously (**I Peter 2:18 – 23**). By suffering unjustly, Jesus can also identify with and be touched by the feelings of those who have been systemically exploited (**Hebrews 4:15**).

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What did you learn or need to be reminded of from this evening’s Bible study?
2. What can you apply from Jesus’ example when undergoing unjust suffering?
3. In what ways can you better see, address, and work to change unjust systems?