

- *Five trials*

- (i) *Annas and Caiaphas*

- (ii) *Sanhedrin*

- (iii) *Pilate*

- (iv) *Herod*

- (v) *Pilate again*

- *At night-time*

### 1. Jesus faced unfair accusers

- *The trial was irregular if not illegal*

### 2. Jesus was burdened with weak followers

- *One betrayed Him*

- *Ten fled*

- *One failed to confess Him*

- *Peter's denial – 4 steps*

- *He followed at a distance*

- *He pretended to be unrelated*

- *He avoided an opportunity*

- *Outright denial*

- *Underlying causes*

At this point in our story, the various legal trials of Jesus begin. Luke 22:54–65 describes some kind of night-time trial. There are at least five trials altogether. (i) Jesus was questioned late at night on Thursday evening in the house that belonged to Annas and his relative Caiaphas. (ii) Then He was tried again on the Saturday morning before the Sanhedrin, the Jewish parliament. (iii) He was sent to Pilate. (iv) Pilate sent Him to Herod. (v) From Herod He came back to Pilate again.

The idea put forward by some scholars that Luke records only a daytime trial is not right. There is no hint of a time-gap between the late-night arrest and the interrogation. The fire of 22:56 implies a cold night. The passing of an hour's time in 22:59 and the later coming of the day<sup>□1</sup> all indicate that this passage records a night-time interrogation.

1. **Jesus faced unfair accusers.** Jesus' enemies were unfair. Of course! When people are showing enmity, they do not bother about justice or fairness. There were at least two things about this trial that were irregular, if not illegal. It was surely wrong to accuse Jesus in a night-time trial. Later on in Israel's history (and perhaps even at this stage) it would be illegal to do so. And it was highly irregular for the Sanhedrin to be interrogating Jesus in a private house.

2. **Jesus was burdened with weak followers.** One of the twelve had betrayed Him. Ten had fled and left Him to His fate. Only Peter showed any loyalty and soon his weakness would be revealed. Jesus wanted His disciples to stand with Him, even if it caused them suffering and death. He had just commended them for staying with Him amidst His troubles<sup>□1</sup>. They had shown loyalty so far but now they refused to identify with Jesus. Jesus wants us to identify with Him and His cause. Peter is an example of a believer who fails to confess Christ in a situation in which he is being tested. There are four steps to his fall into denying Jesus.

He followed Jesus at a distance<sup>□1</sup>. He did not want to disown Jesus altogether and was deeply concerned to know what would happen. Yet he would not boldly stand by Jesus and suffer with Him if necessary.

He was pretending to be unrelated to Jesus<sup>□1</sup>. The servant girl realised that he had some connection with Jesus, but he did not want his faith to be known at precisely this time.

He turned down an opportunity when challenged. He was given a chance to identify with Jesus but, not only did he not voluntarily witness to his faith, even when it was almost forced upon him he avoided the challenge. Again and again opportunities came to him<sup>□1</sup> but he did not want them. Then the cock crowed<sup>□2</sup>, and with a look Jesus reminded Peter of their earlier conversation<sup>□3</sup>. Peter was overwhelmed with distress. He is a believer. His faith has stumbled but has not ceased to exist. Jesus prayed for his continuing faith. We have seen what led to Peter's fall: (i) over-confidence, (ii) prayerlessness, (iii) indecision, (iv) foolish company.

□1 22:66

□1 see 22:28

□1 22:54

□1 22:55-57

□1 22:58-60

□2 22:60b

□3 22:61

## Jesus' suffering

**But what about Jesus?** All along He has been listening to the conversation. He has been mindful of Peter even when Peter was denying Him. For the rest of the night Jesus was alone. He was suffering in our place, bearing the shame and the guilt of our sin. Jesus had to suffer. When people suffer together, they become very close to each other. One reason why Jesus suffered so much is so that He might be drawn close to us in our sufferings. Consider His sufferings here.

### 1. Violence

1. **He suffered violence**<sup>□1</sup>. Some people fear violence more than others. Some like a fight! They make good soldiers. These tough Roman soldiers thought it was fun to beat up Jesus. Other people hate the slightest hint of violence and shrink from it – even on a TV programme. Certainly Jesus would have hated it. To enjoy violence for its own sake was bad enough but to be doing it in the courts of Jerusalem was hateful.

□1 22:63

### 2. Rejection

2. **He endured the distress of not having His ministry taken seriously**<sup>□1</sup>. They blindfolded Him and then asked for a display of His supernatural knowledge. What would they have done, we wonder, if He had given them what they asked for? Would they have charged entrance fees to watch Him perform?

□1 22:64

### 3. Insult

3. **He suffered insult**<sup>□1</sup>. They ridiculed His famous ability to prophesy and speak for God. As we see the greatness of Jesus in His willingness to endure terrible adversity, so we see too the disgusting cruelty of human beings towards each other. It was bad enough that they arrested the Son of God, but now they added insult to injury, piling blasphemy upon blasphemy. Yet this is the very reason why the Son of God is going to the cross. Jesus is having to die because men and women are *'foolish, disobedient, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another'*<sup>□2</sup>. We see it all in these events leading up to the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

□1 22:64

□2 Titus 3:3

### • Jesus showed calmness and restraint

But Jesus showed calmness and restraint in the midst of everything that was happening to Him. What an example He is to us! It should lead us into refusing all complaint and irritation of spirit when some relatively small vexations are put upon us or when the world throws its insults at us. Jesus went through the worst kind of insult and provocation and yet stayed cool. We His disciples must learn to be like Him.



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Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His *Preaching Through The Bible (PTTB)* books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.



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