

# Our **GUIDE**

## for little ones

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IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

### Lesson 47

#### **Trial Before the Sanhedrin**

*John 18:13, 14, 19-24; Mark 14:55-65*

At last the rulers of the Jews have Jesus where they want Him. He's their *prisoner*. They have Him *tied with a rope*. Before the sun rises on this day they will condemn Him to *death*. And then they will spit in His face! So much do they hate this man!



Do you ever wonder *why*? Do you wonder why the leaders of the Jews hated Jesus so much?

Think of what Jesus had *done*. For three years Jesus had lived among the Jews, preaching and teaching about the kingdom of heaven. For three years He had done many, many deeds of mercy. He had healed the sick — the *incurably* sick. He had made blind people see and lame people walk. He had healed lepers. And He had raised the dead. For three

years He had done good — *only* good.

This is the man the Jews hate. Why? What is there about Jesus that brings such fierce hatred out of the rulers of the Jews?

One of the rulers knew the right answer to that question — because Jesus had *told* him. His name was Nicodemus. Nicodemus was probably not there, among the other rulers, on this terrible night — because, secretly, he *believed* in Jesus. Three years earlier he had come to Jesus by night. Jesus told him, then, why He would be hated. Listen. “...*light* is come into the world, and men loved

**Note to Parents:** These papers are intended for the younger Sunday School students — grade 3 and below. Vocabulary and concepts are such that children in this age group, even the 3rd graders, will profit most if the stories are read *to* them, not *by* them. Most lessons have two stories, for two sittings if that proves to be beneficial. Our hope is that parents will find these lessons to be useful tools in the teaching of Bible stories and Bible truths to their children in the “off” season.

*darkness* rather than light, because their *deeds were evil*. For every one that doeth evil *hateth the light*.”

For three years, *Jesus had been that light*. He would not let people be comfortable with their sins. The sins of their *hearts*. Sins of pride, of self-seeking, of self-righteousness, of worldlimindedness. Sins of the Pharisees. Sins of which the Pharisees would not repent. They loved darkness ... and hated the light. And now that they have the light in their power, they will not rest until they have *snuffed it out*.



Yes, they did think now that they had Jesus in their power. Just a few minutes earlier He had showed them, beyond any doubt, that that wasn't true. Without lifting so much as a finger, He had put 400 armed men flat on their backs. But then, as soon as they got up again, they forgot all about that — and proceeded to put a rope around Him and lead Him away captive. “This is *your hour*,” Jesus said, “and the *power of darkness*.”

From that point on, it seemed as if *they* were in control, that they could do with Jesus as they wished. And they wish to put Him on trial *right now*. The *time*? It's about *1:00 in the morning*. It's time to be *sleeping!* But that's okay. They will work right through the night. They will get this business over with as soon as possible — before the people of



Jerusalem find out what is going on. So they bring Jesus before Annas, one of the high priests.

Annas starts the trial. How, do you think, will he do that? Will he ask the rulers of the Jews to *state their charge* against this man? Will he demand that they bring *witnesses* to *prove their charge*? That's what he *should have done*. But he doesn't do it. Annas knows very well that these rulers do not yet *have* any witnesses. He knows, too, that they don't even have a *charge*. Wicked judge that he is, Annas will *question the prisoner*, to see if he can *find* a charge. “Tell me about Your followers and about Your doctrine,” he demands of Jesus.

Now, hear Jesus' answer. “I spoke openly to the world,” Jesus says. That is, in *broad daylight*. “Why askest thou *me*? ask them which *heard me*.” In other words, “What is the *charge*, Annas? And where are the *witnesses*?” In this court there is not even an *appearance* of justice. Annas knew that. The rulers of the Jews knew that. It was *wrong* — *all wrong*. And Jesus told them so.

Annas, then, having made no headway in the trial, sent Jesus, still bound with the rope, to Caiaphas.

Now Jesus is before the *Sanhedrin*. These are the religious *rulers* of the Jews.

*Seventy* of them — gathered here, in the middle of the night, to sit in judgment, as they suppose, over Jesus of Nazareth.



At this point they still have no *charge*. At least, they have no charge that will convince the Roman governor, Pilate, that Jesus is a trouble-maker who is worthy of *death*. Annas had tried to get something from *Jesus' own mouth* — but he had failed. Caiaphas now tries to get something from *witnesses*. From *false witnesses*. From men who had been paid, *by the rulers themselves*, to *lie* about Jesus. And that didn't work either. Witness after witness is brought in, each being questioned separately by the Sanhedrin. And never did the lying story of one witness agree entirely with the lying story of another witness. They would *contradict* each other. They would *disagree* with each other. Their stories always had to be *rejected* by the Sanhedrin.

Caiaphas was getting impatient. He was impatient with the witnesses, who kept messing up their stories. And he was angry that Jesus refused to argue against them. Clever Caiaphas had figured that he could twist Jesus' words so that those words could be used *against* Him. But Jesus said nothing. At last Caiaphas jumped up and demanded of Jesus, "Answerest thou *nothing*? what *is it* which these witness against thee?"

Still Jesus said not a word.

Caiaphas could see that they were getting nowhere. There was only one thing left to do, and that was to face ... the *real question*. The real question was not, What did Jesus *do*? But, Who *is* He? Is He just the son of Joseph and Mary, just a *man*, like every other man born of

earthly parents? Or is He more than that, is He the *Son of God*?

Yes, that was the real question. The Sanhedrin hadn't wanted to face it. They wished they could accuse Him of some *crime* — some crime, that is, that even *Pilate* would consider worthy of death. Then they wouldn't have to face the question of who He is. Why didn't they want to face that question? Because there was just too much *evidence*, too much *reason to believe*, that Jesus was who He said He was. Not long before, in nearby Bethany, Jesus had *raised from the dead* a man who had been *four days in the grave*. Everybody in Jerusalem had heard about that. Who, now, will believe the Sanhedrin if they say, "This man is a *fake*." It was as plain as day that *God* is on Jesus' side. To be against *Jesus*, therefore, is to be against *God*. Caiaphas knew that. The Sanhedrin knew that. That's why they hoped to find a *crime* that they could accuse Him of. That would be so much easier.

But it didn't work. They could find no crime. So Caiaphas at last asks the question, "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God."

*This*, Jesus will answer. He answers it with a straight-forward "I am." There must be *no doubt* about His answer to the *real question*. It's "*I am*."

And then Jesus added this solemn word of warning: "And ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of

heaven.” Yes, someday things will be very different. Someday *they* will stand before *Jesus*, and He will judge *them* — for the judgment that they are now about to make over *Him*.

Did that make these judges stop and think? No, it *angered* them. The hatred in their hearts burned all the hotter. “What need we any further witnesses?” Caiaphas asks the Sanhedrin. “Ye have heard the *blasphemy*: what think ye?”

Yes, what think ye? That was the great question in the greatest court case in the history of the world. God, in fact, asks the question: “What will you do with My Son?”

And their answer is, “He is guilty of *death*.”

But they aren’t satisfied even with that. They *spit* on Him. They cover His face, hit Him with the palms of their hands, and mockingly say, “Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee?”

Thus do they do to the *Son of God* — when He stands before them as a helpless man.

### How Well Did You Listen?

1. What time was it when Jesus was brought as a prisoner to the palace of the high priest?
2. Jesus was brought first to Annas. What did Annas ask of Jesus? Did Jesus answer Annas?
3. Jesus was next brought before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin. How did they get witnesses to accuse Jesus of a crime?

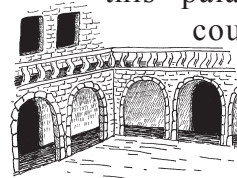
4. Caiaphas finally asked Jesus to tell them if He was the Christ, the Son of God. What was Jesus’ answer?

5. What did the Jews do to Jesus after they had condemned Him to death?

## Peter’s Denial

*Mark 14:66-72*

Peter, meanwhile, was not far away. When Jesus was taken, in the garden of Gethsemane, Peter had fled, with the rest of the disciples, into the darkness. But he changed his mind. He turned back and followed the mob. He saw Jesus’ captors lead Him into the palace of the high priest. The rooms of this “palace” were built around a courtyard that was open to the sky. Into this courtyard Peter went, anxious to learn what was happening to Jesus. Peter went and warmed himself by the fire. Some of the temple police were there too, with the servants of the high priest. Maybe Peter will be able to hear something from them about what is going on.



This was not a good place for Peter to be. Jesus had warned him that this night, before the cock would crow twice, Peter would deny Jesus three times. But Peter wasn’t worried. *He* would never do that. Not even here in the courtyard of the wicked high priest. Nobody here knows him, Peter thinks. He will just keep his ears open, and his mouth shut, and everything will be all right.

Trouble is, the maid who opened and shut the gate to the courtyard had guessed that Peter was a follower of Jesus. She walked over to the fire and, in front of all of the men gathered around it, she said to Peter, "Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth."



Now, what to do? Peter was caught off guard. What will happen if he admits to being a disciple of Jesus? Will these men *seize him*? Probably not. Will they *mock him*? Most likely. Why risk that, when a confession of Jesus in a place like this will do no one any good? So Peter said simply, "I know not what thou sayest." Not really a yes or a no, you see, just "I don't know what you're talking about."

But Peter knew it was a lie. He squirmed. After a bit he wandered off onto the porch. Off in the distance somewhere, a cock crew.



But Peter didn't notice.

Peter wasn't on the porch long before another maid spotted him and said, "This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth." Peter said nothing. But then one of the men standing there put it directly to Peter: "Thou art also of them."

Peter's getting worried now. Why can't these people leave him *alone*? He's already told a "little" lie. Better stick with it. "Man," Peter says, "I am not." And then he used a *swear word* — to show that he really *meant* it.

Back to the fire Peter went. Only

this time he wasn't quiet. Maybe, he thinks, people are suspicious of him because he is all by himself and doesn't say anything. Well, then he will join in the conversation. Just one of the guys — that's all that he is. But he gave himself away. He talked ... like a Galilean. Finally one of the men said, "Surely thou also *art* one of them; for thy speech betrayeth thee." And, to make matters worse, a relative of *Malchus* was there. *Malchus*, of all people! Peter had cut off his ear in the garden. "Did I not see thee in the garden with him?" this man asks.

Peter now is getting frantic. He began to curse and to swear, saying, "I know not this man of whom ye speak."

The words were not yet out of his mouth, when, for the second time, somewhere in the distance, a cock crew.

This time Peter heard.

And then he remembered. Jesus had *warned* him that he would do this. And he *did* it. He had *denied Jesus* — *three times*. Before the cock crew twice.



Peter looked toward the room where Jesus was being tried. And he saw Him. Maybe Jesus was, at that moment, being led, bound, from Annas to Caiaphas. But there He was. Peter saw Him. And Jesus *looked at* Peter.

One look was all it took. It was a look that said, "I heard it all, Peter. I heard your denials. I heard your cursing and your swearing." By that look, Peter knew that he had *wounded his Master*.

But that wasn't all. The look also

reminded Peter of Jesus' words, "But I *prayed* for thee, that thy faith fail not." It was as if that look pierced right through to Peter's *heart* ... and brought him to *repentance*. Crushed, now, by the terrible sin he had committed, Peter went out and wept bitterly.

### How Well Did You Listen?

1. While Jesus was being tried before wicked judges, where was Peter?
2. What did Peter say when the first maid declared that he was one of Jesus' followers?
3. Peter denied Jesus two more times. How was the last denial much worse than the first?
4. What did Peter hear after his third denial?
5. What did Peter do when he saw Jesus look at him?

### How Well Do You Understand?

1. For three years Jesus had lived among the Jews doing nothing but *good*. Why, then, did the rulers hate Him?
2. Jesus had been arrested without a charge against Him. How did Annas try to find one?
3. To seek the testimony of witnesses is a *good* thing. How was the Sanhedrin's use of witnesses a *wicked* thing?
4. When the Sanhedrin could find Him guilty of no crime, what did Caiaphas demand of Jesus?
5. After the Sanhedrin had

condemned Jesus to death, how did they show their bitter hatred of Him?

6. Why did Peter, in the courtyard, not want to admit that he was a disciple of Jesus?

7. After Peter's third denial, Jesus turned and looked upon Peter. What did that look of Jesus tell Peter?

### Memory Verse

Luke 22:62 "And Peter went out, and wept bitterly."

Color in the shapes with dots.  
What do you see?

