

**Review Earle L. Wingo, *A Lawyer Reviews The ILLEGAL Trial of Jesus*,
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Pages: 236

The Gravest Miscarriage of Justice Ever

By application of sound legal principles and Hebrew law of the day, lawyer Earle Wingo brings to light breaches in Jesus' multiple trials, including:

- *Arrest without authority of law.
- *Secret examination before one man (Annas), also without jurisdiction.
- *Unlawful court proceedings at night, before a Sabbath, and a Feast day.
- *Changing charges multiple times (to get something to 'stick') without informing the prisoner.
- *Denial of defence witnesses.
- *Guilty verdict without a witness.
- *Trial concluded in a single day.
- *No power to sentence to death.
- *Not acquitted despite a unanimous verdict [a Hebrew law].
- *Judges at enmity with the accused.
- *Not released by Pilate despite acquittals.

These are taken from the Gospel accounts, and with great empathy for Christ's predicament. The author also gives historical context so jurisdiction and powers relating to law can be understood.

To kill Christ the Sanhedrin were willing to sacrifice their own name, which they did forever by perverting their own laws.

Main antagonists were both Jewish and Roman, although Christ pointed out His deliverers (the Jews) bore the greater sin than the unjust Romans. Judas, Annas, Caiphas, Pilate, Herod Antipas, and the unruly mob all played major roles.

The reader will come away with a sense of great injustice at what was a set up and betrayal of the Innocent Man; how would anyone like to be treated this way by a court of law?

Preface (pp. 7-10)

Christ had both a Hebrew and Roman trial and was charged first with blasphemy, then sedition, then treason.

Jesus Christ, The Son of God (pp. 11-17)

Pre-Trial Days In Judea (pp. 18-23)

The Jews had been under the yoke of the Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks and then Romans.

At the time of Christ Israel was divided into three *tetrarchies* (Iturea [NE under Philip]; Galilee and Decapolis [East, under King Herod Antipas]; Archelaus/Judea, 6AD [South, under Pilate]).

Tiberius Caesar was the master of Pilate and Herod who served in his place.

Caiphas was officially the High Priest when Jesus was tried.

The two religious sects of Judaism were the Sadducees and Pharisees. Annas, father-in-law of Caiphas was a Sadducee and obviously threatened by Jesus resurrection miracles.

Approximately ninety percent of the Sanhedrin were Sadducees.

Jewish Hopes For An Earthly King (pp. 24-28)

Messianic hope and relief from Roman oppression was forefront in the minds of the Jewish people. A turning point of the masses' hope in Christ was after the feeding of the 5,000 when he refused an earthly crown.

Main Characters Against Jesus (pp. 29-65)

*Judas Iscariot: From Kerioth, Judea. After Jesus' refusal to rule temporarily Judas sought to escape with as much as he could. After his betrayal he repented himself rather than towards God and murdered himself.

*Annas: Political power in Judea. He was from Alexandria, the son of Seth. Annas was in his late eighties. His money changers profited from exchanging Roman for Temple coinage to buy doves.

Jesus was first taken to Annas so a secret quorum of the Sanhedrin could be arranged of biased members.

*Caiphas: High priest from 25-36AD and son-in-law of Annas. He broke the law:

- Presiding over a trial where he was at enmity with the accused (Christ).
- Unfairness and partiality in trying Christ.
- Brought a new charge of blasphemy during a trial.
- Procured false witnesses.
- Ignored the requirement of two witnesses.
- Held a trial at night, on the eve of Passover, and the day before a Sabbath.
- Called for the death penalty which was illegal in Jewry at the time.
- Allowed mistreatment of the prisoner and tore his own robes.

*Pontius Pilate: Born Seville, Spain. His father served as a Roman against Spain. He married Claudius age 15, youngest daughter of Julia, Caesar Augustus' only child.

Murdered hundreds of innocent Jews.

According to legend, after seeing the darkness of the crucifixion, Caesar had him killed for murdering an innocent man.

*Herod Antipas: King of the Jews in Galilee and Perea.
Murdered seven of his ten wives after becoming bored with them.
Beheaded John Baptist.

*Tiberias Caesar: Worked solely through Pilate Unlike Paul Jesus did not have a right of appeal to the Emperor.

*Sanhedrin: There were three Jewish courts: Great (Sanhedrin) with seventy-one members, Minor and Lower (the 'Court of Three').

Each member of the Sanhedrin had to:

- Be Hebrew.
- Know written and oral Hebrew law.
- Know languages of surrounding nations.
- Not be haughty.
- Be pious.
- Not have a personal interest in any case being judged.
- Take an oath to be fair.

In the Mishnah (oral traditions written 200AD that were combined with Rabbinical writings (*Gemara*) in 500AD to make the Talmud. There is a Babylonian and Jerusalem version of the Talmud), if a guilty verdict was unanimous on the day of trial the accused was acquitted.

At least two witnesses were required to convict.

To show power, Rome took away the Sanhedrin's right to impose the death penalty.

New Testament Details of Events (pp. 66-78)

The Unlawful Acts (pp. 79-80)

There were fifteen:

- i. Arrest without authority of law.
- ii. Examination without jurisdiction (before Annas).
- iii. Unlawful court proceedings at night.
- iv. Changing charges without informing the prisoner.
- v. Denial of witnesses for the accused.
- vi. Guilty verdict solely upon defendant's testimony.
- vii. Prosecution without two witnesses.
- viii. Trial concluded in a single day.
- ix. Death sentence unlawful.
- x. Not acquitted despite a unanimous verdict.
- xi. Court at enmity with the accused.
- xii. Defense ignored.
- xiii. Not released by Pilate after pronouncement of innocence.
- xiv. Condemnation without legal conviction.
- xv. Ignorance for Hebrew law protecting the innocent.

No Authority For Arrest (pp. 81-85)

The temple guards, chief priests and soldiers had no arrest warrant. This was a law evidenced by Saul's letters procured from the High Priest.

Crowds will follow their hero in his days of triumph, but leave during adversity.

Annas Had No Jurisdiction (pp. 86-90)

Hebrew law stated no individual alone could question the accused judicially, or in a secret examination.

Annas, Caiphas, Herod and Pilate all lived within short distance of each other.

Annas knew there was no place for him in Jesus' type of kingdom [although the author states he was in his late eighties?]

The Sanhedrin's Unlawful Assembly (pp. 91-95)

Trial could not be held a day before a festival, a Sabbath, or at night (daylight examination was mandated as a more thorough examination was

possible).

Changing the False Accusations (pp. 96-109)

Christ was charged with:

*Attempting to destroy the temple: The two false witnesses' testimony broke down.

*Blasphemy: the divine Name had to be fully pronounced and used wrongly for this offence to have been committed.

Before Pilate, the high priest and cohort were dismissed at first by Pilate.

*Perverting the nation, refusing to pay tribute and calling himself a king: Pilate acquitted Jesus.

*Sedition in Galilee: This caused him to be brought to Herod, King of Galilee who happened to be in Jerusalem. There were no real legal proceedings with Herod. Pilate then finds Christ innocent a second time.

After an illegal sentence of chastisement, Pilate acquits Christ a third time. Subsequently, after pressure from the Jews Pilate relented and sentenced him to crucifixion.

Jesus Not Allowed Witnesses (pp. 110-113)

There were a myriad of witnesses of Jesus' miracles, at his baptism when the Father's voice was heard, etc. which could have been called but weren't. The Sanhedrin was stacked against Christ.

No Conviction On Confession Alone (pp. 114-116)

Requirement For Two Witnesses (pp. 117-120)

Unlike modern jurisprudence, under Hebrew law each of the two must have had full knowledge of the event to testify.

No witness oath's were required as the Ninth Commandment was thought

sufficient.

In US Military Courts the accused can remain silent indefinitely.

Women were never permitted to testify, likewise slaves, minors, idiots, illiterates, usurers, or those with vested interests.

A perjured witness in a capital case would himself be executed, also any witness in this case had to attend execution of the convicted.

Death Trial Can't End In One Day (pp. 121-123)

An acquittal could be though.

Sanhedrin Can't Authorize Death Penalty (pp. 124-126)

Death Sentence Can't Be Unanimous (pp. 127-129)

Also, a vote of fifty percent of the Sanhedrin plus two was required for conviction and any majority would do for acquittal. These provisions only applied to the Sanhedrin.

Court officers in Jewish Courts performed the duties of today's lawyers.

As the defendant had no lawyer, the judges were entrusted with his legal protection

Sanhedrin Members Were Disqualified (pp. 130-132)

Christ's Defense Was Ignored (pp. 133-138)

Criminal cases all involve:

- (i) Formal charges brought against the accused in plain language, then witnesses presented to establish guilt beyond reasonable doubt.
- (ii) Permitting a plea by the defendant. If not guilty is plead sufficient time is provided for a defense to be prepared.

There was not a single witness brought against Christ and the accused can't establish his own guilt.

Christ's Conviction Was Utterly Void (pp. 139-141)

Shadows Of The Cross Were Fast Falling (pp. 142-151)

Argument On Law And The Facts (pp. 152-191)

Once an unlawful act is done, no subsequent act can make it lawful, starting with the illegal arrest.

At Passover, there would have been multitudes of people wandering aimlessly seeking diversion who would have seen Christ carrying the cross. He would have had an insatiable desire for water on the cross due to a severe loss of blood.