

# THE SIX STAGES OF JESUS' TRIAL / *John 18:12*

Although Jesus' trial lasted less than 18 hours, he was taken to six different hearings.

Before Jewish  
Authorities

Preliminary Hearing  
before Annas (John  
18:12-24)

Because the office of high priest was for life, Annas was still the "official" high priest in the eyes of the Jews, even though the Romans had appointed another. Thus, Annas still carried much weight in the high council.

Hearing before  
Caiaphas (Matthew  
26:57-68)

Like the hearing before Annas, this hearing was conducted at night in secrecy. It was full of illegalities that made a mockery of justice.

Trial before the High  
Council (Matthew  
27:1-2)

Just after daybreak, 70 members of the high council met to rubber-stamp their approval of the previous hearings to make them appear legal. The purpose of this trial was not to determine justice, but to justify their own preconceptions of Jesus' guilt.

Before Roman  
Authorities

First Hearing before  
Pilate (Luke 23:1-5)

The religious leaders had condemned Jesus to death on religious grounds, but only the Roman government could grant the death penalty. Thus, they took Jesus to Pilate, the Roman governor, and accused him of treason and rebellion, crimes for which the Roman government gave the death penalty. Pilate saw at once that Jesus was innocent, but he was afraid of the uproar being caused by the religious leaders.

Hearing before Herod  
(Luke 23:6-12)

Because Jesus' home was in the region of Galilee, Pilate sent Jesus to Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee, who was in Jerusalem for the Passover celebration. Herod was eager to see Jesus do a miracle, but when Jesus remained silent, Herod wanted nothing to do with him and sent him back to Pilate.

Last Hearing before  
Pilate (Luke 23:13-25)

Pilate didn't like the religious leaders. He wasn't interested in condemning Jesus because he knew Jesus was innocent. However, he knew that another uprising in his district might cost him his job. First he tried to compromise with the religious leaders by having Jesus beaten, an illegal action in itself. But finally he gave in and handed Jesus over to be executed. Pilate's self-interest was stronger than his sense of justice.