

Seeking God's Plan When the Plan is Missed When God's Plan is Missed Because of Unbelief

I. The Background of Jesus' Trials – A Commitment to Truth

A. God's people were to be known for being exceptionally just

Deuteronomy 16:18-20 - You shall appoint for yourself judges and officers in all your towns which the Lord your God is giving you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment. You shall not distort justice; you shall not be partial, and you shall not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and perverts the words of the righteous. Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue, that you may live and possess the land which the Lord your God is giving you.

B. Between the Old Testament and New Testament, the "Great Sanhedrin" was established as the highest court in Israel

Numbers 11:16 - The Lord therefore said to Moses, "Gather for Me seventy men from the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and their officers and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you."

1. Still governed by the rules of evidence and impartiality established under Moses
2. Two credible witnesses were required to establish guilt
3. The accused were entitled to a public trial
4. Those placed on trial were entitled to a defense, including the ability to call witnesses and present evidence
5. False witnesses were to be severely punished

Deuteronomy 19:16-19 - "If a malicious witness rises up against a man to accuse him of wrongdoing, then both the men who have the dispute shall stand before the Lord, before the priests and the judges who will be in office in those days. "The judges shall investigate thoroughly, and if the witness is a false witness and he has accused his brother falsely, then you shall do to him just as he had intended to do to his brother. Thus you shall purge the evil from among you.

6. (From rabbinical tradition) A full day of fasting was to be observed by the council between passing of the death penalty and the execution of a criminal
7. The charges had to be brought from an outside party

8. The court could not be convened at night

(The Murder of Jesus by John MacArthur - pp. 103-104)

C. The court was to be governed by rules of evidence and principles of impartiality

“By Jesus’ time, the Sanhedrin had become a corrupt and politically motivated body. Appointment to the council could be bought with political favors and sometimes even with money. Favoritism and partisanship were therefore rife, and political expediency often determined who rose to power or fell from it within the Sanhedrin.” (The Murder of Jesus, p. 103).

II. The Character of Jesus’ Trials – The Suppression of Truth

A. They had already made up their minds before even considering the facts

Proverbs 14:12 - *There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.*

Matthew 5:3 - *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Isaiah 55:8-9 - *“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” declares the Lord. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.*

Matthew 26:3-4 - *Then the chief priests and the elders of the people were gathered together in the court of the high priest, named Caiaphas; and they plotted together to seize Jesus by stealth and kill Him.*

Matthew 26:59 - *Now the chief priests and the whole Council kept trying to obtain false testimony against Jesus, so that they might put Him to death.*

B. This characteristic, regrettably, is one of the key characteristics of those in the process of rejecting God

Romans 1:18-21 - *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.*

C. They made up their minds about the supernatural

D. They made up their minds about the importance of their position

John 11:47-48 - *Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, "What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs. If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."*

Philippians 2:5-7 - *Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.*

E. They also made up their mind about what would really make them happy

Mark 11:15-17 - *Then they came to Jerusalem. And He entered the temple and began to drive out those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves; and He would not permit anyone to carry merchandise through the temple. And He began to teach and say to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you have made it a robbers' den."*

III. The Lessons of Jesus' Trials – Celebrate Truth

A. The truth of the efficacy of prayer

Psalm 61:1-2 - *Hear my cry, O God; give heed to my prayer. From the end of the earth I call to You when my heart is faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I.*

1 Peter 5:7 - *casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.*

B. The truth of adopting a biblical view of self

Romans 12:3 - *For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.*

C. The truth of organizing your life around people instead of material things

Luke 12:15 - *Then He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions."*

D. The importance of valuing truth highly

Proverbs 23:23 - *Buy truth, and do not sell it, get wisdom and instruction and understanding.*