

Who Moved the Stone?

I. Sanhedrin.

A. What they did wrong.

1. Temple guard making the arrest; the witnesses must do so.
2. Trying a capital case at night.
3. Beginning with a pre-determined verdict.
4. Cross-examining the prisoner.
 - a. Should have acquitted him.
 - b. If witnesses were deliberately false, death by stoning.
5. Allowing fear to override truth.
 - a. Fear of Rome.
 - b. Fear of losing their authority.
 - c. Fear of losing religious control.
6. Manipulated the charges.
 - a. Religious charges before the Sanhedrin.
 - b. Political charges before Pilate.
7. Extorted an admission from Jesus under oath.
 - a. Power of accusation in a capital case rested solely in the witnesses.
 - b. Court's duty was to protect the accused.
 - c. The Oath of the Testimony (Mt. 26:63).

B. What they did right.

1. Rejected the insufficient testimony of the witnesses.
2. Tried to follow legal procedures.
 - a. Sought testimony.
 - b. Consulted among themselves.
 - c. Tried to frame charges that would justify their action.
 - d. Recognized the empty tomb was a serious problem.

C. The charges.

1. Threatened to destroy the Temple.
2. Claimed to be the Son of God.
3. Stirred up the people against Ceasar (political only).
 - a. The claim to be Messiah.
 - b. Challenged the authority of Rome.

II. Pilate.

A. A crude, cruel, and vicious man, yet vacillating at the trial.

1. Sought to acquit Jesus.
 - a. Shifting the matter to Herod.
 - b. Three times proclaiming Jesus to be innocent.
 - c. Offering Barabbas.
 - d. Washing his hands of the matter.
2. Only gave in at the threat of not being Caesar's friend.
 - a. Tiberius was emperor.
 - b. Sejanus, commander of the Praetorian Guard.
 - 1) Plotted to take the throne.
 - 2) Executed along with all his friends.
 - 3) Pilate's distance from Rome saved him.

B. Timeline.

1. Meeting with Judas probably Tuesday night (Mk. 14:11).
2. Hours passed between Judas leaving supper and the arrest.
 - a. Consultation among themselves.
 - b. Organizing the arresting party.
 - c. Urgency of completing the execution by the next day.
 - d. Almost certainly had to consult with Pilate.
 - 1) Only Caiaphas could have met with him.
 - 2) Pilate came out to them – they would not have time for purification before the Feast if they had gone to him.
 - 3) Explains Pilate's curious behavior at the trial.
 - 4) The note from Claudia Procula, his wife (Mt. 27:19).
3. Unlikely could have happened before 11:30.
 - a. Arrival at the Garden of Gethsemane by 10:00.
 - b. Disciples very tired.
 - c. Three separate periods of the disciples sleeping.
 - d. The time Jesus spent in prayer.
 - e. It was dark enough for torches to be used.
4. Pilate had almost certainly agreed to ratify Caiaphas's request.
 - a. Claudia's note made him change his mind.
 - b. Formality of the trial surprised the accusers.
 - 1) Presentation of the prisoner to Pilate.
 - 2) Request for the accusation.
 - 3) Insolent response from the priests.
 - 4) Pilate's response: Judge him yourself.

- 5) Improvised responses.
 - a) Perverting the nation.
 - b) Forbidding tribute to Caesar.
 - c) Calling himself a king.
- 6) Are you the king of the Jews?
- 5. Gave in to the Jews.
- 6. "What I have written, I have written" (Jn. 19:22).

III. Burial.

- A. In the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.
- B. "In the manner of the Jews" (Jn. 19: 40).
 - 1. Wrapped in layers of linen.
 - 2. About 75 pounds of spices and ointments between the layers.

IV. The empty tomb.

- A. Coma.
- B. Stolen body.
 - 1. The disciples.
 - 2. The authorities.
 - 3. Joseph of Arimathea.
- C. Wrong tomb.
- D. Hallucination.
- E. The disciples were liars.
- F. Jesus rose from the dead.
 - 1. The empty grave clothes.
 - 2. The appearances of Jesus.
 - 3. No attempt to deny the resurrection by the authorities.
 - 4. The willingness of the disciples to die.

V. Who moved the stone?

- A. Not the women, the disciples, Joseph, the guards, or the Jews.
- B. The power of God.
- C. The stone was moved not let Jesus out, but so others could see in.

VI. We serve a risen Savior.

- A. The heart of the Gospel (1 Cor. 15:3-8).
- B. If Christ did not rise from the dead, we are still in our sins (1 Cor. 15:16-19).
- C. If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you will be saved (Ro. 10:9).