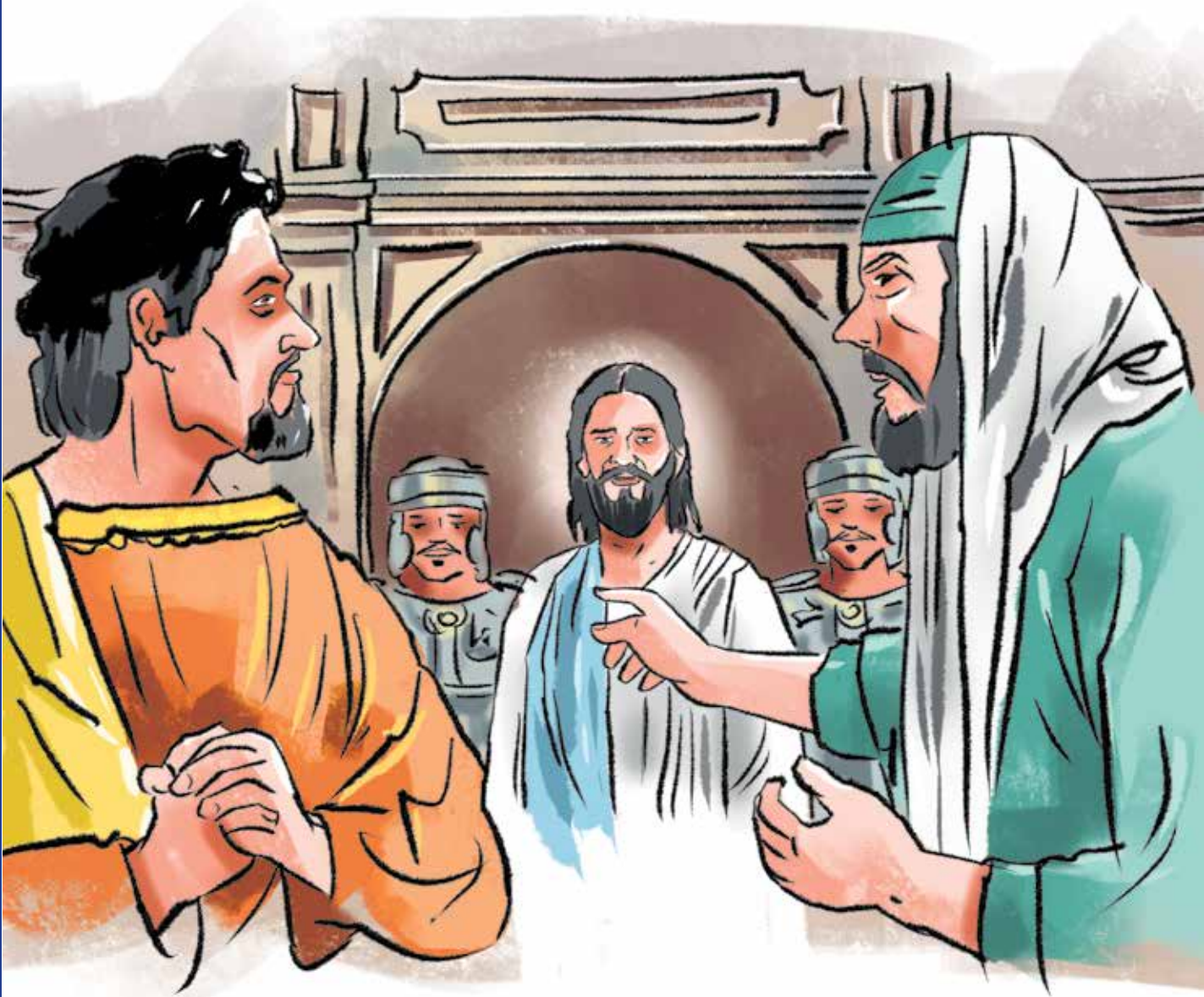




The Hearing before the Sanhedrin

You might have heard of courts where those accused of committing a crime are tried. Lawyers argue for and against during the trials to help judges arrive at a decision on the accused person's guilt or innocence in a crime.



In some countries like USA, UK, France or India, there are courts based on secular laws, but in some countries ruled according to age-old customs, you will find there still exist courts based on religious laws. The Sanhedrin was one such court in Jesus' times. The Sanhedrin were assemblies of rabbis (teachers) appointed to act as judges. Jesus was brought before the Sanhedrin after His arrest in the garden of Gethsemane. But the Jewish rabbis had a problem. Their decision had to be approved by the Roman authorities who ruled Israel.

Jesus was, therefore, taken to Annas, the son-in-law of the high priest Caiaphas, who questioned Him about His teachings. When Jesus answered truthfully, one of the officers struck Him for being so bold while standing before a judge. But Jesus was not scared and asked why He was hit when He had spoken the truth.

Annas sent Jesus to Caiaphas who wanted to know whether He was indeed the Messiah, because such a claim would have been a clear violation of Jewish law inviting severe punishment for committing blasphemy. But to convince the Romans, the high priest had to establish that Jesus was challenging their emperor and his authority.

When Jesus told the Sanhedrin that they would see Him seated in power and authority with God, they found it sufficient grounds to prove He was a rebel who was challenging the Roman Emperor. The Jewish religious leaders, who had been plotting to somehow get Jesus killed, thought this was their chance.

Caiaphas and his men then took Jesus before the Roman governor Pontius Pilate and tried to prove that the man, who called Himself the Son of God, was fit to be condemned to death. But Pilate tried to wriggle out of the situation by saying that Jesus was claiming only to be the king of the Jews.

Thus, both Jews and Gentiles got involved in deciding the fate of Jesus' life. They did not realise that God the Father had willed His only Son to die on the cross to save humanity, and that Jesus Himself had willingly accepted His will for the sake of human sins and salvation.





Word of God

Mark 14:61-64

But he was silent and did not answer. Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?" Jesus said, "I am; and 'you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power,' and 'coming with the clouds of heaven.'" Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "Why do we still need witnesses? You have heard his blasphemy! What is your decision?" All of them condemned him as deserving death.



Know Now: The 1st-century Jewish historian Josephus is considered the most reliable extra-biblical literary source for Caiaphas. According to him, Caiaphas was appointed in AD 18 by the Roman prefect Valerius Gratus during a turbulent period. Josephus gives a coherent description of the responsibilities of the high priestly office.

Know Now: In 2013, a Kenyan lawyer Dola Indidis filed a case in the International Court of Justice in Hague against Tiberius (emperor of Rome), Pontius Pilate, and a section of Jewish elders, King Herod, the Republic of Italy and the State of Israel to consider a re-trial of Jesus Christ for His unlawful crucifixion. "I filed the case because it's my duty to uphold the dignity of Jesus," said the lawyer.

Reading

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Pages Minutes



Watch Jesus trial before Caiaphas as shown in the film, The Passion of the Christ.

Bible@Home - Mark 14: 53-65

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