

also was at Jerusalem at that time.” (Luke 23: 6, 7).

The reason why Pilate sent Jesus Christ to Herod is also provided. “And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves.” (Luke 23:12).

The inquirer must note here that both Pilate and Herod found Jesus Christ innocent of the crime which the Seventh Day Church of the Jews had accused him. “Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him: No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him.” (Luke 23:14, 15).

But, would they release him? “I will therefore chastise him, and release him. (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.)” (Luke 23:16, 17).

AGAIN BEFORE PILATE Christ's fifth prosecution

From the court of Herod, Jesus was led back to the court of Pilate for the second time. In his judgement, Herod said, “No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him.” (Luke 23:15). Jesus Christ, was therefore, sent back to Pilate, but only after being chastised, the reason of which is only known by Herod.

“When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.” (Matt. 27: 1, 2).

“And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest. And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? And he answered him to never a word; inso-much that the governor marvelled greatly.” (Matt. 27:11-14).

BEFORE THE MOB Christ's sixth prosecution

Finally, the climax is reached for the lamb of God to be offered for a sacrifice. The suffering of the Son of man was for our salvation, yours and mine. All this was done for you and me. Let our hearts of stone be melted by this costly offer.

“When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands

before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children. Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.” (Matt. 27:24-26).

The Bible account has it that Pilate scourged Jesus (the same did Herod), and delivered him to the mob to be crucified. The soldiers took Him in a common hall, gathered a band of soldiers who stripped him, put on Him a scarlet robe, platted a crown of thorns and put it on His head and a reed in his right hand. They then, mockingly, bowed their knees before Him and mocked Him, saying Hail King of the Jews. They spit on Him, took the reed and smote Him on the head. They then dressed Him and led Him way to be crucified. (Matt. 27:27-31).

The manhandling and humiliation and the persecution of Jesus Christ followed by his crucifixion and resurrection, spanned over a period of three days and three nights. Six prosecutions, assaulted by the church, scourged by Herod and Pilate, then the soldiers and manhandled by the church leadership and their followers before He was crucified.

Finally, the question must be asked, Who killed Jesus Christ? Who sentenced Him to death, the Roman authority or the Seventh day Church of the Jews? I leave it to you, the Bible student, to answer.

Christ's six times court **TRIALS** then, cruelly treated, scorned, humiliated, and crucified

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The closing scenes of Christ's earthly ministry should evoke a deep search of heart to every true Christian. How surprising that the creator of the heavens and the earth was sold for the price of a slave, prosecuted and appeared before the earthly courts six times and finally committed to the death of a criminal!

PRICE OF A SLAVE **Sold for a price of a mean slave**

"Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver." (Matt. 26:14, 15). Thirty pieces of silver was the price for the meanest slave in the Jewish culture.

"If the ox shall push a manservant or a maidservant; he shall give unto their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned." (Exodus 21:32). Jesus Christ is the creator of heaven and earth (Gen. 1:26), yet He was made a slave. "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." (Phil. 2: 6, 7).

BETRAYAL **Betrayed by His own disciple**

"And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast. And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him. And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him." (Matt. 26:47-50).

"Hail, Master" and a "kiss" were a usual compliment among the Jews and Judas, as do many of his kind today, pretended to wish our Lord continued health while with intent, they meditated his destruction. The same account is found in 2 Samuel 20:9-10. "Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast." (Matt. 26:48). How many compliments of this kind are there today among professed believers. Let all those who use unmeaning or insidious compliments rank for ever with Joab and Judas.

"The official dignity of the Jewish leaders had not prevented them from joining in the pursuit of Jesus. His arrest was too important a matter to be trusted to subordinates; the wily priests and elders had joined the temple police and the rabble in following Judas to Gethsemane. What a company for those

dignitaries to unite with--a mob that was eager for excitement, and armed with all kinds of implements, as if in pursuit of a wild beast!" (DA 696.4).

"Over the brook Kedron, past gardens and olive groves, and through the hushed streets of the sleeping city, they hurried Jesus. It was past midnight, and the cries of the hooting mob that followed Him broke sharply upon the still air. The Saviour was bound and closely guarded, and He moved painfully. But in eager haste His captors made their way with Him to the palace of Annas, the ex-high priest." (DA 698.1).

BEFORE ANNAS **Christ's first prosecution**

After His arrest in Gethsemane, they led him first to Annas who was the father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year." (John 18:13). Thereafter, He was sent to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled, to face his second prosecution (Mat 26:57).

"Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest." (John 18:24). Annas was the head of the officiating priestly family, and in deference to his age he was recognized by the people as high priest. His counsel was sought and carried out as the voice of God. He must first see Jesus a captive to priestly power. He must be present at the examination of the prisoner, for fear that the less-experienced Caiaphas might fail of securing the object for which they were working. His artifice, cunning, and subtlety must be used on this occasion; for, at all events, Christ's condemnation must be secured." (DA 698.2).

BEFORE CAIAPHAS **Christ's second prosecution**

Caiaphas, the sitting high priest and his council had already decided that Jesus should be killed (John 18:14). Also read John 11:47, 49-50. From Annas the retired and former high priest who was the father in law of Caiaphas, the sitting high priest, Christ was led to the Church Council of Caiaphas where the scribes and elders were assembled (Matt. 26:57). Caiaphas had already decided that Jesus must be killed, therefore, Christ's appearance before him was a mere formality.

Christ was to be tried formally before the Sanhedrin; but before Annas He was subjected to a preliminary trial. Under the Roman rule the Sanhedrin could not execute the sentence of death. They could only examine a prisoner, and pass judgment, to be ratified by the Roman authorities. It was therefore necessary to bring against Christ charges that

would be regarded as criminal by the Romans. An accusation must also be found which would condemn Him in the eyes of the Jews.

They sought false witnesses, but found none. At last, there came two false witnesses saying "This fellow said, I'm able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days." (Matt. 26:60, 61), but Jesus kept quiet.

Then the high priest said, "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said...Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death." (Matt. 26:57-66).

It should be noted here that the sentence of death was meted out not by the civil power of the Romans, but the ecclesiastical power of the church. Not by any church was this sentence passed, but by the Seventh day Church of the Jews.

BEFORE PILATE **Christ's third prosecution**

"Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover." (John 18:28).

"Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man? They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee. Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." (John 18:29-31).

The Prosecution of Jesus Christ was impossible without the two forces, religious and civil powers leaguely together for a common purpose of silencing what would be regarded as a sect of Christian believers whose religious convictions differ with ecclesiastical powers. "And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified." (Matt. 27:23).

BEFORE HEROD **Christ's fourth prosecution**

"When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilaean. And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself