

WESTERN WISDOM BIBLE STUDY

Culmination of the Ministry

The Trials

AS the Master suffered in Gethsemane, there were heard the uproar and cries of an approaching throng which broke the awed stillness of the Garden wherein had occurred His great conflict with sorrow. The glimmering of many lights threw strange and weird shadows upon the olive trees that had witnessed His last mighty ordeal and final submission. The soldiers of the Sanhedrin approached, accompanied by Judas who gave the traitorous kiss. The Christ met this with an infinite compassion and love transcending anything the world has ever known as He spoke to Judas and called him "friend." Here is the perfect ideal for humanity to follow. They were no idle words He pronounced to those gathered about Him on the Mount on a certain summer day. *Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that spitefully use you.* He taught them the secret of a great vibratory power which man must learn to build within himself if he would become a Christed one—the power of love which is beneficent and triumphs over all enmity.

While the Sanhedrin was being assembled at midnight, Annas endeavored by subtle questioning to cause Christ Jesus to convict Himself. The charges which they held against Him were, first, His words concerning the destruction of the Temple, which they interpreted to mean the material Temple in Jerusalem, and second, His affirmation that He was the Messiah. Though Annas found no reason for His condemnation, he bound Him and sent Him to the high priest, Caiaphas.

Between the preliminary examination by Annas and the first trial by Caiaphas, Christ Jesus witnessed His betrayal by

Peter. Again the *Rock* man became the *Water* man. As the Christ was being led away from the apartments of Annas to those of Caiaphas, He heard the third denial.

The trials of the neophyte are in proportion to his spiritual status. The farther one advances upon the Path, the more subtle and far-reaching become his testings. None could compare in severity with those undergone by Christ Jesus, for no one else possesses His spiritual strength and power.

Read *Matthew 27:3-5*.

Between the trials by Caiaphas and Pilate, Judas threw the thirty pieces of silver at the feet of the priests and went out and hanged himself. Evil always destroys itself. Wrongdoing can only bring its own reaction in greater evil. This is an immutable law of all Nature and finds a perfect correspondence in the lives of the Disciples. Judas died in shame and disgrace; Peter repented of his terrible failure and became the stepping stone, the rock or foundation stone of the new religion. Temptation is one of the greatest factors in soul growth. Libra, the balance, suspended between Virgo and Scorpio, spirit and flesh respectively, is aptly called the trial gate. The discrimination exercised by the disciple as he stands in this place reveals to the Wise Ones the position to which he has attained in his spiritual progress.

Read *Luke 22:59-62*.

The greatest failure often becomes the most important stepping stone toward higher attainment. After the denial Peter returned to the Garden of Gethsemane, the crucible of pain and tears wherein base metal is transmuted into pure gold. From the Garden Peter came forth purified, redeemed.

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