

# WESTERN WISDOM BIBLE STUDY

## Culmination of the Ministry

### *The Trials (Continued)*

**T**HE Sanhedrin voted for the death of Christ Jesus, but it had no power to carry out its decrees unless sanctioned by the Roman government. Pilate was the fifth of seven procurators or governors in the Roman province of Judea; he ruled from 26 to 36 A.D. A man of inferior birth and culture, hostile to and suspicious of the Jews, he regarded their manners and customs with contempt.

The Jews knew that the Roman governor would condemn no man to death for blasphemy, so they charged the Christ with sedition and with making a false claim to royal power--which was considered treason against Rome. Their gross materialism could not comprehend that Christ desired no earthly throne and that His was not a physical kingdom.

Pilate, to excuse himself, sent Christ Jesus to Herod, who was in Jerusalem at the time. Disappointed and chagrined because the Teacher refused to answer his questions or perform miracles for him, Herod mocked the prisoner and returned Him to Pilate.

Pilate's weaknesses were those that cause so many to fall--indecision and a cowardly fear to take a stand for right against the opinion of the majority. When Pilate saw that a mob was forming he feared that violence would follow, with the result that Rome would judge him adversely for inefficiency and inability to maintain order. He therefore "took water, and washed his hands before the multitude," a symbolic act and one which many a Christian neophyte performs every day. Everyone who does this under similar circumstances is leaving the Christ within himself to be scourged and crucified by his own

lower nature.

Trials must constantly beset the path of the neophyte, for it is only as he is tested and tried that his strength is determined. Many times and in many lives we must stand trial before we prove our worthiness for Initiation. How do we face the trials designed to serve as stepping stones toward a higher goal? Do we meet them with the hypocrisy and treachery of a Judas, with the indecision and cowardice of a Pilate, or with the infinite compassion and forgiveness of the Christ?

The principal obstacles on the Path are represented in the trials before Annas, or mortal mind, the trial before Caiaphas, or worldly ambition, and before Pilate, typifying weakness and vacillation of mind when required to stand for Truth at the risk of endangering personal position and prestige.

The scourging symbolizes the pain and discomfort which accompanies the awakening of certain centers lying along the spine within the body of the aspirant. The crown of thorns has a similar significance, as it refers specifically to certain areas in the head.

Three times the Lord Christ fell beneath the weight of the cross. That which He enacted physically is representative of corresponding moral failures to which humanity is prone to succumb as it learns to walk the spiral way leading toward the Light. Man falls beneath the weight which veils of matter have placed upon his Spirit; also he falls because of his Earth-bent desires; yet again by reason of the worldly glamor to which his spiritually unilluminated mind succumbs. Three pitfalls on the Path come from the weakness of the physical, the power of desire, and the darkness of the human mind.