

Name _____

Why They Killed Jesus Answer Key

Scene 1: Judas and Zealots at the Burial of John the Baptist

1. What does the director of *Jesus of Nazareth* (1977, 382 minutes, not rated) want you to notice about Judas's attitude toward the Zealots (in their discussion about John and Jesus)?
 - (2:50:50) Judas likes the Zealots' idea of Jewish liberation but does not like their plan.
2. Given Judas's speech about Jesus, what does Judas believe about Jesus?
 - (2:51:30–2:54:00) Judas **is** fully convinced that Jesus is the Messiah and wants to be Jesus' disciple—if Jesus will have him.

Scene 2: Judas Meets with the Zealots

3. What does the director want you to notice regarding Judas's attitude toward the Zealots' plan?
 - (3:15:08–3:17:35) Judas does not want the Zealots manipulating Jesus but agrees to the Zealots' plan because Judas thinks Jesus could prove himself to the Sanhedrin. "We shall wait for the Passover in Jerusalem. That's when you bring him to us, Judas . . ."

Scene 3: Events in Jerusalem Leading to the Passion and Death

Judas Meets with Zerah

4. What does Judas want?
 - (3:53:30) Judas wants Zerah to allow Jesus to prove himself to the Sanhedrin, to proclaim he is the King of the Jews to the Romans, promising that Jesus will bring peace to the region. Judas is hopeful.
5. What is Zerah's attitude toward Judas?
 - Zerah is sarcastic and dismissive. Zerah responds with a baiting tone, "I think I can promise you he will have that opportunity."

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

6. Knowing this major event foreshadows the Passion and death of Christ, what might the director want you to notice about the reactions of the members of the Sanhedrin/Zerah?
 - (3:58:47) Jesus cleanses the Temple. (4:00:08) Zerah introduces himself to Jesus and attempts to chastise him. Jesus speaks of destroying and rebuilding the Temple in three days. Judas is disappointed in how the conversation goes because Zerah is not interested in "believing in" Jesus.



Jesus Teaches in Jerusalem

7. What does the director want you to notice about the following two groups?

Pharisees:

- (4:11:56) The Pharisees criticize Jesus for welcoming the children.
- (4:17:55) Woman Caught in Adultery: The Pharisees attempt to entrap Jesus.
- (4:24:55) Jesus Heals the Blind Beggar: The Pharisees doubt the legitimacy of the miracle, to which Jesus yells, “Woe to . . . ,” criticizing the Pharisees.
- (4:36:12) Nicodemus visits Jesus to warn the to stay away from the Temple.

Zealots:

- (4:07:38) Barabbas is introduced as a Zealot (fictionally constructed encounter). Barabbas tries to get Jesus to lead the Zealots. Jesus says to forgive your enemies and take up your cross, while Judas observes.
- (4:21:06) Roman Centurion approaches Jesus: “I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof; I know if you say the word my servant shall be healed.” Barabbas and Zealots conspire against Jesus because he is a friend of the Romans.
- (4:34:39) After Jesus yells “Woe to . . . ” at the Pharisees, the Zealots incite a riot, Barabbas murders the Roman guard and screams insults at Jesus, and the Apostles walk away from the riot. Judas pauses, disappointed in how things are unfolding.

Meeting of Sanhedrin

8. What does the director want you to notice regarding the following?

Positive comments about Jesus:

- (4:39:32–4:49:31) Discussion of Jesus and his “new ideas”: Some like the ideas, and some do not. Some ideas are good, and some are blasphemous.

Negative comments about Jesus:

- Caiaphas: “The central core is that this man dares to proclaim himself the Son of God.” He questions whether Jesus is really the Son of God or a false prophet. There is a discussion that the Romans won’t wait for the Sanhedrin to figure this out. If Jesus is a false prophet, it’s better for one man to die than the whole nation to suffer.

Specific concerns:

- The Sanhedrin doesn’t have the authority to condemn him to death; only Romans do. They decide to question Jesus fully and allow him to defend himself. There is a suggestion to wait until after Passover, but they decide to not wait. They are concerned about where to even find Jesus; Zerah volunteers to help locate him.



From the Agony in the Garden through the Sanhedrin Trial

9. What motive(s) or attitude(s) does the director ascribe to Judas?

In the garden:

- (4:59:30) Judas says: "Peter listen to me. The only way the Master can save himself is by speaking to the Sanhedrin."

In the courtyard:

- (4:59:54) Judas wants to be at the meeting with Caiaphas. Zerah responds: "Meeting? There is no meeting. There's a trial. Your Jesus is accused of blasphemy. You have been an invaluable help to us, Judas. Come and see me when all of this is over." Zerah gives Judas thirty pieces of silver. The guard says, "Well, now you got what you wanted, so go; get out of here."
- Judas is portrayed as a misguided person who conspires with the Zealots for the sake of Jewish liberation and is manipulated by Zerah.

10. How does the director characterize those involved in the Sanhedrin's trial?

Caiaphas (desire, concerns, intent):

- "It is not our intention to treat you like a criminal, but we want you to explain some of your teachings," says Caiaphas, but Jesus does not care to persuade or convince the Sanhedrin.
- At the end of the scene, Caiaphas asks Jesus directly if he is the Messiah. Jesus says, "I am." Caiaphas rends his garments, and Jesus is turned over to Pilate.

Those "defending Jesus" (desire, concerns, intent):

- Joseph of Arimathea insists they not treat Jesus like a criminal.
- Some members says Caiaphas, him preach and have heard nothing which denies the basic principles of our faith."

Those "against Jesus" (desire, concerns, intent):

- Other members ask for clarification on some teachings. There is disagreement as to the what details each heard in Jesus' teachings.
- There is reference to the riot (after Jesus yells "Woe to . . . "), which Barabbas took advantage of. There is a concern that the Romans will blame the Jewish leadership.

Jesus' response:

Jesus hardly responds vocally or emotionally. Refuses to "prove himself" or defend himself.



Pilate/Romans

11. How does the director characterize/attribute responsibility to the following?

Pilate (desire, intent, attitudes):

- (5:14:13) Pilate is impatient, angry at the unrest, and annoyed by having to “go out to meet” the Sanhedrin in the courtyard.
- (5:18:50) Pilate finds Jesus laughable and doesn’t care about the Jews’ concerns. Pilate is not interested in helping them, nor is Pilate interested in truth. Pilate doesn’t see Jesus as a threat. Jesus gives Pilate no emotional reaction (neither fear nor hate).

Zerah/Sanhedrin (desire, intent, attitudes):

Zerah tries to convince Pilate that they want the same things, that the Romans should be concerned about Jesus for the same reasons they are.

Roman Soldiers at Scouring Scene (desire, intent, attitudes):

(5:22:31) Romans are laughing and enjoy beating, mocking, and torturing Jesus.

In the Praetorium

12. How does the director characterize/attribute responsibility to the following?

Pilate:

- (5:33:00) Pilate is adamant that they do not free Barabbas, “an assassin and enemy of Rome.” Pilate’s attitude is mostly indifference; he doesn’t seem to “regret” the decision to condemn Jesus, but he isn’t pleased either.
- The film does not depict Pilate sending Jesus to Herod Antipas and Antipas sending Jesus back to Pilate (see Luke 23:6–12).

Zerah:

- Zerah watches from afar to make sure Jesus is condemned.

Crowd:

- (5:28:34) An assembly of people gathers before the Praetorium, many conspiring to release Barabbas. Most of the crowd shouts, “Free Barabbas!” and “Crucify [Jesus]!” Very few appear to be shouting to free Jesus, and one of the women (Mary) gets slapped.

