

# The New Kid on the Block

*Four people sat round a table*

**Jolyon:** Right. Now we're all here, I want to, firstly, say 'welcome' to Rabbi Philip who is representing the Sanhedrin at our meeting today. And so, to begin with, I am going to ask Charles to bring us up to date with what has been going on.

**Charles:** Yes, thanks Jolyon. Well, three years ago, before Jesus came on the scene, a survey was done throughout the kingdom...

**Jolyon:** Was that done by us, Charles?

**Charles:** Yes, it was, Jolyon. The poll asked the question, "Who do you trust the most to teach you the truth about God?"

**Jolyon:** OK. Good question, Charles.

**Charles:** Thanks Jolyon.

**Jolyon:** And what was the result?

**Charles:** The Priests and Pharisees had virtually a clean sweep, with 87% saying they were the ones people trusted the most. Only 5% said they trusted someone else to teach them the truth about God, and 8% didn't know.

**Jolyon:** Well, Charles, that's a very satisfactory result. How did 87% seem to you Rabbi Philip?

**Rabbi:** Yes, we were happy with this result. But that was three years ago. A lot has happened since then that we're not so happy about.

**Jolyon:** Yes, of course. So, how are things looking now Charles?

**Charles:** Patricia's been organising this year's poll Jolyon.

**Jolyon:** Right. Over to you then Patricia.

**Patricia:** Thanks Jolyon.... Ok, so this year we asked exactly the same question, and addressed it to the same demographic to see if anything had changed.

**Jolyon:** And what were the results?

**Patricia:** Well, Jolyon, there has been quite a substantial shift in opinion. The Priests and Pharisees have dropped from 87 down to 51% trusting them to teach the truth about God. Where as the new kid on the block....eh Jesus...who was unknown three years ago...is now pulling an impressive 42%, with 4% saying 'others' and 3% don't know.

**Jolyon:** Hmm. That's a big change in just three years. Have you any comment to make at this stage, Rabbi?

**Rabbi:** Jesus is a magician and an entertainer. He knows how to draw a crowd, and his disciples even give out free food. So, it's not surprising that people are paying him a lot of attention. We, at the Sanhedrin, are also paying him a lot of attention. We believe him to be a false Messiah.

**Jolyon:** There has been talk of miracles, Rabbi.

**Rabbi:** As far as we are concerned there is no evidence for such things.

**Jolyon:** So, may I ask what is your strategy for dealing with him at the moment?

**Rabbi:** Yes. We have our best people asking him tough questions in public, to undermine the idea that Jesus knows what he is talking about.

**Charles:** How is that going?

**Rabbi:** Um...well...we're still looking for the right question to ask him.

**Charles:** Still looking for that knock-out punch...yeh?

**Patricia:** Rabbi, as you can see from the survey, things seem to be moving quickly. I am told that Jesus was welcomed into Jerusalem recently by a very large crowd of people, and that he's drawing big numbers in the Temple this week. Will you be challenging him there?

**Rabbi:** Yes, tomorrow one of our Pharisees will be asking Jesus which is the greatest commandment.

**Patricia:** Oh! And what's the answer to that question?

**Rabbi:** Moses told us that we should love the Lord our God with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our mind.

**Charles:** Wow! That's an awful lot of loving you have to do! Can you really expect people to love God like that?

**Patricia:** How is it even possible?

**Jolyon:** Yes, well, I'm sure the good Rabbi has better things to do with his time than answer our questions on theology. Thank you, Rabbi Philip, for joining us today. Please let us know how your man gets on with his questioning Jesus. And remember, we really value the business which the Sanhedrin brings to our small company.