

The illegal trial of Jesus

Mark 14:53–72 (NASB95)

⁵³They led Jesus away to the high priest; and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes gathered together.

⁵⁴Peter had followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest; and he was sitting with the officers and warming himself at the fire.

⁵⁵Now the chief priests and the whole Council kept trying to obtain testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, and they were not finding any.

⁵⁶For many were giving false testimony against Him, but their testimony was not consistent.

⁵⁷Some stood up and began to give false testimony against Him, saying,

⁵⁸“We heard Him say, ‘I will destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands.’ ”

⁵⁹Not even in this respect was their testimony consistent.

⁶⁰The high priest stood up and came forward and questioned Jesus, saying, “Do You not answer? What is it that these men are testifying against You?”

⁶¹But He kept silent and did not answer. Again the high priest was questioning Him, and saying to Him, “Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?”

⁶²And Jesus said, “I am; and you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.”

⁶³Tearing his clothes, the high priest said, “What further need do we have of witnesses?

⁶⁴“You have heard the blasphemy; how does it seem to you?” And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.

⁶⁵Some began to spit at Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him with their fists, and to say to Him, “Prophecy!” And the officers received Him with slaps in the face.

⁶⁶As Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came,

⁶⁷and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, “You also were with Jesus the Nazarene.”

⁶⁸But he denied it, saying, “I neither know nor understand what you are talking about.” And he went out onto the porch.

⁶⁹The servant-girl saw him, and began once more to say to the bystanders, “This is one of them!”

⁷⁰But again he denied it. And after a little while the bystanders were again saying to Peter, “Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean too.”

⁷¹But he began to curse and swear, “I do not know this man you are talking about!”

⁷²Immediately a rooster crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had made the remark to him, “Before a rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times.” And he began to weep.

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⁵³They led Jesus away to the high priest; and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes gathered together.

- This is a gathering of the Sanhedrin
 - Historicity of Mark
 - Some suggest Mark doesn’t know some basics about the Jewish culture in Israel at the time
 - But he gets those right (already covered hand washing)
 - And things like this

- It happens at night
 - Mishnaic rules about capital trials
 - Not at night
 - Not on the eve of a festival
 - Must be held at one of three courtrooms, not the high priests house
 - Must begin by hearing a case for the defense
 - No verdict that day
 - BUT
 - 200 years later
 - Some of that content came after Jesus' time
 - The Jews had no capital punishment power at the time
 - so it may have been codified later
 - In context
 - They are not looking to execute Jesus but to build a case to bring to Pilate to ask the Romans to do it.
 - Is Jesus dangerous enough to send to the Romans
 - Still, VERY sketchy for a number of other reasons we will look at.

⁵⁴**Peter had followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest; and he was sitting with the officers and warming himself at the fire.**

- Typical teaching
 - Allegory
 - Step one – follow at a distance
 - Step two – warming himself by the fire of the world (ungodly comforts)
 - Step two – denying
 - Possibly good application but a stretch
 - “following at a distance” didn’t mean “following in the sense of being a disciple”
- What we lose
 - Some bravery here...
 - Peter saw Jesus in agony
 - Saw Judas betray Him
 - Knows Jesus went forward willingly
 - And remember how Peter thought of the idea of this sort of thing
 - “NO Lord”
- If there’s application it is in our attitude toward our own confusion, and failed expectations about present prosperity

⁵⁵**Now the chief priests and the whole Council kept trying to obtain testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, and they were not finding any.**

⁵⁶**For many were giving false testimony against Him, but their testimony was not consistent.**

- Problem #2 the court calls for witnesses
 - It should be the witnesses that call for the court!
 - ***But - Mark 14:1 (NASB95) ¹Now the Passover and Unleavened Bread were two days away; and the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to seize Him by stealth and kill Him;***
 - They want to condemn Him instead of upholding the law
 - The law is meant to prevent oppression of the innocent
 - Here it’s being used to condemn the innocent
 - An oddity
 - They don’t just accept the false witnesses

- Because of a trial procedure
 - OT says they need multiple witnesses of the same accusation
 - Mishnah says they had to cross-examine each witness and make sure they agreed
 - Same week, day, and hour.
- Problem #3 in the trial
 - No consequence for false witnesses
 - **Deuteronomy 19:16–20 (NASB95)**

¹⁶*"If a malicious witness rises up against a man to accuse him of wrongdoing,*

¹⁷*then both the men who have the dispute shall stand before the Lord, before the priests and the judges who will be in office in those days.*

¹⁸*"The judges shall investigate thoroughly, and if the witness is a false witness and he has accused his brother falsely,*

¹⁹*then you shall do to him just as he had intended to do to his brother. Thus you shall purge the evil from among you.*

²⁰*"The rest will hear and be afraid, and will never again do such an evil thing among you.*
- It's a microcosm of those who want to use religion to validate their agenda
 - Instead of submitting to Christ
 - The problem isn't religion... it's MAN made religion and not AUTHENTIC biblical views
 - Some rail against all religious leaders.
 - But God set UP the high priests!
 - The problem is when they don't submit to God

⁵⁷Some stood up and began to give false testimony against Him, saying,

⁵⁸"We heard Him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands.' "

⁵⁹Not even in this respect was their testimony consistent.

- 2 issues
 - A distortion of Jesus' words
 - Not in Mark
 - **John 2:19 (NASB95)** ¹⁹*Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."*
 - Which is why they didn't agree
 - Different time, details, etc
 - But it was close enough for them
- Later they accused Stephen of the same thing
 - **Acts 6:13–14 (NASB95)** ¹³*They put forward false witnesses who said, "This man incessantly speaks against this holy place and the Law; ¹⁴for we have heard him say that this Nazarene, Jesus, will destroy this place and alter the customs which Moses handed down to us."*
- Then we get the interaction of Jesus and the high priest
- Multiple high priests at the time... sort-of
 - Caiaphas – from 18-35
 - That's who Mark is referring to
 - We've actually found his ossuary
 - PIC? – found in 1990
 - Annas – previous high priest and father of Caiaphas
 - Still retained a role and the title
 - Luke 3:2 calls this "the priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas"

⁶⁰The high priest stood up and came forward and questioned Jesus, saying, “Do You not answer? What is it that these men are testifying against You?”

⁶¹But He kept silent and did not answer.

- Why did Jesus stay silent?
 - Fulfilling scripture
 - Isaiah 53:7 (NASB95) ⁷He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth.
 - To be condemned – pragmatically
 - Jesus offered clever words to deal with accusation before...
 - He could likely say things now to avoid punishment
 - Because WE have no defense
- THEN the high priest asks a question that isn’t about supposed crimes... and Jesus answers.

Again the high priest was questioning Him, and saying to Him, “Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?”

- The way it’s worded in Greek is interesting. An assertion Jesus is asked to accept or reject.
 - This puts it as a proclamation on the high priest’s lips
 - It will also be in the lips of the centurion who helps crucify Jesus (15:39)
 - It’s the revelation of the Messianic Secret
 - Abused by some to imply nobody knows
 - But the whole Gospel is a step by step revelation
 - Leading to this
 - Jesus’ identity MUST be seen in light of His necessary suffering
 - The Messiah MUST die
 - He’s our sin offering
 - James Edward’s commentary – *“Until the question of the high priest, however, Jesus has steadfastly silenced all proclamations of his divine Sonship. In order truly to understand the meaning of his person something has been missing. The missing element has been the necessity of his suffering. Only in the light of suffering can Jesus openly divulge his identity as God’s Son. At the trial the veil is finally removed. The malevolence which the Jewish authorities have harbored since the beginning of Jesus’ ministry (3:6) is finally exposed; hence the secret that Jesus has protected since the beginning of his ministry can now be disclosed.”*¹
- Theology of the messiah?
 - A variety of views at the time
 - “Messiah, son of David”
 - Less extreme
 - “Messiah, Son of the Blessed One”
 - Much more extreme
 - “blessed one” = God
 - They don’t use the divine name
 - Implies some sense of deity in the nature of Jesus

⁶²And Jesus said, “I am; and you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.”

⁶³Tearing his clothes, the high priest said, “What further need do we have of witnesses?”

¹ Edwards, J. R. (2002). [*The Gospel according to Mark*](#) (pp. 446–447). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

⁶⁴“You have heard the blasphemy; how does it seem to you?” And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.

- France says, about vs 62, “with this verse we have come to the christological climax of the gospel.”
 - Irony – He’s the messiah, the Son of God, so He must die!
 - Yes.
 - The high priest ironically comes to the right conclusion for the wrong reasons
 - **John 11:49–52 (NASB95)**
*⁴⁹But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all,
⁵⁰nor do you take into account that it is expedient for you that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation not perish.”
⁵¹Now he did not say this on his own initiative, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation,
⁵²and not for the nation only, but in order that He might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.*
- “I am”
 - Ego eimi
 - Equivalent to the divine name in OT
 - Ex 3:14
 - Is 43:10 & 13
 - Already implied earlier
 - Mark 6:50 (NASB95) ⁵⁰for they all saw Him and were terrified. But immediately He spoke with them and said to them, “Take courage; it is I, do not be afraid.”
 - Job 9:8–11 (NASB95)
⁸Who alone stretches out the heavens And tramples down the waves of the sea;
⁹Who makes the Bear, Orion and the Pleiades, And the chambers of the south;
¹⁰Who does great things, unfathomable, And wondrous works without number.
¹¹“Were He to pass by me, I would not see Him; Were He to move past me, I would not perceive Him.
 - Also, “Son of the Blessed” implies some kind of divinity
 - Also, Jesus use of Daniel implies it as well
 - Luke has “you rightly say that I am”
 - Matthew doesn’t have “I am”
 - Mt 26:64 “You have said so”
 - Not word for word.
- Jesus is condemned for what exactly?
 - Not just saying He is the messiah
 - They had various (and mistaken) views of what the Messiah was to be
 - James Edward’s commentary - *It is often supposed that Jesus’ claim to be the Messiah triggered the explosion from the high priest and his condemnation by the Sanhedrin. This is not the case. It was no crime to call oneself the Messiah, or to be called so by others; for, as Justin Martyr later acknowledged, the Messiah would be only “a man among men” (Dial. Trypho 49). A century after Jesus, Rabbi Akiba openly declared Bar Kokhba, leader of the second revolt against Rome (a.d. 132–135), to be the Messiah, and the mass of people believed it—even after Bar Kokhba’s death. The charge of blasphemy was thus not owing to any messianic claim, perhaps not even to the charge that Jesus would destroy the temple (v. 58). Blasphemy was not breaking a holy commandment or even profaning a holy place, but the audacity to ascribe God’s honor to oneself, or to equate oneself with God. It was the claim to be God’s Son (v. 62), not Messiah, that*

sealed Jesus' fate before the Sanhedrin. The charge of blasphemy is powerful, if indirect, proof of Jesus' claim to be the Son of God²

- Jesus' confession
 - The Christ, the Son of the Blessed One
 - Not merely Messiah... Son of God
 - Jesus takes further with the statement ***"and you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven"***
 - Jesus' theology of Jesus
 - Dan 7:13
 - Daniel 7:13–14 (NASB95)
¹³"I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him.
¹⁴"And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.
 - Rides on the clouds
 - YHWH does
 - Jesus is also saying that He will judge them!
 - Ironical because they are wrongly judging Him now
 - Psalm 110:1
 - Psalm 110:1 (NASB95) ¹The Lord says to my Lord: ***"Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet."***
 - Previously Jesus used this passage to say that He was David's Lord
 - Mark 12:35–37 (NASB95)
³⁵And Jesus began to say, as He taught in the temple, "How is it that the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David?
³⁶"David himself said in the Holy Spirit, 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Until I put Your enemies beneath Your feet.'" '
³⁷"David himself calls Him 'Lord'; so in what sense is He his son?" And the large crowd enjoyed listening to Him.
 - So much more
 - "the Power" – in place of God's name

⁶⁵**Some began to spit at Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him with their fists, and to say to Him, "Prophecy!" And the officers received Him with slaps in the face.**

- Shocking treatment
 - A mocking game
 - "who hit you?"
 - Oh the patience of God

² Edwards, J. R. (2002). [*The Gospel according to Mark*](#) (pp. 448–449). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

- Another irony

- They see Jesus failing to tell them who hit Him as a failure to prophecy

- But, Jesus had already prophesied this moment

- **Mark 10:33–34 (NASB95)**

³³saying, “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and will hand Him over to the Gentiles.

³⁴“They will mock Him and spit on Him, and scourge Him and kill Him, and three days later He will rise again.”

- **Isaiah 50:6 (NASB95)** ⁶I gave My back to those who strike Me, And My cheeks to those who pluck out the beard; I did not cover My face from humiliation and spitting.

- Why this is relevant, and not a random verse out of context

- Jesus CLEARLY teaches His own suffering is that of the suffering servant in Isaiah 53

- The four servant songs

- **Isaiah 42:1–4 (NASB95)**

¹“Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations.

²“He will not cry out or raise His voice, Nor make His voice heard in the street.

³“A bruised reed He will not break And a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish; He will faithfully bring forth justice.

⁴“He will not be disheartened or crushed Until He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands will wait expectantly for His law.”

- Quoted about Jesus
- Previously in Isaiah “behold” the false idols and the foolish who believe in them
- Now – my servant

- **Isaiah 49:1–7 (NASB95)**

¹Listen to Me, O islands, And pay attention, you peoples from afar. The Lord called Me from the womb; From the body of My mother He named Me.

²He has made My mouth like a sharp sword, In the shadow of His hand He has concealed Me; And He has also made Me a select arrow, He has hidden Me in His quiver.

Jesus was literally named by God before His birth

Jesus was concealed but chosen

³He said to Me, “You are My Servant, Israel, In Whom I will show My glory.”

Earlier the “servant” was Israel but now we will learn there’s more

⁴But I said, “I have toiled in vain, I have spent My strength for nothing and vanity; Yet surely the justice due to Me is with the Lord, And My reward with My God.”

He will be mistreated but God will finally vindicate Him (the res)

⁵And now says the Lord, who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant, To bring Jacob back to Him, so that Israel might be gathered to Him (For I am honored in the sight of the Lord, And My God is My strength),

Called “Israel” but is ONE who represents them

⁶He says, “It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”

⁷Thus says the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel and its Holy One, To the despised One, To the One abhorred by the nation, To the Servant of rulers, “Kings will see and arise, Princes will also bow down, Because of the Lord who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel who has chosen You.”

- He will save Israel AND the world

- ***Isaiah 50:4–10 (NASB95)***

⁴The Lord God has given Me the tongue of disciples, That I may know how to sustain the weary one with a word. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to listen as a disciple.

⁵The Lord God has opened My ear; And I was not disobedient Nor did I turn back.

Unlike Israel who is unfaithful, He is faithful

⁶I gave My back to those who strike Me, And My cheeks to those who pluck out the beard; I did not cover My face from humiliation and spitting.

Literally fulfilled

Again, He volunteers for this

As it is in Mark

⁷For the Lord God helps Me, Therefore, I am not disgraced; Therefore, I have set My face like flint, And I know that I will not be ashamed.

⁸He who vindicates Me is near; Who will contend with Me? Let us stand up to each other; Who has a case against Me? Let him draw near to Me.

⁹Behold, the Lord God helps Me; Who is he who condemns Me? Behold, they will all wear out like a garment; The moth will eat them.

Is shamed by people but He no one can rightly accuse Him of wrong

“who will contend with me” – feels like the trial

¹⁰Who is among you that fears the Lord, That obeys the voice of His servant, That walks in darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord and rely on his God.

- Believing the servant is trusting in the Lord God

- ***Isaiah 52:13-53:12***

- The most detailed theological explanation of the cross
- In more detail later

- Let's not forget the very difficult application

- ***1 Peter 2:21–23 (NASB95)***

²¹For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,

²²who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth;

²³and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously;

- Not just ideals
 - An example, a savior to follow
 - If you return kindness for hatred you will be following your savior

⁶⁶As Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came,

⁶⁷and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, “You also were with Jesus the Nazarene.”

- It especially makes sense that Jesus was called by this title in Jerusalem
- This is embarrassing
 - Because Peter denies
 - After saying he would die with Jesus
 - To a servant girl

- But, she is dangerous – she can report Peter to the high priest

⁶⁸But he denied it, saying, “I neither know nor understand what you are talking about.” And he went out onto the porch.

⁶⁹The servant-girl saw him, and began once more to say to the bystanders, “This is one of them!”

⁷⁰But again he denied it. And after a little while the bystanders were again saying to Peter, “Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean too.”

⁷¹But he began to curse and swear, “I do not know this man you are talking about!”

⁷²Immediately a rooster crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had made the remark to him, “Before a rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times.” And he began to weep.

- Peter isn’t remarkably unfaithful
 - He’s the best of us, still failing.
 - Jesus is the only faithful one
 - We all need Him
- Can I harmonize the denials?
- Next week – Pilate
- The “Messianic Secret” should be “The Messianic Theology”
 - The Messiah is not
 - Merely a social deliverer
 - Merely making an earthly kingdom
 - The Messiah is
 - The Son of God – divine
 - The judge of the earth
 - The one ruling over the kingdom of God
 - Going to die
 - As an atoning sacrifice

For “My God, My God why have you forsaken me?” <https://youtu.be/RtbfL9XmVQs> - start at 12:35

Add 14:49 if not already there. Jesus, clearly knows what He will face (death by crucifixion) and says that it's according to the SCRIPTURES – when He later quotes the best passage on the topic from the OT it is folly to ignore the connection.

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