

A Study of Mark – Lesson 42

Mark 14:53-65 The Trial of Jesus

14⁵³ They took Jesus to the high priest, / and all the chief priests, / the elders / and the teachers of the law / came together. / ⁵⁴ Peter followed him at a distance, / right into the courtyard of the high priest. / There he sat with the guards / and warmed himself at the fire.

⁵⁵ The chief priests / and the whole Sanhedrin / were looking for evidence against Jesus / so that they could put him to death, / but they did not find any. / ⁵⁶ Many testified falsely against him, / but their statements did not agree.



⁵⁷ Then some stood up / and gave this false testimony against him: / ⁵⁸ “We heard him say, / ‘I will destroy this temple / made with human hands / and in three days / will build another, / not made with hands.’” / ⁵⁹ Yet even then / their testimony did not agree.

⁶⁰ Then the high priest stood up before them / and asked Jesus, / “Are you not going to answer? / What is this testimony / that these

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men are bringing against you?” / ⁶¹ But Jesus remained silent / and gave no answer.

Again the high priest asked him, / “Are you the Messiah, / the Son of the Blessed One?”

⁶² “I am,” / said Jesus. / “And you will see the Son of Man / sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One / and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

⁶³ The high priest tore his clothes. / “Why do we need any more witnesses?” / he asked. / ⁶⁴ “You have heard the blasphemy. / What do you think?”

They all condemned him / as worthy of death. / ⁶⁵ Then some began to spit at him; / they blindfolded him, / struck him with their fists, / and said, / “Prophecy!” / And the guards took him / and beat him.

Vocabulary

1. **Testify:** To swear to tell the truth, to affirm something happened
2. **Testimony:** Evidence. Proof.
3. **Blasphemy:** Disrespect for religion. Speaking and acting disrespectfully concerning God.
4. **Spit:** Expel something from your mouth; show disrespect by expelling saliva from the mouth.

Questions

1. Jesus was arrested and put on trial in the middle of the night.
Why would that take place? Is it legal?
2. Why do you think the High Priest tore his clothes?
3. If the people had known Jesus had been arrested, what do you think the testimony would have been like?
4. Why do you think the High Priest and the Sadducees were so determined to get rid of Jesus?

Notes

1. From this point on, decisions and actions move very quickly.
Jesus is no longer free to move about, only free to rely on God.
2. The Romans are the court of last resort. Because they are a conquered people, the Sanhedrin, the court of the Religion and of the Jews, cannot condemn a man to death. They have only rights over religious affairs. Here, they must prepare a charge serious enough to be brought before the Roman courts or governor.
3. The Sanhedrin was the supreme court of the Jews. It was composed of 71 members. It was made up of Sadducees, Pharisees and Scribes, who were experts in the law, and respected men called elders. The High Priest presided over the court.

4. Rules of the Sanhedrin:

- Official meeting place was the Hall of Hewn Stone in the Temple. (Jesus was tried at the home of the High Priest)
- Decisions were not valid unless reached in the Hall of Hewn Stone.
- The court could not meet at night or on any of the Religious Holidays.
- Evidence of witnesses must agree in all details
- Each individual member of the Sanhedrin must give his verdict or decision separately.
- If the verdict was death, a night must pass before it could be carried out so that the court could have a chance to change its mind and its decision toward mercy.

5. In Mark 13:2, Jesus talked of the temple. His words were overheard and twisted.

6. The High Priest took over. When he did, he asked a leading question, and that was also forbidden. He wanted Jesus to incriminate himself. He asked Jesus if he was the Messiah.

7. When Jesus said he was the Messiah, this left him open to the charge of Blasphemy. Now he could be condemned to death.

8. In Jesus, we see his courage and his confidence.