

**Introduction**

1. Have you ever been accused of doing something that you didn't do?
  - a. What was your response to your accuser?
  - b. Most likely you defended yourself from the false accusations. That is the natural human response.
  - c. As He stood before the Sanhedrin, Jesus was falsely accused, but He offered no defense because He knew that the unfolding events would lead to fulfillment of His Father's purpose in sending Him.
2. **Read Mk 14:53-65.**

**A. The Transfer (53-54)**

1. Jesus was taken from Gethsemane to appear before the high priest and an assembly of the chief priests, elders, and teachers of the law—the Sanhedrin.
2. Jesus faced two trials. The first was before Jewish leaders, and the second was before the Roman Procurator Pontius Pilate (cf., Mk 15:1-15).
  - a. To see the complete picture of the trials, one must examine the record found in all four gospels.
  - b. Warren Wiersbe summarizes it well as he writes, “Both the Jewish trial and the Roman trial were in three stages. The Jewish trial was opened by Annas, the former high priest (John 18:13-24). It then moved to the full council to hear witnesses (Mark 14:53-65), and then to an early morning session for the final vote of condemnation (Mark 15:1). Jesus was then sent to Pilate (Mark 15:1-5; John 18:28-38), who sent Him to Herod (Luke 23:6-12), who returned Him to Pilate (Mark 15:6-15; John 18:39-19:6). Pilate yielded to the cry of the mob and delivered Jesus to be crucified” (Warren Wiersbe, *Be Diligent*, 169).
  - c. These trials and the events following them fulfilled completely Jesus' predictions in Mk 8:31, 9:31, and 10:33-35.
3. On the way to the first trial, Peter followed Jesus “at a distance” (Gk., *makrothen*).
  - a. Peter went into the courtyard of the high priest's home.
  - b. He sat with the “guards” (Gk., *hupereton*) warming himself by their fire.
  - c. In writing about Peter following Jesus at a distance, Wiersbe writes, “I have read eloquent sermons blaming Peter for ‘following afar off,’ but they completely miss the point. He was not supposed to follow at all! Had he obeyed the Lord, he would not have attacked a man with a sword or denied the Lord three times” (Wiersbe, 167).

**B. The Lack of Evidence and False Testimony (55-59)**

1. As we know, the Jewish leaders had been looking for some time for evidence to convict Jesus of a crime worthy of a death sentence (cf., Mk 3:6, 11:18).
2. “. . . but they did not find any” (55).
3. They even gave false testimony (Gk., *epheudomartuouon*) against Him but their testimony did not agree.
  - a. In order to convict, the testimony of at least two witnesses had to agree according to Jewish law (cf., Dt 17:6, 19:15; Nm 35:30).
  - b. Bearing false witness against another was a violation of the ninth commandment (cf., Ex 20:16).
  - c. The willingness of these most “righteous” Jews to stoop to a sinful act indicates their sheer desperation to rid themselves of Jesus by any means.
4. Mark pointed out the chief false charge brought against Jesus.
  - a. “We hear him say, ‘I will destroy this temple made with human hands and in three days will build another, not made with hands.’” (58)
  - b. We have not heard these words from Jesus directly in Mark's account. However, they do appear in John's gospel in the context of Jesus clearing the temple courts and being questioned by the Jewish leaders regarding His authority to do so.
  - c. John recorded, “The Jews then responded to [Jesus], ‘What sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?’ Jesus answered them, ‘Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.’ They replied, ‘It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?’ But the temple he had spoken of was his body. After he was raised from the dead, his

disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken” (Jn 2:18-22).

d. But even in their attempt to use Jesus’ words against Him, “. . . their testimony did not agree” (59).

5. Daniel Akin observes, “A false witness will find ways to lie no matter the facts. A true witness will tell the truth no matter the consequences” (Daniel Akin, *Exalting Jesus in Mark*, 339).

### C. The Interrogation and Condemnation of Jesus (60-65)

1. Caiaphas, the high priest named in Mt 26:57, took matters into his own hands with a direct interrogation of Jesus.

a. “Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?” (60b)

b. Caiaphas hoped Jesus might be tripped up in trying to answer the false charges. He appealed to the natural human instincts of self-defense and preservation.

c. Jesus did not take the bait but “. . . remained silent and gave no answer” (61a). This was a fulfillment of prophecy in Isa 53:7, “He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.”

d. Jesus knew the verdict was already in before the trial began. There was no need for a defense that would not prevail anyway. He had already submitted Himself to His Father’s will in Gethsemane.

2. So, Caiaphas cut to the chase with the direct and open question that was in everyone’s mind: “Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?” (61b)

a. James Edwards notes, “The effect is to put a full Christological confession into the mouth of the high priest! . . . His arch-prosecutor confesses his name! How ironic that in the Gospel of Mark the two most complete Christological confessions from humans occur in the mouth of those responsible for Jesus’ death: the high priest in 14:61 and the centurion at the cross in 15:39) (James Edwards, *Mark*, 446).

b. Peter had confessed Jesus as Messiah Mk 8:29, but Jesus had cautioned His disciples to keep this truth about His identity a secret (cf., Mk 8:30). The time for openly proclaiming the Messianic Secret about Jesus had now come.

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

1) “I am” is most likely a reference to the fact that Jesus is Yahweh (Hb., I am) in flesh (cf., Ex 3:14).

2) The reference to “Son of Man,” Jesus’ favorite name for Himself, pointed to the eschatological events of Daniel 7:13ff as the Son of Man receives power from God Almighty in the end time to come and rule with justice, righteousness, and peace over the earth for eternity.

3) Jesus pointed to the reality that although the Jewish leaders now sat in judgment of Him, the time will come at the end of days when they will see Him standing in judgment of them.

3. Caiaphas “tore his clothes” at Jesus’ answer which was a sign of great distress/grief/indignation. (63)

a. The testimony of false witnesses had not been successful, but now Jesus’ own words convicted Him in the minds of the high priest and the members of the Sanhedrin.

b. There was no longer a need for witnesses as Jesus had confessed to claiming to be the Messiah, which was blasphemy in the minds of the Jewish leaders.

c. Of course, we know that what Jesus confessed was not a lie but the truth!

d. It was the high priest and Jewish leaders who committed blasphemy by reviling and rejecting Jesus.

4. Caiaphas announced the charge, “You have heard the blasphemy (Gk., *blasphemias*)” and asked for the sentence. (64ab)

a. “They all condemned (*katekrinan*) him as worthy of death (Gk., *thanatou*)” (64c)

b. They then acted in accordance with their sentence as they “spit at him . . . blindfolded him, struck him with their fists, and said, ‘Prophecy’” (65a)

c. The guards also “beat” (Gk., *rapismasin*) Jesus. These were the same guards with whom Peter had earlier set warming himself in the courtyard.

- d. The actions summarized v. 65 fulfill Jesus' prophecy, "'We are going up to Jerusalem,' he said, 'and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise.'" (Mk 10:33-34)
- e. William Lane notes, "Once Jesus was condemned, it was necessary for the council to show that it could not condone his (apparently) abhorrent behavior. This was accomplished through the spitting and the administering of blows, which were conventional gestures of rejection and repudiation (cf., Job 30:10; Num 12:14; Deut 25:9; Isa 50:6 . . . . The detail that Jesus was blindfolded and cuffed, with the demand to 'prophesy,' i.e. to say who it was that struck him, accurately preserves an old interpretation of Isa. 11:2-4, according to which Messiah could judge by smell without the need of sight. What is described in the text is a traditional test of messianic status, to which Jesus declined to submit. . . . the degrading treatment corresponding to the basis of the condemnation" (William Lane, *Mark*, 539-40).
- f. Next week we will see further fulfillment of prophecy (cf., Mk 14:30) as Peter denies Jesus.

#### **D. Questions/Thoughts for Reflection**

1. Have you ever tried to lie your way out of a situation but only made things worse?
2. Is there enough evidence to convict you of being a Christian?