

**Valley Bible Church**  
**Sermon Notes for February 18, 2018**

**Jesus Before the Council**  
**Mark 14:53-65**

I. The illegal trial (14:53-54)

*53 And they led Jesus to the high priest. And all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes came together. 54 And Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. And he was sitting with the guards and warming himself at the fire.*

- “And they led Jesus to the high priest.”
  - Caiaphas was the high priest at this time
- “And all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes came together.”
  - This was an assembly of the Sanhedrin
    - Diverse group containing Pharisees, Sadducees, and scribes
  - The Jewish authorities gathered for meeting that turned into a trial
  - Was this gathering permissible?
    - Mishnah or Jewish Oral Law as well as Josephus would say no
    - Not allowed to meet at high priest’s palace (Mishnah)
    - Not allowed to meet at night (Mishnah)
    - “The high priest was a political appointee of the Romans; the council did not have the right to convene without the governor’s permission (Josephus, Ant. 20.9.1 § 202).”<sup>1</sup>
  - The mistreatment of Jesus continues from betrayal to an illegal trial
- “And Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. And he was sitting with the guards and warming himself at the fire.”
  - Earlier Peter had scattered from Jesus just like the rest of the disciples
  - Now, Peter had made his way to follow Jesus from a distance
  - Peter gained access into the courtyard through another disciple (John 18:15-18)
  - Mark makes us aware that Peter was present but we won’t see his interactions until next time

II. The inconsistent testimonies (14:55-59)

*55 Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking testimony against Jesus to put him to death, but they found none. 56 For many bore false witness against him, but*

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<sup>1</sup> David E. Garland, Mark, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996).

<sup>2</sup> D. Edmond Hiebert, The Gospel of Mark: An Expository Commentary (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones

*their testimony did not agree. 57 And some stood up and bore false witness against him, saying, 58 “We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.’ ” 59 Yet even about this their testimony did not agree.*

- “Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking testimony against Jesus to put him to death, but they found none.”
  - Sanhedrin viewed this as an official meeting and trial
  - They sought testimonies against Jesus
  - They wanted testimonies to warrant the death of Jesus and not just punishment
  - Mark makes it clear that the Sanhedrin found none of the sort
- “For many bore false witness against him, but their testimony did not agree.”
  - Many attempted to testify against Jesus
  - Mark calls their testimonies inaccurate lies
    - They were breaking commandment #9 of the ten commandments while trying the Son of God (Exodus 20:16)
  - Even more, Mark shows their testimonies to be inconsistent and failing to agree
- “And some stood up and bore false witness against him, saying, 58 ‘We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.’”
  - Mark now identifies the particular false witness that gained traction in this trial
  - This was not something that Jesus stated in Mark’s gospel
  - Closest statement is found in John’s gospel from the first time Jesus cleansed the temple in the beginning of his three year ministry
    - John 2:19-21 “Jesus answered them, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’ 20 The Jews then said, ‘It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?’ 21 But he was speaking about the temple of his body.”
    - Mark 13:2 “And Jesus said to him, ‘Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.’”
  - This testimony is clearly a misrepresentation of Jesus’ words from John 2
    - Jesus did not say that He would destroy the temple Himself
    - He simply prophesied that the temple would be destroyed
  - To the Sanhedrin, the claim that someone would destroy their temple would be a massively evil rebellion against God and the temple system
- “Yet even about this their testimony did not agree.”
  - Mark highlights that the Sanhedrin could not even get their story straight about this particular statement
  - They misrepresented Jesus’ words from John 2

- And they could not even testify in a way to show agreement among themselves
- This doesn't just serve to show their pathetic conduct in this trial
- More importantly, it shows that they weren't even conducting a lawful trial according to the Law of Moses
  - Deuteronomy 19:15 "A single witness shall not suffice against a person for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offense that he has committed. Only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established."

### III. The invisible truth (14:60-62)

*60 And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, "Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?" 61 But he remained silent and made no answer. Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" 62 And Jesus said, "I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."*

- "And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, 'Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?'"
  - The false testimony led the high priest to act in the midst of the trial
  - The high priest was probably also baiting Jesus to get a confirmation of these claims
- "But he remained silent and made no answer."
  - Jesus' response is righteous and unthinkable
  - Jesus' maintained purity and fulfilled Scripture
    - Isaiah 53:7 "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth."
  - Jesus did not take Caiaphas' bait regarding the false testimony
- "Again the high priest asked him, 'Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?'"
  - The high priest elevates his interrogation of Jesus
  - Caiaphas directly asks Jesus if He is the Messiah
  - Notice how Caiaphas asks Jesus this question
    - "The Christ, the Son of the Blessed"
    - Mark 1:1 "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God."
  - We now get Jesus' affirmation of the very thing that Mark has been trying to prove in this account of Christ's life
- "And Jesus said, 'I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.'"
  - Jesus plainly, clearly and certainly settles the question and debate
  - Jesus confesses that He is in fact the Messiah and the Son of God

- Jesus adds to His confession of His identity
- Jesus speaks of His work as the Messiah and Son of God
  - It is interesting what Jesus chooses to emphasize regarding His work
  - He speaks nothing of His imminent suffering and death
  - He knows that these Jewish leaders want nothing to do with a supposed suffering servant Messiah
  - Thus, Jesus chooses to speak only of His work of future judgment
- Jesus draws from the Old Testament to affirm His future work of judgment
  - Psalm 110:1 “The LORD says to my Lord: ‘Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.’”
  - Daniel 7:13-14 “I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. 14 And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.”
- Jesus is currently positioned at the right hand of the Father
  - Hebrews 1:3 “After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,”
  - Colossians 3:1 “If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.”
- We still await His powerful and visible return to this earth
  - Revelation 1:7 “Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him.”

#### IV. The immediate torture (14:63-65)

*63 And the high priest tore his garments and said, “What further witnesses do we need? 64 You have heard his blasphemy. What is your decision?” And they all condemned him as deserving death. 65 And some began to spit on him and to cover his face and to strike him, saying to him, “Prophesy!” And the guards received him with blows.*

- “And the high priest tore his garments and said, ‘What further witnesses do we need? You have heard his blasphemy. What is your decision?’”
  - After Jesus’ clear admission to the claim of Messiah, Caiaphas was convinced
  - He first showed this by tearing his clothes, which was a sign of grief or anguish
    - Acts 14:13-15 “And the priest of Zeus, whose temple was at the entrance to the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates and wanted to offer sacrifice with the crowds. 14 But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their garments and rushed out into the crowd, crying

out, 15 ‘Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men, of like nature with you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them.’”

- Numbers 14:6 “And Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes”
- He then stated that there was no more need for witnesses based upon Jesus’ own words and confession
- Caiaphas identified Jesus’ words as blasphemous words
  - “Caiaphas regarded the words as blasphemy because Jesus claimed the position and power of deity.”<sup>2</sup>
- He then called upon the council or Sanhedrin to make a decision
- “And they all condemned him as deserving death.”
  - The Sanhedrin agreed with the high priest’s accusation
  - Thus, they “all” condemned Jesus as deserving death
  - This would be the fitting punishment for blasphemy
    - Leviticus 24:16 “Whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall stone him. The sojourner as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death.”
  - However, the Jewish people were not allowed to carry out capital punishment on their own law
  - They needed to acquire the approval of the Romans in order to have Jesus handed over to death
  - The Sanhedrin had made progress in their pursuit to kill Jesus
  - They now had Him in their custody and had convicted Him of blasphemy
- “And some began to spit on him and to cover his face and to strike him, saying to him, ‘Prophecy!’ And the guards received him with blows.”
  - Immediately after they reached their decision as a council, they proceeded to torture Jesus
    - They spat upon Him
      - Strong and gross insult
      - Isaiah 50:6 “I gave my back to those who strike, and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard; I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting.”

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<sup>2</sup> D. Edmond Hiebert, *The Gospel of Mark: An Expository Commentary* (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1994), 433.

- They mockingly covered his face and hit Him while asking Him to prophesy whom it was that had hit Him
  - Luke 22:64 “They also blindfolded him and kept asking him, ‘Prophesy! Who is it that struck you?’”
- The Temple guards received Jesus back from the Sanhedrin with beatings and continued torture
- This concluded their preliminary and illegal trial of Jesus
- They would wait until morning before they formally convicted Jesus of blasphemy