

耶稣受审向我们见证的真理——马可福音 14:53-65

Truths Witnessed in the Trial of Jesus—Mark 14:53-65

Introduction and Outline

- Scripture Reading: Deuteronomy 16:18-20; Mark 14:53-65; John 5:22-29

Mark 14:53-65 (NASB1995)

53 They led Jesus away to the high priest; and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes gathered together. 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. 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. 57 Some 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.’” 59 Not even in this respect was their testimony consistent. 60 The 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?” 61 But He kept silent and did not answer. Again the high priest was questioning Him, and saying to Him, “Are You [ac]the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?” 62 And 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.” 63 Tearing 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. 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.

- The entire process of Jesus’ trial (summarizing accounts from all four Gospels) has two main phases: first, in the Jewish religious court, and then, in the Roman secular court. Each phase has three distinct stages, totaling six separate trials. These six trials took place in five different locations, much of which occurred during the night. The Jews condemned Jesus to death over one night, and early in the morning, they gave Him over to the Romans who also sentenced Him to death. The execution of the death sentence followed immediately, with the entire process taking less than half a day.
- **Mark 10:33-34:** "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. They will mock Him and spit on Him, and scourge Him and kill Him, and three days later He will rise again."
- Outline:
Truths Witnessed in the Trial of Jesus—Mark 14:53-65
 1. The Craftiness of Sinners (v.53)
 2. The Weakness of Disciples (v.54)
 3. The Sovereignty of God (vv. 55-59)
 4. The Boldness of the Savior (vv. 60-62)
 5. The Madness of Enemies (vv. 63-65)

The Craftiness of Sinners (v.53)

- "They led Jesus to the high priest": From the former high priest Annas' house, they brought Him to the current high priest Caiaphas' house (see John 18:12-24). This marks the second phase of the Jewish interrogation of Jesus.
- "The chief priests and the elders and the scribes gathered together with the high priest": In the middle of the night, they convened immediately at a summons call, indicating this trial had been prearranged. They dared not hold a public trial in broad daylight as the law required, so they acted under the cover of night, aiming for a swift proceeding. That's why they all showed up promptly in the high priest' mansion for this secretive meeting.

These people made up the 'whole Council' (v. 55), the most esteemed religious leaders in all of Israel. Comprising 71 finest selected leaders, the Council was the highest judicial institution in Israel. Their official meeting place was a room on the north wall of the temple, equivalent to today's Supreme Court. Holding a trial overnight at the high priest' house was completely unlawful.

The Weakness of Disciples (v.54)

- "Peter followed Jesus at a distance": A futile attempt to prove the bold claim he had made just a few hours earlier: "Even though all may fall away, yet I will not. ... Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" (Mark 14:29, 31).
- "He went right into the courtyard of the high priest": A place full of dangerous temptations, forming the context for Peter's three denials of the Lord.

The Sovereignty of God (vv. 55-59)

- "Looking for testimony to put Jesus to death": A fair and just judicial process must first investigate the evidence and confirm the crime, and then decide the proper sentence based on the established crime. Here, they got it completely reversed. They first decided the sentence would be death, and then tried to make up a crime to support this verdict. They had no interest in a fair and just judgment whatsoever.

The punishment for a false witness in the Old Testament was that the outcome he intended for the accused would be applied to himself (Deuteronomy 19:16-19). Therefore, according to their own law, they all should have been put to death. However, they clearly did not think this law applied to themselves.

- "But they did not find any": They had the intent to do evil but lacked the ability to carry it out.
- "Many were giving false testimony against Him, but their testimony was not consistent": How could this be? If it's hard to find a real testimony against Jesus, how hard is it to fabricate a false one? Why couldn't they even come up with a lie? Couldn't they have conspired in advance? (See 1 Kings 21:1-16 for an example of how the wicked easily used false testimony to condemn the innocent.)

【Explanation】 The best explanation may be found in a prayer of David from the Psalms. In **Psalm 55**, David cries out to God for help while being persecuted by his enemies. **Verse 13** mentions a close friend betraying him, similar to Judas' betrayal of Jesus, as David himself is **a foreshadowing of Jesus**. This psalm clearly anticipates Jesus' suffering. In **verse 9**, David prays, "Confuse, O Lord, divide their tongues, for I have seen violence and strife in the city." David asks God to divide his enemies' tongues

just like He divided the tongues at the Tower of Babel, thus frustrating their communication and thwarting their evil plan.

- "And some stood up and began to give false testimony against Him..." This was evidently their closest attempt to success.
- "I will destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands": This is a severe distortion of John 2:19. Jesus never said He would destroy the temple; rather, He said the Jews would destroy it. Moreover, He was using the temple as a metaphor for His body, which had nothing to do with the physical building made with human hands.
- "They are bearing witness in this way, yet their testimonies do not align." How do they not align? As it turns out, Matthew 26:61 has the original version of this false testimony which did not say the temple rebuilt would be "made without hands." Mark's version here is clearly a correction by another person, but the first person evidently disagreed. In this case, this testimony was rendered invalid.

【Conclusion】 That's why I say this must be God dividing their tongues. Otherwise, how could the second person make such a senseless correction? Couldn't they simply agree with each other so the case would be closed? But God just wouldn't allow their scheme to prevail.

【Significance】 God intended to clear all charges against Jesus, leaving only one—that He claimed to be the Christ, the Son of God. **Jesus' true identity is the only reason people want to kill Him, for they want to be king themselves and won't yield their throne to Jesus.** This is the fundamental reason why anyone rejects Jesus in all of history. Apart from this, there is no legitimate reason whatsoever to reject Him. **No one can find any valid objective evidence to prove Jesus isn't the great Savior and King that the Bible says He is.**

【Insight】 Perhaps the pitiful performance of the religious leaders here is meant to show us just how absurd and unreasonable it is to reject Jesus. There is no legitimate ground or rational basis whatsoever.

"Like many people throughout the ages who have rejected Christ, it was not that they had carefully examined the evidence about Him and found it to be untrue or unconvincing but that they refused to consider the evidence at all. Even God's own Holy Spirit cannot penetrate such a willful barrier to His truth and grace. Miracles do not convince the hard-hearted." - One pastor

The Boldness of the Savior (vv. 60-62)

- "Do You not offer any answer for what these men are testifying against You?": They themselves didn't even know what they were accusing Him of. Jesus, of course, did not need to answer. The accusers, after speaking at length, still didn't know what they were accusing Him of, and yet the judge found no fault with the accusers but demanded the defendant to explain the situation. The whole thing was a farce, devoid of any sense or justice.
- "But He kept silent and did not offer any answer": The best answer to such baseless accusations is silence. There is no need to answer such hostile attacks; no one needs to answer slanderous statements that have no factual basis.

【Application】 Can you treat hostile attacks in the same way? When confronted with slander and defamation from a whole group of people speaking against you, can you remain silent without defending yourself? Only those filled with the Holy Spirit and completely under His control can keep such silence. When facing hostile attacks, we all too often respond too quickly. One of the most obvious signs of our sinful flesh is the impulsiveness to respond quickly to criticism and the strong desire to defend ourselves against any criticism.

Israel 53:7 “He was oppressed and 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 tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God.": Jesus had already declared His identity many times in various ways. The reason this question is only being raised now is that, under Roman law, this was not considered a crime. Their initial strategy was to fabricate some charge that the Romans would agree with. Now, after that attempt failed, they proceeded to bring up the issue of His identity.
- “You have said it yourself. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.”: Jesus broke His silence and boldly and fearlessly testified about His identity with a clear and powerful statement. Such testimony was the primary purpose of His incarnation.

The Madness of Enemies (vv. 63-65)

- “Then the high priest tore his robes”: A passionate expression of sadness and indignation. But high priests were not allowed to do so in Leviticus 12:10.
- “He has blasphemed!”: A blasphemy is a direct attack on God’s person, character or reputation. That is exactly what they are doing.
- “Then they spit in His face and beat Him with their fists; and others slapped Him”: At this point, they had crossed the bottom line of any moral standards. The top leaders of the Jews were nothing more than a group of bandits and hooligans.

Matthew 7:15 “Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.”

Conclusion and Application

1. *To unbelievers, do not harden your heart and reject Jesus. Repent of your sins today, receive His salvation, and start following Him.*
2. *For Christians, we can imitate Christ by responding to personal attacks with silence, but standing boldly and fearlessly when it comes to the Gospel. This is the example of how Jesus testified to the truth of the Gospel.*