

The Illegal Trial of Jesus (Part 2)

Mark 14:53-65

August 31, 2014

Introduction

Earlier this week, I have been reading about Jesus' trial, and one of the authors makes a point that I like. He points out that there is this recklessness in the actions of the Sanhedrin. They are so focused on their false religion that they refuse to see the signs that Jesus is God in flesh. They are completely oblivious to the fact that Jesus is the Messiah. It is interesting that the Sanhedrin do not deny that Jesus performs miracles.

John 11:47 *Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin. "What are we accomplishing?" they asked. "Here is this man performing many miraculous signs."*

They accept the fact that Jesus has risen Lazarus from the dead. They have gone so far in their unbelief that they are willing to kill Lazarus.

John 12:9-11 *Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of Him but also to see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. 10 So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, 11 for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and putting their faith in Him.*

The Sanhedrin hate Jesus with an intense passion. They see Him as a threat to their security. They are afraid that Jesus could cause an insurrection that will draw Rome's attention and have them come and destroy the nation. Their greatest fear is realized when Jesus enters into Jerusalem riding on a donkey with people singing, "Hosannas to the Son of David."

John 11:49-50 *Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, spoke up, "You know nothing at all! 50 You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish."*

They think that by getting rid of Jesus, they could end this threat. They never stop to consider who is Jesus. When the mob comes to arrest Jesus, they fall face down on their face when they ask who He is. He even heals a high priest's servant's ear after it has been cut off. None of the signs deter them from wanting Jesus dead. They did not stop to think of the consequences of killing Jesus.

Why? What causes them not to believe?

John 12:39-40 *For this reason they could not believe, because, as Isaiah says elsewhere: 40 "He has blinded their eyes and deadened their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, nor turn-and I would heal them."*

God has withdrawn His mercy and grace from them and allows them to fall full into their own depravity. Their deepest desire is to kill Jesus is now allowed by God.

Review

- Illegal trial
 - Trial must be public
 - Trial cannot be at night, on feast days, or day before Sabbath
 - Accused must be charged by witnesses

- Accused have the right to call his/her own witnesses
- Sanhedrin cannot charge anyone with crime
- False witnesses are not allowed
- Bribery not allowed
- Decision for punishment cannot happen until a full day of fasting
- Six parts to Jesus' trial
 - Annas—to be charged; they did not press charges when they arrested Jesus
 - Caiaphas—trial at his house
 - Early morning (at dawn)—Sanhedrin meet at regular place of meeting
 - Pilate, Herod, and then Pilate
 - Both Jews and Romans failed miserably performing their duty.

Mark 14:60-65

60 Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, "Are You not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against You?"

- High priest's questions
 - Are you not going to answer?
 - A sham or performance
 - They bought and brought in false witnesses
 - None of the false witnesses' story collaborated
 - Even the two false witnesses about the temple did not agree

Mark 14:57-59 Then some stood up and gave this false testimony against Him: **58** "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this manmade temple and in three days will build another, not made by man.'" **59** Yet even then their testimony did not agree.

Matthew 26:60-61 But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward. Finally two came forward **61** and declared, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.'"

- This is what Jesus said

John 2:19 Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days."

- Caiaphas is now frustrated because the two false witnesses are not enough

61 But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer. Again the high priest asked Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?"

- Jesus' silence
 - Jesus was under no obligation to answer the false charges
 - Silence very expressive and oppressive—unnerves Caiaphas
 - Fulfillment of Isaiah

Isaiah 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 her shearers is silent, so He did not open His mouth.

- High priest's demand
 - He wants Jesus to claim that He is God's Son or the Messiah
 - Caiaphas is looking for the blasphemy charge against Jesus

Leviticus 24:16 *anyone who blasphemes the name of the LORD must be put to death. The entire assembly must stone him. Whether an alien or native-born, when he blasphemes the Name, he must be put to death.*

- Matthew adds that he charges Jesus with an oath
 - Ironic because he brings lies to accuse Jesus
 - He cares nothing for God
 - Why is Caiaphas so insistent in getting Jesus to say that He is the Messiah?
 - Why can't they act as witnesses against Jesus because He has claimed to be the Son of God many times

Note: John records Jesus saying "I am" 23 times in the gospel alone.

John 10:24-25 *The Jews gathered around Him, saying, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." 25 Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in My Father's name speak for Me."*

- The reason is that they cannot act as witnesses unless Jesus incriminates Himself
- They are trying to legitimize themselves
- Even if He did incriminate Himself, it would not be allowed in court

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."*

- Jesus answers truthfully
 - I am

Exodus 3:14 *God said to Moses, "I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.' "*

- The Judge
 - I am the Messiah and the next time you see Me, I will be the Judge of everything

Daniel 7:13-14 *In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into His presence. 14 He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and His kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.*

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.*

- High Priest's reaction
 - He tore his clothes

- Signifies shock and grief
- He was acting that he was shocked at what he had heard from Jesus' statement
- High priest were forbidden to tear clothes

Leviticus 21:10 *The high priest, the one among his brothers who has had the anointing oil poured on his head and who has been ordained to wear the priestly garments, must not let his hair become unkempt or tear his clothes.*

- He is not showing grief that God's name is dishonored
- He is gleeful that Jesus "incriminates" Himself
- Caiaphas is actually blaspheming God Himself
- Witnesses
 - We do not need these false witnesses because we all heard what He said
 - They finally have a charge to go with their verdict

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.*

- Horrific cruelty

Matthew 26:67-68 *Then they spit n His face and struck Him with their fists. Others slapped Him **68** and said, "Prophecy to us, Christ. Who hit You?"*

- Jesus knew that this was coming

Luke 18:31-32 *Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. **32** He will be handed over to the Gentiles. They will mock Him, insult Him, spit on Him, flog Him and kill Him.*

- They are mocking the Son of God, committing the very blasphemy against God
- Evil men hate God and things of God

Luke 11:47-50 *"Woe to you, because you build tombs for the prophets, and it was your forefathers who killed them. **48** So you testify that you approve of what your forefathers did; they killed the prophets, and you build their tombs. **49** Because of this, God in his wisdom said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and others they will persecute.' **50** Therefore this generation will be held responsible for the blood of all the prophets that has been shed since the beginning of the world.*

- These leaders are actually accusing Jesus of being a false prophet

Luke 23:2 *And they began to accuse Him, saying, "We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Christ, a king."*