

Daily Bible Study

“God On Trial”

Mark 14:53-65

January 20 –26, 2013

THE LORD’S DAY & MONDAY –This week we move along to **Mark 14:53-65** and find **“God On Trial”**. To understand this text as well as what follows in **chapter 15** it is necessary to remember that Jesus underwent two trials. The first we see here in our text involving the Jewish leaders and authorities. This trial had a hearing before Annas (**John 18:12–14, 19–23**), a trial before the Sanhedrin (highpriest, chief priests, elders, and scribes-**Mark 14:53**), and the trial before the whole lot just after daybreak (**Mark 15:1**). The next trial directly involves the Roman authorities. We have one before Pilate, before Herod, and back before Pilate again. The first hearing before Annas is found only in John’s Gospel and Jesus before Herod is recorded only by Luke (**Luke 23:6–12**). In our current text, we assume the preliminary hearing before Annas has been held. If not for the sinfulness, it is laughable to think that the supreme and only God who spoke the universe into existence and sustains it by the word of His power (**Hebrews 1:3, Colossians 1:17**), The Anointed Messiah, The Lord of Lord’s and King of King’s is now subjected to a trial by men He created. In God’s Providence, this is what took place. Of course we know that nothing that Jesus could be charged with or accused of would be true, for He was without sin (**John 8:46**). Therefore, what we are about to read is an obvious travesty. **Mark 4:53-65**: *“And they led Jesus away to the high priest; and with him were assembled all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes. But Peter followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. And he sat with the servants and warmed himself at the fire. Now the chief priests and all the council sought testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree. Then some rose up and bore false witness against Him, saying, ‘We heard Him say, ‘I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.’ ” But not even then did their testimony agree. And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, saying, “Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?” But He kept silent and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked Him, saying to Him, “Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” Jesus said, “I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.” Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “What further need do we have of witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?” And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death. Then some began to spit on Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him, and to say to Him, “Prophecy!” And the officers struck Him with the palms of their hands.”*

Suggestion for Prayer: God, show me Jesus and His glory & majesty as I study this Scripture.

TUESDAY – **Mark 4:53-56**: *“And they led Jesus away to the high priest; and with him were assembled all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes. But Peter followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. And he sat with the servants and warmed himself at the fire. Now the chief priests and all the council sought testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree.”* The high priest spoken of here is Caiaphas (**Matthew 26:3**). He was the son-in-law of Annas (**John 18:13**). His obvious hatred for Jesus and hypocritical testimony is clearly seen in his actions. We are told that *all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes were assembled*. This assembly appears to have been one of the Sanhedrin not just a few members but a good number of them being present. But as Jesus informed them when they arrested Him in the garden, *this is your hour and the power of darkness* (**Luke 22:53**). After all the disciples initial fleeing we know that two, Peter and *another disciple* followed along to the high priest’s palace and **John 18:15-16** tells us how they got entrance to what was taking place. Peter takes his forever known place of betrayal at *the courtyard of the high priest* as he *sat with the servants and warmed himself at the fire*. By this time most of the soldiers probably had returned to the fortress of Antonia since they had delivered their prisoner. **Verses 55-56** clearly indict the Jewish religious leaders and Scripture as a whole lays the primary blame at their feet for the death of Jesus. It is the leaders and Caiaphas mentioned in **John 11:53** as the ones who plotted Christ’s death. Jesus’ Seven Woes (**Matthew 23**) are not against the masses in general but against the *scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites*. It was the chief priests and their officers who leading the shouts of *crucify* (**John 19:6**). **Matthew 27:20–23** makes very clear that the leaders *persuaded*, influenced and led the people in this. And though we see so much blame placed here by no means is it possible for us on scriptural grounds to excuse any of those who followed the example of these leaders. All those who took part in the crime or were in agreement with it share the blame. And in a very real way, that is all of mankind; *we all like sheep have gone astray...to our own way* (**Isaiah 53:6**), *all fallen short of the glory of God* (**Romans 3:23**) and *none righteous, no not one* (**Romans 3:10**). But these religious leaders are indeed a twisted group who actually hate the God they profess to love, serve and know. This is why God is so severe and gracious to warn us who profess Jesus to be sincere and sure of our stand with Him and not be hypocrites. To know the right way and to walk away from it is a horrific, dangerous, tragic offense. As we continue we find they *sought testimony against Jesus to put Him to death*. They searched for some offense against Him, *but found none* (**John 8:46**). *Many false witnesses against Him* were brought out, *but their testimonies did not agree*. The real judge is on trial and the real guilty ones have Him standing before them; this will one day change (**2 Corinthians 5:10**). There is no agreement among the *many* (all) for as Scripture states: *Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God* (**Romans 3:19**).

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, help me see that I do stand before you guilty and without excuse or hope apart from the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus, I worship and praise You as I look upon Your demonstration and continuation of humility, grace, and patience with sinners.

WEDNESDAY – Mark 14:57-61a: “Then some rose up and bore false witness against Him, saying, “We heard Him say, ‘I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.’ ” But not even then did their testimony agree. And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, saying, “Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?” But He kept silent and answered nothing.” We see that they finally get someone, actually two someone’s according to **Matthew 26:60** to bring some testimony. **John 2:19** records Jesus’ words to which these false witnesses refer. You will see they perverted what Jesus actually said. Jesus said, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up”. They have Christ saying He will destroy assigning to Jesus a destructive criminal act. What is interesting is that it is Jesus, as God the Son ultimately did have the control to both lay His life down and raise it up from the dead (**John 10:18**). Their lying testimony did in fact contain and point to a real, greater truth. Jesus did not say, “I will destroy,” but actually the original sentence structure infers they would be the ones to destroy; Listen to Jesus; “Destroy this Temple...” He also did not say He would “build another” but rather, “I will raise it up”, that is as we know, from the dead for John tells us that *He was speaking of the temple of His body* which, as in a temple, there dwelt the fullness of the Godhead in bodily form (**Colossians 2:9**). John reminds us that the disciples remembered these words when Jesus rose from the dead. Christ chose to speak in a veiled way and as we see the witnesses and people didn’t get it; our Lord’s words appear as an empty boast but certainly not enough to bring any charge against Jesus and on top of it all, *even then did their testimony agree*. Jesus could have shown their testimony was a misinterpretation of what he had said but this trial is not about making things right it’s about making sure the wrong triumphs. So he remains silent and this irritates Caiaphas. The High Priest is so angered he *stood up* asks Jesus the question of **verse 60** while Jesus is fulfilling the prophecy of **Isaiah 42:1–4 & Isaiah 53:7**.

Suggestion for Prayer: Jesus, I thank You that You did in fact raise up this Temple which vindicated Your word, acquitted me of my sin, and secured my justification (**Romans 4:25**). Thanks for being such an example of strength and truth; actually strength and truth in flesh.

THURSDAY – Mark 14:61b-62: “Again the high priest asked Him, saying to Him, “Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” Jesus said, “I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.” Finally, when it seems this sham of justice would not result in a guilty verdict of Jesus, it is as if Satan himself gives Caiaphas a thought and he then asks the “big one”; the question that cuts to the chase if you will; *Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?* That was the decisive question which seals

the deal for these crooked judges. This question was apparently such a key in their scheming plan against Jesus because **Matthew 26:63** informs us that Caiaphas, knowing Jesus will have to answer this question, puts Jesus “*under oath*,” and not any oath but, “*by the living God*.” He is demanding a clear and straightforward reply to the greatest question of all; is Jesus or does He claim to be The Messiah of God, The Chosen One, The Savior, God The Son? They know the answer; Jesus told the Samaritan woman as much (**John 4:25-26**), He told the blind man that He healed (**John 9:35-38**) and He defended this claim even before these men at His Triumphal entry as The Son of David (**Matthew 21:15-16**). After answering this most vital question with “*I Am*” Jesus takes back serve and goes on the offensive attack. He references **Daniel 7** with His comments ...*And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven*. These men knew this passage well and know that Jesus is saying He is the heavenly being that comes to The Throne of The Almighty. He as God, came from the Father, and will ascend back to The Father’s right hand where He will receive the authority to judge the earth. In short paraphrase, “This isn’t the last you will see me. I’ll be back with the authority of heaven and God Himself and this time you will be on trial”.

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, thank You that in Jesus I’m safe, secure and will come through the final day and judgment because of Jesus righteousness given me. Although I will be saved in Jesus on that day, help me live understanding, there is a final judgment and I’ll be there.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY – Mark 14:63-65: “Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “What further need do we have of witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?” And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death. Then some began to spit on Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him, and to say to Him, “Prophecy!” And the officers struck Him with the palms of their hands.” The hypocrisy now overflows as Caiaphas tears his clothes as if in grief or sorrow. Actually, inside he is certainly saying, Yes, we’ve got him! He says in short, why look for more witnesses, *You have heard the blasphemy!* He is saying Jesus unjustly claimed for Himself Divine prerogatives. In representing Himself as the fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecy, he is making a claim that could only be made by God. Two options: either Jesus was indeed the divine Son of God or else He is guilty of blasphemy which punishable by death (**Leviticus 24:16**). Caiaphas chose option #2 and *they all* agreed. To declare guilt and exact a sentence on a person are two different things. We will see the illegal way that these men carried out the sentencing tomorrow. Now the dignified, reserved, religious leaders show the reality of sin and the way it hides behind and in the most “calm” of people. They hurl out in sinful fury against Jesus spitting on, mocking, and beating Him. In their midst stands Jesus; majestic, calm, true, firm. Isaiah’s *Servant of The Lord* will finish the job and save His people.

Suggestion for Prayer: Jesus, my words can’t express my thanks to You for being the perfect, Suffering Servant. Thank you Father for bruising Christ while giving me His righteousness.