

Mark 14:53-65 - 53 And they led Jesus away to the high priest; and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes gathered together. 54 And 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, and yet their testimony was not consistent. 57 And 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 And not even in this respect was their testimony consistent. 60 And the high priest stood up and came forward and questioned Jesus, saying, "Do You make no answer? What is it that these men are testifying against You?" 61 But He kept silent, and made no answer. Again the high priest was questioning Him, and saying to Him, "Are You 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 And 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 And some began to spit at Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him with their fists, and to say to Him, "Prophesy!" And the officers received Him with slaps in the face.

Here **Jesus** will stand before the entire **Sanhedrin**. This group consisted of **71 members**, including the **high priest** (who presided over the council) and representatives from the **chief priests, elders, and scribes**. The Sanhedrin was the **most powerful** Jewish legislative body. They acted much like a **court**, and would hear **cases** concerning their **Jewish Law** and **religious** system. They were responsible to make sure those **accused** of a **crime** would be **protected** by; having a **public trial** during **daylight hours**, an adequate **opportunity** to give a **defense**, and the **rejection** of **charges** unless it was **confirmed** by at least two or three **witnesses**. This is the same group that conspired with **Judas** Iscariot to have Jesus arrested. **“53 And they led Jesus away to the high priest; and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes gathered together. 54 And 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.”** Take note that Peter, at least at first seemed to be brave enough to follow them **“right into the courtyard of the high priest; and he was sitting with the officers, and warming himself at the fire.”** Mark will come back to the situation with Peter, but for now they put Him through an **illegal trial**. To hold a **private trial** in the darkness of

night was illegal according to their law. Nevertheless, these religious rulers press on in haste to not only condemn Jesus, but use whatever means they can to bring it about. One wonders how they found so many to give false testimony. **“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, and yet their testimony was not consistent.”** Plagued by the inconsistency of liars, who likely had been bribed, they couldn't find any credible evidence that would be sufficient to **“obtain testimony against Jesus to put Him to death; and they were not finding any.”** In fact, they were trying to use Jesus' own words to condemn Him, but badly misquoted Him, and thwarted the testimony process. **“57 And 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 And not even in this respect was their testimony consistent.”** Rather than proving the guilt of the sinless Son of God, this mess only seemed to reveal what a circus of clowns this really was. As a result of false witnesses not working out to establish a testimony, the high priest intervenes to try and hurry things along. **“60 And the high priest stood up and came forward and questioned Jesus, saying, "Do You make no answer? What is it that these men are testifying against You?" 61 But He kept silent, and made no answer.”** Jesus of course gave no answer to these foolish false claims and contradictory stories, as they were not worthy to be addressed but only served to unmask the corruption of this council. Here again the Scriptures were fulfilled on this night.

Isaiah 53:7 - He was oppressed and He was 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.** NASB

Even in their frustration and ridiculous scheming, these corrupt priests are bringing the eternal plan of God to fulfilment with perfect accuracy. They have been conspiring to kill Jesus, now they are just looking for a supposed legal way to do it. They have already agreed that He is going to die. John records the earlier words of the high priest Caiaphas.

John 11:47-52 - 47 Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, "What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs. 48 **"If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."** 49 But a certain one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, 50 nor do you take into account that it is expedient for you that **one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish.**" 51 Now this he did

not say on his own initiative; but being high priest that year, **he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation**, 52 and not for the nation only, but **that He might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad**. NASB

God took Caiaphas words and made them a **prophecy** of the substitutionary **atonement** of His Son for all God's people. These corrupt leaders bent on their evil **conspiracy**, bring God's plan to His desired goal. In **frustration** the high priest now puts the **ultimate question** on the table. For if Jesus answers truthfully, they will see it as blasphemy. **"61 Again the high priest was questioning Him, and saying to Him, "Are You 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."** Here Jesus answered **plainly** the two questions posed by the high priest. **"I am the Christ and I am the Son of God!"** This is the **first time** in Mark's Gospel that He **openly declared** He is the Christ or **Messiah**. But Jesus answered also with two quotes from the Scriptures, **"you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."** This is a combination of quotes from Psalm 110 and Daniel 7.

Psalm 110:1 - 110 The Lord says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand, Until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet." NASB

Daniel 7:13-14 - 13 "I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. 14 "And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations, and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed. NASB

Jesus here is basically telling them that the tables will soon be turned and **He** will be **standing** as their **Judge** in the **highest court** of all ages. This of course enraged the high priest. **"63 And 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."** At this the **high priest is enraged** at what he sees as **blasphemy**, and tears his clothes. This of course was the **testimony** they were looking for as **Jesus plainly spoke the truth**. Even as **He is the Son of God** and the **Christ**, yet these blind religious rulers can't see that they have the **Son of God** in their own **courtroom**. More than this, **"they all condemned Him to be deserving of death."** This of course is the greatest **irony of all time**, God's own chosen nation has God's own Son in a court, and **finding no sin** in Him, they all condemn Him to be **deserving of death**. God is on trial before men! Truly they have **eyes** but **cannot see** and **ears** but **cannot**

hear. They will take this scene from bad to worse. **“65 And 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.”** This of course was **severe contempt** and **mockery** to **“spit at Him,”** but also to **“blindfold Him, and to beat Him with their fists, and to say to Him, “Prophecy!”** Here they sought to put Him to the **test** of being a **prophet**, but Jesus did not **revile** them, for their **contempt** was **not worthy** of an **answer**. They have begun to **beat Him** with their fists and **“the officers received Him with slaps in the face.”** Imagine these supposedly dignified religious rulers, members of the **Sanhedrin** nonetheless, beating the Son of God with their wicked fists. The words of Peter come to mind.

1 Peter 2:21-24 - 21 For you have been called for this purpose, **since Christ also suffered for you**, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, **22 who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; 23 and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously;** 24 and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. NASB

Later, Peter recalled quite well all that Jesus went through on our behalf. What happens next was **Peter’s low point**, as Jesus prophesy comes to its fulfilment.

Mark 14:66-72 - 66 And as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came, 67 and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him, and said, "You, too, were with Jesus the Nazarene." 68 But he denied it, saying, "I neither know nor understand what you are talking about." And he went out onto the porch. 69 And the maid saw him, and began once more to say to the bystanders, "This is one of them!" 70 But again he was denying it. And after a little while the bystanders were again saying to Peter, "Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean too." 71 But he began to curse and swear, "I do not know this man you are talking about!" 72 And immediately a cock crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had made the remark to him, "Before a cock crows twice, you will deny Me three times." And he began to weep.

Now **Peter** was **actually** on the **inside** of the **courtyard**, as verse 54 had said, **“54 And 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.”** Now Peter will be **confronted** in front of the **officers** of the high priest. **“66 And as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came, 67 and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him, and said,**

"You, too, were with Jesus the Nazarene." 68 But he denied it, saying, "I neither know nor understand what you are talking about." And he went out onto the porch." Now Peter had been rather **overconfident** as Jesus had told him that he would **deny the Lord** and **fall away** on this very night, yet **Peter boasted** in his zeal that he would **not fall** away.

Mark 14:27-31 - 27 And Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away, because it is written, 'I will strike down the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.' 28 "But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."
29 But Peter said to Him, "Even though all may fall away, yet I will not." NASB

He also had **failed** to **stay awake** and **pray** when the **Lord** had **warned** him to be careful of **temptation**. Peter again was rather **overconfident** and taking his rest in a time of great temptation and **repeated warnings** from the Lord.

Mark 14:37-38 - 37 And He came and found them sleeping, and said to **Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour?"**
38 "Keep watching and praying, that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." NASB

Now the time is upon him and **Peter** has been **put to the test**, but in the weakness of his flesh, he was **not able** to stand. Peter's **first denial** was a common Jewish legal denial, **"I neither know nor understand what you are talking about."** Obviously embarrassed and feeling like retreating, Peter **"went out onto the porch."** Having retreated from the pressure momentarily, he is soon again confronted. **"69 And the maid saw him, and began once more to say to the bystanders, "This is one of them!" 70 But again he was denying it. And after a little while the bystanders were again saying to Peter, "Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean too." 71 But he began to curse and swear, "I do not know this man you are talking about!" 72 And immediately a cock crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had made the remark to him, "Before a cock crows twice, you will deny Me three times." And he began to weep."** Sadly, Peter in his **zeal** and **confidence** failed in the hour of **trial**. Surely, we can **all identify** with **Peter's failure** for there are times when we find it rather difficult to **maintain** our **witness** for **Christ** in certain situations, and we have never been under threat of **bodily harm** as he was. Mark here notes that **Jesus had earlier predicted** the scene.

Mark 14:30-31 - 30 And Jesus said to him, **"Truly I say to you, that you yourself this very night, before a cock crows twice, shall three times deny Me."** 31 But Peter kept saying insistently, "Even if I have to die with

You, I will not deny You!" And they all were saying the same thing, too. As we **all** have a **willing spirit** and would want to hasten to be a good witness for our Lord, yet in the **weakness** of our **flesh** we often retreat or **remain silent**. It