

## JESUS WAS TRIED IN OUR PLACE

Mark 14:53-72 (Key verse 61-62)

*But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer. Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?" / "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."*

In today's passage we are going to learn about Jesus' trial before the Sanhedrin, the title of the message says Jesus was tried in our place. We are therefore going to learn in what sense was Jesus tried in our place, why did he have to be tried in our place and what attitude should we have towards him. I pray that God may have mercy on us today to receive one word, and truly learn the deeper meaning behind Jesus' trial before the Sanhedrin.

The passage today begins after Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus into the hands of armed men sent by the chief priests, teachers of the law and the elders. The armed men took Jesus to the chief priests, the elders, and the teachers of the law. At this time Jesus was all alone, when they captured him the disciples fled. Peter, who so passionately declared that he will not disown Jesus, followed him at a distance, he did not walk close to Jesus to support him at least, but instead he walked at a distance and sat with the guards and warmed himself there. Before many people followed Jesus, one time he was followed by the 5000 which he eventually fed with 5 loaves and two fish. Throughout his journey as he went from region to region healing the sick, preaching the gospel to the people, he had his disciples by his side following him. But in today's passage we see Jesus all alone, we see him in danger captured by the man with arms, he had no one to support him and it seems like he was very helpless.

Why did the Sanhedrin order for Jesus to be captured and brought to them? In **verse 55-56** it says: *"The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death, but they did not find any. / Many testified falsely against him, but their statements did not agree."* They Sanhedrin ordered for Jesus to be captured and brought to them so that they can charge with him a crime that will lead to his death. Jesus was not guilty of any crime, they just wanted him to be killed to satisfy their own selfish political ambitions. The Sanhedrin made up of the chief priest, teachers of the law and the elders, were the leaders of the Jewish people, a council made up of 70 odd, well-educated men who were trained and well versed with the word of God. They possessed so much respect in the community. Sadly, instead of serving and leading the people they became political figures only concerned about their self-ambitions. And so, when Jesus came, and became popular they became jealous and so they began plotting to get him killed. The Sanhedrin were so desperate to get Jesus killed, they were so desperate to remove Jesus whom they regarded as their enemy. When they could not find any valid reason to charge Jesus, they began to testify falsely against him, and their statements did not agree.

The Sanhedrin captured Jesus; and had already decided his sentence, but they did not have a valid charge against him. Amongst them one some stood up and gave false testimonies in **verse 58** saying: *"We heard him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with human hands and in three days will build another, not made with hands.'" Their testimonies still did not agree, out of desperation to do evil they twisted Jesus words. Jesus did not say I will destroy this temple, made with human hands", but rather in **John 2:19** we learn of Jesus exact words, it says: "Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days." Jesus was referring to his body, the body that they will destroy and after 3 days he will raise from the dead, Jesus was referring to his death and resurrection. The fact that they could not find even the smallest sin against Jesus, but only false testimonies, tells us that indeed Jesus was innocent, even his enemies who watched him so closely day and night could not find any evidence of wrongdoing. This tells us that indeed Jesus was no ordinary man, but holy and sinless God, for in Adam all mankind have sinned, but Jesus was without sin. When the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus saying: "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" Jesus remained silent and did not answer him.*

Why did Jesus not answer him? Why did he remain silent? Jesus remained silent to reveal his identity, the purpose of his coming into the world. Jesus did not come into the world to defend himself and to claim a position as a political figure, a victorious rival against the Sanhedrin. In **2 Corinthians 5:21** it says: *"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."* Jesus came into this world to take our sins, to take our place, to be tried in our place. In **Isaiah 53:7** it says: *"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 its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth."* This is why Jesus was silent, it is who he is, the lamb of God who was led to the slaughterhouse, to be tried and falsely accused. Instead of us, Jesus was led to the slaughterhouse, instead of us guilty sinners, it was Jesus who was charged with a death sentence. Through his silence Jesus also revealed his determination to obey the will of God, allowing himself to be charged in our place and fulfil the will of God to save all mankind through his death.

When the testimonies of the Sanhedrin did not agree, the high priest counted on Jesus' response to implicate himself so that he can charge him. When Jesus remained silent, the high priest became so frustrated and asked him other questions hoping to catch him. In

**verse 61b** it says: *“Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?”* The high priest asked Jesus if he is the messiah, the son of God. The high priest wanted to charge Jesus with blasphemy, a crime punishable by death. How then did Jesus respond to this question? In **verse 62** it says: *“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 did not remain silent, but answered the high priest saying I am. Jesus’ response gave the chief priest reason to sentence him to death. Why did Jesus do this? Jesus responded in this way to once again reveal his identity, just as he revealed his identity through silence Jesus revealed it here by responding to the chief priest saying, *“I am”*. Jesus did not compromise when it come to revealing his identity to the world, knowing who Jesus is, is the most important thing in a human beings life, it is a matter of life and death.

Jesus responded to the high priest saying, *“I am”* meaning that he is indeed the Messiah, the Son of God, the one and only that God had promised to deliver his people from the power of sin and death. Jesus could have remained silent to protect himself from the death sentence, but this is not who Jesus is, it is not the reason why Jesus came into the world. Jesus came into the world to be tried in our place, to be condemned to death in our place. This is the way that the Lord has set out for Jesus to bring salvation unto mankind. You see, God cannot overlook sin, he cannot overlook our sins, a price had to be paid and Jesus who was without sin was the perfect price to redeem us from the power of sin and death.

Furthermore, when Jesus responded to the high priest, he did not only say *“I am”*, but went further and said: *“And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.”* Why did Jesus say this? Jesus said this to challenge the concept of Messiah that the Sanhedrin had, to challenge our concept of Messiah. In their minds the Sanhedrin had an idea that the Messiah would rescue them from their political battles, he would rescue them from the Roman empire. They had a concept that the Messiah was only for the Jewish people. They bounded the Messiah by geography, territory and nationality. And hence, Jesus challenged their thought and revealed to them that He is the messiah who is not bounded by geography, territory or nationality. But the Messiah who created the heavens and the earth, who exists from everlasting to everlasting, who sits at the right hand of God. Further, he revealed to them that he is the Messiah who will judge all the people. Jesus said this so that we can consider very carefully our sins, and come to him in repentance. Jesus wants us to turn away from our life of sins, we must do this for the day of judgement is coming. He said, you will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven. In his lonely position, captured by the Sanhedrin, helpless, carrying all our burdens of sin and tried in our place, Jesus urged us to repent, Jesus said judgement day is coming, he urged us to be on our guard and come to him with repentance.

After Jesus had responded so boldly that he is indeed the Messiah and the judge of all mankind, the mood in the council changed. In **verse 63-64** it says: *“The high priest tore his clothes. “Why do we need any more witnesses?” he asked. / “You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?” They all condemned him as worthy of death.”* The high priest tore his clothes, in ancient times this act reflected grief and heartbrokenness, however he did this in false pretence. In fact, this was celebration for him, they finally found a reason to eliminate Jesus. Everyone joined in and they all condemned Jesus as worthy of death. Jesus was innocent, he was without sin, and in our place was condemned to a death sentence. It was supposed to be the Sanhedrin standing on Jesus’ position, it was supposed be me and you standing on Jesus’ position and handed over our death sentence. But Jesus the Messiah took our place.

After condemning Jesus to a death sentence, some began to spit on him; they blindfolded him, struck him with their fists and said Prophecy! In **Matthew 26: 67-68** it says: *“Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him /and said, “Prophecy to us, Messiah. Who hit you?””* Jesus was sentenced to death and they made fun of it, they were at joy and thought they were ridiculing Jesus by saying Prophecy. They did not know that Jesus has already prophesied, all the events of the day, Jesus had prophesied them, and accurately so. In **Mark 10:33** Jesus said to his disciples: *““We are going up to Jerusalem,” he said, “and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles,”*

Again before Jesus was captured, he explicitly told Peter that before the rooster crows twice, Peter will have disowned him three times. Peter was very certain that he will not disown Jesus, he said: *“Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.”* But when Jesus was captured, Peter only followed him at a distance, when the servant girl of the high priest saw him and said to him that he was with the Nazarene, Peter he denied it, not only once but 3 times. Jesus Prophesied. When Peter heard the second rooster crow and realised that he had denied Jesus 3 times, he wept. Peter wept, because he realised his sinful nature, he realised that actually Jesus was tried and condemned in his place, Peter realised the true identity of Jesus, the Messiah who was tried and condemned in our place. Jesus was innocent, and without sin, and yet he did not defend himself for our sake. Peter on the other when he was put on trial by the servant girl, he was guilty, to protect himself he denied and disowned Jesus 3 times. This shows that only Jesus can take our place, because of our weakness without Jesus we cannot even take responsibility for our own guilty sins.

I pray that God may help us today, to fully accept Jesus as our Lord and Saviour, acknowledge that we are guilty sinners worthy of a death sentence, and come to Jesus in repentance. Through today's passage we have learnt that it was only because of Jesus that we could be exempted from our death sentence, we could be exempted because Jesus took our place, he was tried and sentenced in our place. I pray that we may all meditate on this word as we prepare for the conference and draw nearer to Jesus.