

Marks of Discipleship

Daily Prayer ■ Weekly Worship ■ Bible Reading
Giving Time, Talents & Resources
Spiritual Friendships ■ Service In & Beyond the Church
August 13, 2023

Day 1: Mark 14:53-54

They took Jesus to the high priest; and all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes were assembled. Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest; and he was sitting with the guards, warming himself at the fire.

The house of Annas controlled the high priesthood from 6 A.D. until 62 A.D. Annas, Caiaphas and Elazar (all at one time high priests) formed a kind of inner circle within the 70 member Sanhedrin. Caiaphas' (the current high priest) political views on the "Jesus problem" are stated in John 11:50, "Do you not understand that it is better for you to have one man die for the people than to have the whole nation destroyed." It is important to note that the average person in Jerusalem at the time did not participate in the trial or the call for Jesus' death - only the leaders and probably just those in the Sadducees party.

Question: Though the account of Peter's denial comes later in the chapter, why did he think he would not be recognized?

Challenge: It is hard to get into someone else's mind, but can you imagine why Peter followed them after the arrest?

Scripture: Hebrews 9

Day 2: Mark 14:55-56

Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for testimony against Jesus to put him to death; but they found none. For many gave false testimony against him, and their testimony did not agree.

The Sanhedrin could not give out a death sentence without permission from the Roman officials (it was against Roman law to execute someone without their permission). Before Herod the Great could execute his own sons (Herod was afraid they were plotting to overthrow him - Herod was very paranoid) he had to obtain Rome's permission to execute them. Some historians believe that it was not the whole Sanhedrin that was in session but just some of the members and that it was their job to come up with the correct charges to bring to the Roman governor; ones that would force the governor to order Jesus' execution.

Question: Did the witness outright lie, did they report half truths, or did they not hear correctly?

Challenge: What would be an example of giving false information about Jesus today?

Scripture: Psalm 88

Day 3: Mark 14:57-59

Some stood up and gave false testimony against him, saying, "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.' " But even on this point their testimony did not agree.

Saying you could destroy the Temple and rebuild it was not a capital offence. Jews at the time believed that God would provide a Temple in the last days. As the new Temple would not be made by human hands the charge would be that Jesus believed He was God. Blasphemy is using God's name frivolously.

Question: Was Jesus being literal in destroying the Temple?

Challenge: Do a little research and see when the Temple was destroyed and how it happened.

Scripture: John 2:13-22

Day 4: Mark 14:60

Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, "Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?"

The high priest is hoping for Jesus to condemn himself by answering the high priest's question. Jesus does not want to speak because the witnesses were in such disagreement. They were disagreeing not about what he said but what it meant. The accusers were hoping to get one charge that could be used against Jesus.

Question: Why do you think Jesus remained silent?

Challenge: How should a person respond when people lie about them and what they said?

Scripture: Exodus 20:1-17 note verse 16

Day 5: Mark 14:61

But he was silent and did not answer. Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?"

It is interesting that the high priest knew the things that Jesus did (healing, teaching and preaching) were signs of the coming of the Messiah. If they can make the case that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah (the Messiah is supposed to be the new King) then Jesus could be charged with treason against the Romans. The high priest is weary of the discussion and calls upon his authority and demands – in the name of God - for Jesus to speak. Jesus is now forced to speak.

Question: Why wait so long to ask Jesus this question that would surely convict Him?

Challenge: Can you think a way that Jesus could have answered the question without accusing Himself?

Scripture: Psalm 110

Day 6: Mark 14:62-63

Jesus said, "I am; and 'you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power,' and 'coming with the clouds of heaven.' " Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "Why do we still need witnesses? You have heard his blasphemy! What is your decision?" All of them condemned him as deserving death.

Jesus' words "I am" echo the name God used when God, on Mt. Sinai, sent Moses to Pharaoh. When Moses asks for the name of who has sent him to the people, God answers "I am." The high priest charges Jesus with blasphemy. This charge in Jewish law did carry a death penalty. However in Roman law Jesus had to be charged with insurrection in order to be guilty of a capital punishment.

Question: Why did the high priest tear his robe?

Challenge: Do a little research and see what blasphemy is.

Scripture: Exodus 3:1-14