



360 DISCUSSION GUIDE: 11.15.15

JESUS ON TRIAL | Mark 14:53-72

More often than not our judgment of others reveals more about us than it does them. That is certainly the case as Jesus stands before the Jewish Ruling Council.

After several awkward attempts to produce a sustainable charge against Jesus, the high priest asks a pointed question. “Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?”

Jesus’ answer is equally pointed. “I am.” And he adds an ominous note, “You will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

While the council was sitting in judgment over Jesus, he warns them that one day he would be sitting in judgment over them.

IN THE HOME OF THE HIGH PRIEST (vv. 53-55)

While many people object to the nature of Jesus’ hearing before the Jewish ruling council, because it failed to follow protocol, this meeting was never intended to be a trial. The verdict has already been rendered. The Council is simply trying to come up with a charge they will make the verdict stick.

1. **READ VERSES 53-59.** Jesus, did indeed predict the destruction of the temple and he also predicted that he would rise after three days, but he never threatened to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days. While the charge against Jesus was false, there is a profound truth buried in their accusation.

- a. In what way did Jesus destroy the temple?
 - b. In what way would he build another temple “not made with hands?”
 - c. What is our role in the temple Jesus is building (1 Peter 2:9)?
2. **READ VERSES 60-65.** While Jesus never openly claimed to be the Messiah, the manner in which he entered the city; threw the money changers out of the temple, and told the parable of the owner’s son who was killed and tossed out of the vineyard, so that the wicked tenants could take possession of it, strongly point in a Messianic direction.
- a. Why do you think Jesus waits until this moment to make his fullest and most forceful claim to be the Messiah, the Son of God?
 - b. Why do you think the high priests failed to consider that Jesus’ claims might be true?
3. The words “coming in the clouds,” is a phrase found in Daniel 7, that gives full definition to Jesus’ favorite self designation — “Son of man.” While “Son of man” can simply mean “human being,” in Daniel 7:14 it clearly refers to the One whom would be given an eternal kingdom and rule all the kingdoms of the earth.
- a. How do you think those who sat in judgment over Jesus will feel when they stand before the one they condemned?
 - b. How do you think we will feel when we stand before the one who was condemned in our place?
 - c. How should we live in light of the fact that we will one day stand before the one who bore our condemnation?

MEANWHILE IN THE COURTYARD BELOW (vv. 66-72)

READ VERSES 66-72. Up to this point, Peter has made a meager attempt to live up to his claim that he would follow Jesus to his death. However, he follows Jesus at a distance and slips into the high priest courtyard where he tries to blend in with the crowd. In the end he looks far more like those who condemn Jesus, than a deeply devoted follower of Jesus.

1. The original language might be translated a “small servant girl.” What does it say about Peter’s bravado that he melts into a pool of denial at the accusation of a “little girl” with absolutely no social standing?
2. What are some of the boasts we make in Christ that melt away at the first sign of opposition?
3. Mark graphically traces Peter’s movement from the fire pit in the center of the courtyard to the entryway at the far edge of the courtyard. Why do you think Peter wants to be near the entryway after the servant girl recognizes him?
4. When Peter calls down curses, he is either cursing himself, Jesus or those who accuse him. Many commentators believe that if he were calling down curses on himself or his accusers Mark would have mentioned it. This leaves us with the very real possibility that Peter actually called down a curse of Jesus. Describe the lengths Peter has gone to, to avoid being associated with Jesus.
5. Mark wants us to see the strong contrast between Jesus’ faithfulness in a time of trial, and Peter’s complete failure.
 1. What allowed Jesus to stand firm?
 2. What caused Peter to fall flat on his face?
 3. While none of us will ever have the spiritual resolve of Jesus, we do have Jesus. What does this passage teach us about why and how we should stay close to Jesus?
6. How would you describe the major difference between Peter’s denial and Judas’ betrayal? How is this encouraging for us?