

## The Outer Court

Mark 14:53-72

There are three trials among the Jews and three trials among the Gentiles. Six is the number of man in biblical numerology. When man reaches the acme of his evil, his number is multiplied (Revelation 13:18). Borrowing from the Old Testament Tabernacle and Temple worship, we liken the approach to the cross to passing through the outer court, then the inner court or Holy Place, and finally we arrive at the Holy of Holies, which I would liken to the cross itself. First, we come to the outer court--Christ before the Sanhedrin and Peter's denial.

Notice three mentions of binding. John 18:12: "Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him." John 18:24: "Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest." Matthew 27:2: "And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor."

Make the comparison in Psalm 118:27: "God is the LORD, which hath shewed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar." Isaiah 53:7: "He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not his mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not his mouth."

Our Lord flattens the armed escort of between 600 and 1,200 men by simply saying who He was. John 18:5, 6: "They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am *He*. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. As soon then as he had said unto them, I Am *He*, they went backward, and fell to the ground." Christ is betrayed by the kiss of Judas. Peter is told to put away his sword. Jesus miraculously heals the servant's missing ear. The Shepherd requests that His sheep be free to go. John 18:8: "Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way." Mark 14:50: "And they all forsook him, and fled." And now Christ allows the mob to take Him away.

### A. THE MOB

Mark 14:53

There were Sanhedrin courts stationed throughout Israel. The Sanhedrin Court in Jerusalem was comparable to our Supreme Court. It was 70 in number plus one more (being the high priest) making it 71--an odd number to be available to break the tie if necessary.

Proverbs 1:10-16 warns against the magnetism of the mob mentality. When many are not willing to do something criminal, if surrounded and influenced with a mob, evil becomes natural.

### B. THE MARGIN

Mark 14:54

There was extra space between Peter and his Lord. His curiosity was competing with his cowardliness. Whenever we allow even the slightest margin to come between our Lord and us, we are in jeopardy of succumbing to temptation.

### C. THE MISCARRIAGE

Mark 14:55-59

Deuteronomy 16:18-20; Deuteronomy 17:6, 7; Deuteronomy 19:15-19

Rules for the Sanhedrin's jurisprudence:

1. A public trial was required. This disallowed private kangaroo courts.
2. A trial could not be held at night.
3. The right of self-defense was enforced. It could never be prosecution only.
4. No one could be convicted without two or three witnesses. Hearsay or generalities were not allowed.
5. A woman could not be a witness, because she would not have the courage to cast the first stone. Nor could an irresponsible child, slave, a person of bad character, or a person whose infirmities prevent the enjoyment of his physical or moral faculties could be a witness.
6. A simple confession of an individual against himself or the declaration, no matter how renowned, would not decide his condemnation. No person can testify against himself.
7. There could be no guilt determined by fervor or emotion. They were careful about who and how to speak to keep from a rabble or emotional response, lending itself to mob rule.
8. If considered guilty, the judges of the Sanhedrin had to wait three days fasting. They adhered to total abstinence from food and wine. It could therefore, never be before a feast day. After three days, if a member had voted to condemn, he could change his vote to acquit. If he had previously voted to acquit, he could not change his vote to condemn.
9. The prisoner, if found guilty, was executed the same day. Ecclesiastes 8:11: "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." Two judges would walk the prisoner very slowly to the place of execution. As the procession continued, the herald would continually announce his crimes and the chief witnesses that would initiate the stoning would be named. During this procession, the announcement would be given repeatedly that if anyone has evidence in the prisoner's favor, he was told to come forth quickly. Someone would also accompany with a flag in the front and an observer in the back of the procession to help scout for witnesses. The flag would be waved and the procession would stop if someone came forth. If someone had more evidence, the prisoner would be taken back and the evidence would be heard. If the prisoner himself had recollections that he had not previously addressed that could prove his innocence, they would go back and hear him out. This would be allowed five times.

Christ's trial was the most unjust trial that has ever been; Christ is the only person who ever lived that did absolutely no wrong.

### D. THE MANIPULATION

Mark 14:60-64

Caiaphas tries to get Christ to answer these false charges, but Christ, the true law keeper, refuses to answer, not giving credence to the false charges. The high

priest continues by asking, "...Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" (Mark 14:61b). Matthew says it like this--Matthew 26:63: "But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God." Caiaphas invokes the highest and holiest of oaths in an attempt to cause Christ to blaspheme (according to his definition of terms). Christ's answer was recorded in Mark 14:62: "And Jesus said, I Am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." The actual blasphemy was done by the captors. The Lord speaks the truth when He identifies Himself as the Messiah and informs the blasphemers that they shall be the ones standing in judgment one day. Philippians 2:9.10a: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow...."

#### E. THE MOCKERY

Mark 14:65

The despicable treatment of our Lord at this hour illustrates the total depravity of man--that man should treat his Creator and soon to be Savior in such a manner. Their imagination runs wild as they incorporate all manner of ways to inflict insult and injury.

#### F. THE MESSAGE

Mark 14:66-72

In Luke 22:31-34, Jesus informed Peter that the Devil was working on him to sift him like wheat. Peter declares that he will be faithful whether in prison or death, But the Lord said, "...Verily I say unto thee, That this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice" (Mark 14:30). Some of the most heart-wrenching words in Holy Scripture are in Luke 22:61, 62: "And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly." Mark said it like this: "...And when he thought thereon, he wept" (Mark 14:72b).

The message that I see in the most recognized leader of the disciples, one whom Christ Himself designated to lead out, fails his Lord miserably. It was at this very moment that our Lord is being prepared to die for our sins and our failures, such as seen by Peter's denial. This very moment shows us why we must have a Savior!

-Pastor Pope-