

LESSON 57

*Scripture Passage: Matthew 26:57-75; Mark 14:53-72;
Luke 22:54-71; John 18:12-27*

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

All through the lessons about Jesus' life, we learned that He came to fulfil the Old Testament Scriptures. In this lesson, Psalm 69:7 came true: "Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face." David wrote this psalm and he meant that he was hated and looked down on for God's sake. But David wrote it about Jesus, too, for Jesus was *the hated One* by the world. It came true when someone slapped His face.

LESSON MATERIAL

The first part of Jesus' trial includes His appearances before Annas and Caiaphas, and the denial by Peter.

1. JESUS BEFORE ANNAS

- a. Suggestion: list the events of this long and confusing night in a semi-permanent place, so the students will maintain the sequence.
- b. Now the rulers of the Jews did not know what to do. They had Jesus, bound, as their prisoner, but they did not want a trial in public *now*, on the feast day. Besides, it was the dead of night, and the law did not allow trials in the darkness of night. Everything was in confusion among the leaders of the Jews, for no one knew what to do. Only Jesus was calm, for He was working according to His Father's will.
- c. They should have brought Jesus straight to the high priest, Caiaphas, but he was not ready yet. Frantically he was sending messengers to get his council, or Sanhedrin, members out of bed and to a meeting to bring Jesus to trial.
- d. To gain time, they took Jesus to the apartment of Annas, father-in-law of Caiaphas, who had been the high priest. He lived in the same palace-like home as Caiaphas. The mansion had an open court in the middle and rooms all around. In this court, the soldiers had made a fire, for the night was chilly; and John and Peter had followed Jesus there and were standing by the fire.
- e. Annas was still a powerful man in Israel, rich, proud, wicked, and able to boss men around. He was also a Sadducee who did not believe in a life after death. This Annas tried to find something in Jesus by which he could condemn Him to death. He asked Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine, John 18:19.
- f. Jesus answered that He had always taught openly, and they could ask His hearers, vs. 21; for it was strange to ask this question in secret, in the middle of the night.
- g. Then a servant — an officer, a man who did not even have the right to do it — slapped Jesus' face, the face of the Son of God. He did it to show that he honored the high priest and hated Jesus. Jesus did nothing but ask, "Why did you smite me?" The answer is because the servant was evil and Jesus is good. The wicked always side with the wicked and always slap Jesus' face. Although he did not know it, the servant made Psalm 69:7 come true.

2. JESUS BEFORE CAIAPHAS

- a. The council, or Sanhedrin, had 71 members, and gradually many of them gathered. By this time it was near to dawn on Friday morning, and the highest council of the church, with the high priest as judge, was ready to try Jesus. But they did everything wrong:
 - 1) They were determined to sentence Jesus to death; but this council had no power to condemn anyone to death.
 - 2) They might not, according to the law, assemble at night.
 - 3) They were supposed to hold meetings in the temple, not in the house of Caiaphas.

- 4) They had no witnesses to say what wrong Jesus had done. The few people that were there all said something different.
- b. Why, then, did Caiaphas go ahead and disobey all the laws so that he could put Jesus to death? He was the high priest, the picture of Jesus, the man who offered a lamb as the picture of salvation. It was the most wonderful work in the world. But Caiaphas did not care about the meaning of being high priest. He did not even believe it. He disobeyed because he was wicked, and made himself rich and powerful by being high priest, and he was afraid Jesus would put him out of a job.
 - c. Jesus *did* put Caiaphas out of a job, too; but He let Caiaphas do it to himself. Caiaphas used the power he had as a picture-high priest to sacrifice the real Lamb of God. When Jesus confessed that He was the Son of God, Caiaphas acted so shocked that he tore his high priestly robes. By doing that, he made a picture of tearing away the high priesthood. Then Caiaphas judged Jesus as worthy to die, and God judged Caiaphas as worthy of hell.

3. JESUS AND PETER

- a. Jesus had suffered mocking and hatred from the evil church leaders of His day, but He expected that, for they had always shown themselves to be wicked. But while His trial was going on, one of His own disciples denied Him, one of the three closest to Him. It was Peter, whom Jesus had named the *Rock* because of his confession that Jesus is the Son of the living God.
- b. How did it happen that Peter, one of Jesus' own children, denied Him?
 - 1) Peter had looked for a glorious kingdom at least partly displayed on earth; and the cross did not fit in with his dreams. Then, when Jesus surrendered, his hopes came crashing down. The cause of Jesus was lost.
 - 2) Right now Peter's faith was weak. Jesus had told him, "Simon, Simon, Satan has desired to sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee." But Peter had answered with a boast, Matt. 26:33, 35 *in his own strength*; in the garden he could not watch and pray with Jesus; and now he went into the courtyard among Jesus' enemies, right into the path of temptation.
 - 3) When first a maiden, then another person, and finally a relative of Malchus all recognized Peter as one of Jesus' disciples, he was ready to deny that he knew Jesus, and call a curse upon himself if he did know Him.
- c. Jesus, walking from Annas to Caiaphas, looked at him, the cock crowed and Peter wept bitterly. Why did God let Peter deny the very Savior who was at this moment ready to die for his sins? To teach Peter, and us, a hard lesson. Peter had to climb down from the rock of his own strength and drop very deeply into sin, so that the Lord could humble him, and so that he would always after that put his trust only in the Lord.

POINT TO REMEMBER

John 1:11 says, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." The church in Israel, made up of the scribes and Pharisees, would not receive Him. One of His own disciples betrayed Him, one denied Him, and the rest were offended in Him. *We* are His own, too, and are no better than the people in Jesus' day; for if it were up to us, we would not receive Him, either. That is why He died — to save us from our unwillingness and to make our hearts ready to receive His salvation.

MEMORY WORK

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not," John 1:11.