

• *The authorities eager to get rid of Jesus as speedily as they can*

Jesus is kept awake all night. He must have been physically exhausted when they took Him to the 'Sanhedrin', the Jewish parliament, at daybreak, on what we would call Friday morning¹. The entire parliament is there. Everyone has arrived early. The authorities are eager to get rid of Jesus as speedily as they can, so they are willing to call a session of parliament very early in the morning. 'If you are the Christ, tell us,' they say².

1 22:66

2 22:67

• *Intense suffering so that He might be drawn close to us in our sufferings*

As we look at the last hours of Jesus' ministry here on earth, we see many aspects of His sufferings. Jesus had to suffer. One reason why He suffered so much is so that He might be drawn close to us in our sufferings. Anything we might suffer He knows about. He has been through the equivalent of every trouble we might face.

• *No one ever faced prejudice as severe and wicked as Jesus*

Our story here is a classic picture of prejudice. Prejudice is when you are so hostile to someone or to a group of people that before you know the facts about them you have already made up your mind. Jesus went through a second trial on the Friday morning in the presence of the 'Sanhedrin', the Jewish parliament. Jesus' sufferings here help us when we face prejudice, for no one ever faced prejudice as severe and wicked as what we see here.

1. Prejudice is when a person's mind is made up without considering the facts

1. Prejudice is when a person's mind is made up without considering the facts. We see it here. These religious leaders are not holding a trial in order to find out anything. They have already got fixed and determined opinions about Jesus. They are simply rushing through a trial because there is no other way of getting rid of Him. But they are already thoroughly convinced that they have to get rid of Him. This is what prejudice is: having one's mind so closed that it is quite impossible to reconsider.

• *Closed minds*

2. Prejudice is not affected by intelligence

2. Prejudice is not affected by intelligence. These people who are acting as the judges of Jesus are, one might think, reasonably intelligent people. They hold official positions. They are elders, chief priests, scribes. You would think that these people would be capable of making an intelligent judgement. Yet they are utterly gripped with prejudice. Actually what controls these people is not their intelligence but their blind animosity towards Jesus. Animosity stops you from thinking intelligently. It knocks out of action your ability to consider the facts properly. It fills you with blind hostile emotion which makes you totally incapable of judging fairly.

• *Blind animosity*

3. Prejudice leads to unfairness

3. Prejudice leads to unfairness. How unjust these men are towards Jesus. We have already seen two highly irregular aspects to their procedure. (i) It was wrong to accuse Jesus in a night-time trial. (ii) It was highly irregular for the Sanhedrin to be interrogating Jesus in a private house. But there is more. (iii) They try to get Jesus to incriminate Himself. 'If you are the Christ, tell us,' they say¹. And (iv) they decide a verdict of guilty immediately, but, in a matter as important as this, a delay of at least one day should take place before the final sentence is made. But all this is brushed aside. They want Him to say something that will get Him into trouble, and will justify them in sentencing Him to death. They are not calmly considering anything.

1 22:67

4. Jesus questions their objectivity

- They do not want to know the truth

5. But Jesus answers their question

- Jesus tells them the truth about Himself regardless of what it costs Him

- Deliverance from prejudice takes nothing but an intervention from God

- Paul's experience

- Are you open to His voice?

4. **Jesus questions their objectivity**¹. 'You will not believe at all, even if I tell you,' He says. They have made up their mind in advance. No genuine consideration of Jesus' claims takes place. No questions are allowed to disturb their refusal to think! 'You will not answer me if I ask you anything'². There is no discussion or any attempt to find out the truth. They do not want to know the truth.

¹ 22:67

² 22:68

5. **But Jesus answers their question**¹. 'From now on' – beginning any moment now – 'the Son of Man will sit at the right hand of God in the place of power.' It is a reference to Daniel 7:13. In His death, resurrection and exaltation to glory, Jesus is just about to be enthroned as the King of the universe. Within one generation Jerusalem will be destroyed. This is very clear talk. They are getting what they want – something to use to get Jesus executed! And Jesus is giving it to them. He is a faithful witness no matter what it will cost Him. He is the very opposite of Peter. They all shout at Him. 'Then you claim that you are God's Son?' they say. 'Yes!' says Jesus. 'You are right!' They don't need witnesses. Jesus will tell them the truth about Himself, regardless of what it costs Him.

¹ 22:69

What delivers you from prejudice? Nothing but an intervention from God. Paul was in blind prejudice 'breathing out threats and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord' when Jesus stepped dramatically into his life and turned him around¹. The only thing that will deliver us is an intervention in our life that turns us around. Are you suffering because of someone who is viewing you with extreme prejudice? Do you have an enemy who constantly jumps to false conclusions about you – long before he or she knows what the facts are. And he is not very interested in knowing the facts anyway. He or she has already made up their minds. You can know that Jesus was treated in exactly the same way. There is a more painful question: are you treating anyone in this way? If you really want to know, Jesus will tell you the truth – but are you open to His voice?

¹ Acts 9:1 ff



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