



Gethsemane & The Transfiguration | 14:32-42

Note the similarities between Gethsemane and the Transfiguration.

- *Both experienced by same three disciples. Both times “they did not know what to say.”*
- *Both took place on a mountain. Both at night.*
- *Eyes & color appear in both, “Eyes weighed down”, “dazzling white”, “red drops of blood”*
- *In both cases Jesus underwent an experience that changed his physical appearance.*
- *In both Peter plays special part – first he alone speaks to Jesus, second he alone is addressed by Jesus*
- *The climax of Christ’s glory prior to the resurrection was the Transfiguration. The climax of the revelation of Christ’s humiliation was Gethsemane.*
- *In the Transfiguration the disciples saw “the form of God.” In Gethsemane they saw “the form of a slave” to God.*

Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus | 14:43-52

- 43 – *Judas, knowing both the place and the wanted person, led the arresting party to Jesus.*
- *This begins the rapid account of Jesus' arrest, investigation by the Sanhedrin, trial before Pilate, and his crucifixion and death. These events were often told as a single story (hence we are reminded Judas was "one of the 12" (though common knowledge).*
- *The warrant for Jesus' arrest had been issued by the Sanhedrin.*
 - *The Sanhedrin had the Temple police (Levites) and auxiliary police (servants of the court) at its disposal. Likely no Roman soldiers as they would have taken Jesus to a Roman prison, not the Jewish hierarchs.*
 - *In Roman provinces, local authorities enforced the civil code. So the Sanhedrin could arrest criminal suspects on their own authority even under the Roman procurators.*
 - *Swords would have been expected. But clubs were for riots which they thought possible.*
 - *"Multitude" = likely not a large force but a well-armed one*

Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus | 14:43-52

- 44-45 – *A signal of betrayal was necessary as the arresting party were not acquainted with Jesus. The signal of a kiss, the customary greeting of respect for a Rabbi (the title of Respect), demonstrates both Judas' respect for Jesus and his gross contempt.*
 - *Judas might have become disillusioned when Jesus showed little interest in fomenting a rebellion against Rome (in the manner of Maccabees) and reestablishing an independent kingdom of Israel.*
 - *It is likely that Judas Iscariot's surname is a reference to his membership in the Sicarri.*
 - *The third son of Mattathias was Judas (Maccabeus, "the hammer") who led Guerilla warfare.*
 - *In any case, we know Satan used Judas as a human agent of his hatred for God in human form and of his violet intentions. But Judas had made himself a willing vessel for Satan's use.*
 - *Judas is not mentioned again in Mark.*
- 46 – *Since Jesus was unarmed, he offered no resistance and was quickly apprehended.*
 - *The grounds of his arrest could have been blasphemy (2:7), Sabbath violations (2:24, 3:2-6), or the practice of magic or sorcery (3:22) but nothing is mentioned.*
 - *Still, legality cannot be questioned as Sanhedrin were the highest civil court in the land.*
 - *Jesus' arrest was for jealousy and in the middle of the night. But there is nothing to indicate the normal rules of Jewish criminal law were suspended.*

Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus | 14:43-52

- 47 – *Mark records a single feeble attempt at resistance.*
 - *We know this is Peter and the high priest's servant was Malchus (likely there to report back to the High Priest) whom Jesus healed.*
 - *With Jesus apprehended, none of the fleeing disciples were followed.*

- 48-49 – *Jesus indignantly protested the show of force as if he were an armed robber. He felt the shame of being treated as a common criminal.*
 - *He had been available for arrest for at least two weeks prior to Passover (11:15-16).*
 - *The difference between this surprise attack and Jesus' daily teaching in the Temple indicates the precautions taken by the auxiliary police were unnecessary.*
 - *"Daily in the Temple with you" = Jesus' captors were Jewish.*

Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus | 14:43-52

- *"But the Scriptures must be fulfilled" = 3 OT prophecies.*
 - *Psalm 41:9 "Even my close friend whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me."*
 - *Isaiah 53:12 "he was numbered with the transgressors"*
 - *Zechariah 13:7 "the sheep will be scattered"*

- 51-52 – *These verses are unique to Mark as an appendix to the statement that "all fled".*
 - *Several Church Fathers conjectured that the young man was Mark himself.*
 - *Normally the outer garment would have been made of wool. Linen indicated the youth was from a wealthy family.*
 - *Mark was known to have come from a wealthy family in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12). His may have been the home where Christ and his disciples ate the Passover.*
 - *If this is so, Mark would have been an eyewitness to the transactions in Gethsemane.*
 - *No undergarment indicated he had dressed quickly.*
 - *Mark's purpose here was not self-insertion into the story. But to indicate again that "all fled" including him. No one remained, not even a valiant young man who intended to follow.*

Proceedings of the Sanhedrin | 14:53-65

- *There are two serious accusations against Mark's account based on the Rabbi's procedures*
 - *First, it is argued that the Rabbis would never condemn Jesus on the night of Passover because a historical prohibition against capital punishment on feast days. But Deut 13:12, 17:13, 21:21 requires serious offenses to be dealt with immediately so "all Israel should hear it and fear".*
 - *Second, if Jesus was sentenced for blasphemy, he should have been stoned, not crucified. But Rome guarded the prerogative of capital punishment strictly for itself. The Sanhedrin possessed the competence to recommend capital punishment but, in fact, they had no power to carry it out. Only Rome (Pilate) had that power.*
 - *Thus, we should accept the historical accuracy of Mark's account.*

- *53 – Jesus was led from Gethsemane to the residence of Caiaphas where the Sanhedrin were assembled as a body in an upstairs room.*
 - *The usual seat was one of the market halls. Perhaps being pre-dawn and the necessity of reaching a binding verdict before daybreak explains the unusual meeting.*
 - *It was normal to try the accused immediately after arrest since Jewish law made no provision for detention.*

Proceedings of the Sanhedrin | 14:53-65

- *3 categories of rulers = chief priests, elders and scribes = precisely those that comprised the Sanhedrin, the supreme Jewish court of law, according to Josephus. It was made up of 70 members plus the high priest himself. 23 members constituted a quorum.*
 - *High priest = Joseph Caiaphas. He was quite a diplomat ruling for 19 years when the average tenure was 4 years.*
 - *"Elders" = most influential lay families in Jerusalem. Tended towards the Sadducees.*
 - *"Scribes" = middle-class lawyers who tended towards the Pharisees.*
 - *These sat in a semi-circle on elevated seats with the accused in the center.*

- *54 – Appears parenthetical. But Mark wants to capture two events that occurred at the same time. So he goes back and forth in his narrative between Jesus and Peter.*
 - *John 18:15-17 tells us John was known to the high priest and brought Peter into the courtyard.*
 - *Peter found the courtyard busy as attendants waited, as opposed to going home, to see the outcome of the extraordinary meeting of the Sanhedrin.*

Proceedings of the Sanhedrin | 14:53-65

- 55-56 – *The proceedings began properly with witnesses.*
 - *Capital cases required unanimous evidence of at least 2 witnesses (Deut 17:6, 19:15 Num 35:30). In Jewish court witnesses functioned as prosecution, hence personal, verbal testimony. Even if their respective depositions differed in trivial details, their testimony was inadmissible as evidence.*
 - *Ready witnesses indicated they had been alerted to arrest of Jesus and should be on call. A number were called but contradictions invalidated them. Sanhedrin strictly adhered to legal standards.*
- *Despite attempts at legal propriety, Mark records that the court was assembled solely with a firm resolve to convict Jesus of a capital crime (14:1, 55).*
- 57-59 – *After the first set of witnesses failed, a substantial charge was levelled that Jesus said he would destroy the Temple and build it again in 3 days.*
 - *Also false as witnesses did not agree but Jesus had said “if this temple be destroyed” (Jn 2:19).*
 - *Those present heard a dire threat against the sanctuary. They even exaggerated it “I will destroy”.*
 - *Why this accusation? Because in Roman law desecration of places of worship was a capital offense. See Jeremiah 26:1-19. The mere threat of violence would likely serve the Sanhedrin’s purpose.*
 - *While this accusation did not stand, it serves to clarify the taunt in 15:29-30.*
 - *And it may have provided the clue that Jesus regarded himself as the Messiah.*

Proceedings of the Sanhedrin | 14:53-65

- 60-61 – *Because the witnesses did not secure the desired result, Caiaphas determined to interrogate the Jesus himself. He arose and stood in the middle of the assembly.*
 - *Jesus was required by law to answer the accusations. And his refusal to do so frustrated the council.*
 - *Through silence Jesus deprived the court of exploiting evidence bringing proceedings to a deadlock.*
 - *Although inadmissible, the testimony about destroying the temple and rebuilding it was Messianic in tone because Judaism anticipated a renewal of Temple glory when the Messiah should come.*
- *The formula “the Messiah, the son of the Blessed One” is not a question of deity. It is a specific reference to Jewish hope the Messiah would be a man. The question was singular “Do you claim to be the Messiah?”.*
 - *Jesus’ answer forms the climax of the proceedings.*
 - *The council was prepared to regard Jesus’ claim to be the Messiah a capital offense.*
 - *Judaism expected the Messiah to provide proof of his identity. An imprisoned Messiah, abandoned by his followers, delivered helpless into the hands of his enemies was impossible to conceive.*
 - *Jesus’ very circumstances proved his was not the Messiah.*
 - *Also some Rabbinic teaching asserted that God alone could announce the Messiah. So self-assertion was invalid on its face. And infringed on the majesty of God.*

Proceedings of the Sanhedrin | 14:53-65

- 62 – Mark’s gospel records repeatedly that Jesus had carefully avoided calling himself the Messiah (8:29-30).
 - Recall the tension between his veiled majesty and his open manifestation of his ministry.
 - Jesus did not desire to arouse the nationalistic and political hopes of Messiah in the public mind.
 - Nevertheless, Jesus knew himself to be the God’s anointed Servant. And his answer “I am” confirms the belief. This is not a claim to be God, it is a simple answer to the question.
- The prophecy brings together Ps 110:1 and Dan 7:13 (with Isaiah 52:8) in a formula which describes the enthronement and future glory of the Son of Man.
 - “Power” or “Mighty One” = a direct reference to God.
 - “Sitting at the right hand” = well-known idiom for occupying the place of highest honor.
 - Here Jesus speaks without reserve about his future exultation and coming as Judge of the world (8:38, 13:26 which imply judgment).
 - This is not a passing reference. Jesus is calling his future Parousia as witness to his Messiahship. His earthly judges will be judged in the end by the man they are today accusing.
 - The High Priest and the Sanhedrin had the responsibility on behalf of the Jewish people to recognize the Messiah. Thus their decision must be overturned by the true High Priest who speaks on behalf of the true Israel of God.

Proceedings of the Sanhedrin | 14:53-65

- 63-64 – OT blasphemy (Lev 24:15-16) was elastic from defaming God & piercing his name.
 - OT substance means to undervalue someone and to say so. Applied to God, it means to dishonor him by diminishing the majesty to which he is entitled.
 - It is only in post-NT times that the meaning was reduced to pronouncing the name of God distinctly.
 - This is not Caiaphas’ narrow interpretation. He clearly regarded Christ’s admission as Messiah to be blasphemy as an infringement of God’s majesty and worthy of death.
 - Under Jesus’ circumstances, he could not be the Messiah so his admission mocked God.
 - Caiaphas’ tearing his robes left no doubt as to his conviction in the mind of the high priest. And a unanimous death verdict was obtained. Jesus had prophesied as much (10:33).
 - There was no appeal in Jewish court. But only Roman officials could legally carry out the sentence.
- 65 – Once Jesus was condemned, it was necessary for the council to show they could not condone his apparently abhorrent behavior.
 - This was administered through spitting and striking Jesus which were conventional gestures of rejection.
 - The detail that Jesus was blindfolded, cuffed and demanded to prophesy accurately fulfills Isaiah 11:2-4 where the Messiah will not judge by what he sees but will judge rightly.