

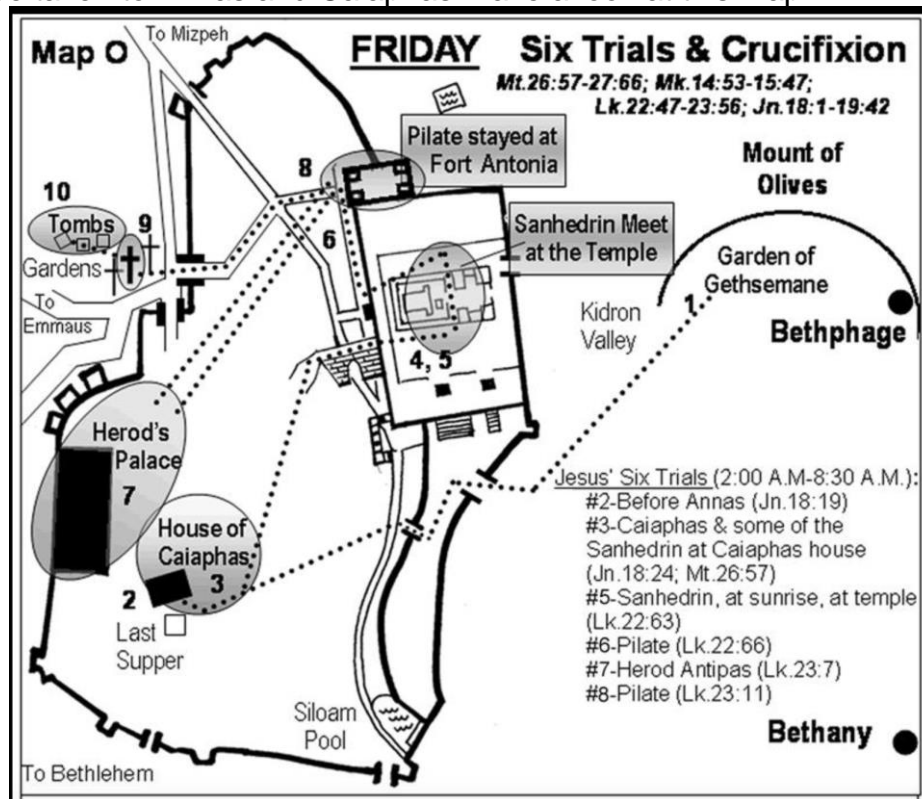
## Matthew 26:57-68 “When Jesus Remained Silent”

7.22.18

This morning we are going to continue on our journey with the Lord Jesus as He makes His way to the cross. I'm going share with you a **rather lengthy introduction**, before we get to our passage of Scripture this morning, because it's important that we have a clear understanding of what's about to happen to Jesus. As you know, it's Thursday night and Jesus has just been betrayed by one of His own Apostles...



Judas. The Betrayal is complete and Jesus is seized by Roman Soldiers and the Temple Police and is going to be taken to Annas and Caiaphas. Take a look at this map.



See the right side where it says: “Mount of Olives and Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus is led from Gethsemane, down through the Kidron Valley and up through the city walls of Jerusalem on the south side of the Temple compound, ultimately to the house of Caiaphas, the High Priest.

Now, I made that journey back in 2007 and Lord willing, I'll make it again in November when I return to Israel. I mentioned he went to Annas, then Caiaphas. We don't know where Annas' home

was. Annas was the Father-in-Law of Caiaphas. But, we do know where the house of Caiaphas was. See the steps going up to Caiaphas' house...



It's pretty steep walk up those steps and they lead to a courtyard outside of the House of the High Priest. Again, this house was basically the Governor's mansion, where the High Priest lived as long as he was in office. See this picture of the courtyard:



It's a large courtyard where the servants would congregate and where, on cool nights, those servants and the Temple Police would gather around fires, awaiting orders. Of course it's in this courtyard that Peter denied Jesus 3 times (we'll see that next week). There's a statue there...depicting that...



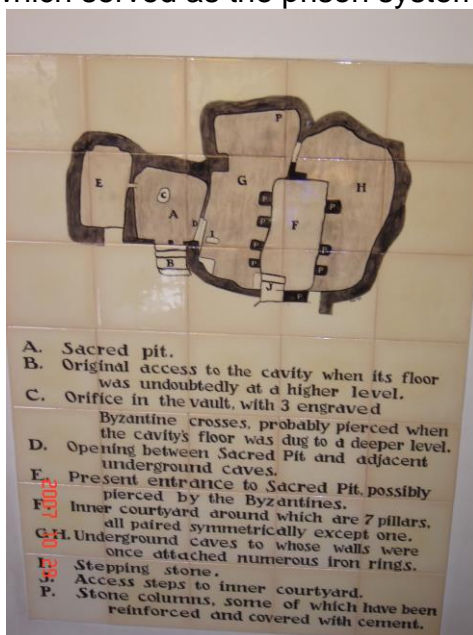
See the inscription in Latin: It means: "I do not know Him." Here's the balcony area on the backside of Caiaphas' house.



It's a beautiful home. Here's the front of it...



Ultimately, Jesus would be taken into the area below the home, the prison of overseen by the Temple Police. I want you to see this diagram of the elaborate labyrinth under the house of the High Priest, which served as the prison system for the Jews.



I won't go into all the details, other than to say, there was enough room to house many prisoners. But, there was one room ("A") that the worst criminals were kept: The Pit.





Our group went down into that pit. We could barely all fit in there. They have opened it up where groups could go in, because the only way in and out, during Jesus' day was through this hole.



The criminal was lowered by ropes tied around him! It was considered maximum security for the worst criminals. There would be no escape! Jesus would be held in this pit as He was shifted back and forth throughout the wee hours of Friday morning through 6 trials. See this chart.

## OVERVIEW OF JESUS' TRIALS

	Trial	Scripture	Judge	Decision
Religious Trials Jewish	First	John 18:12-14	Annas	OK to proceed
	Second	Matt. 26:57-68	Caiaphas	Death sentence; charge of blasphemy
	Third	Matt. 27:1-2	Sanhedrin	Death sentence made legal
Secular Trials Roman	Fourth	John 18:28-38	Pilate	Not guilty
	Fifth	Luke 23:6-12	Herod	Not guilty
	Sixth	John 18:39-19:6	Pilate	Not guilty; turned over to the Jews

There had to be two types of trials because the Jews could not carry out the death penalty under Roman law

He would endure three trials via the Jewish legal system and three trials at the hands of the Romans. His **first trial** was before Annas (as recorded by John), Annas, the “Godfather” of the Sanhedrin. Annas was a past High Priest and he still held great power in the Sanhedrin, even though his son-in-law, Caiaphas, was the acting High Priest.) Annas said “Yes, you can try Him” and he sent Jesus to his son-in-law Caiaphas.

In **Trial #2** Caiaphas would rule Jesus as guilty deserving death. Trial #3 was before the entire Sanhedrin. They ruled: Death. The **4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> trials** were at the hands of the Romans...that being Pilate, Herod and Pilate for a second time. And they all ruled: Not Guilty. Of course, we know that Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin prevailed, because they would bribe the people and the people would shout: “Crucify Him” and Pilate would wimp-out and hand Jesus over to be crucified.

I want to show you another chart that lays out a potential timeline from the arrest in the Garden to the death of Jesus on the cross. I’m not dogmatic about the times, but I believe this is a pretty good depiction of how things might have taken place as Jesus endured all these trials and then the cross. Take a look:

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1. **About 2:00 A.M. Jesus is betrayed and arrested in Gethsemane.** (Jn 18:1)
2. **Jesus is taken to appear before Annas, the former high priest. Jesus is interrogated and slapped** (Jn.18:19) **Peter denies Jesus.** (Jn.18:15)
3. **About 3:00 A.M. Annas sends Jesus, still bound, to the current high priest, Caiaphas.** (Jn.18:24) **Some of the members of the Sanhedrin assemble at Caiaphas' palace/house for a preliminary trial of Jesus.** (Mt.26:57) **Peter denies Jesus again.** (Jn.18:25)
4. **The soldiers mock and beat Jesus while the Sanhedrin assembles at the temple for the "official" trial at the temple after sunrise.** (Lk.22:63)
5. **At sunrise, about 5:15, Jesus is led before the Sanhedrin at the temple. Jesus testifies that he is the Son of God. He is led to Pilate.** (Lk.22:66)
6. **At about 6:00 A.M. Jesus is on the pavement in front of Fort Antonia where Pilate stays. Pilate questions Jesus. Pilate learns Jesus is from Galilee and sends him over to Herod's Palace in Jerusalem.**
7. **At about 6:45 A.M. Jesus appears before Herod Antipas** (Lk.23:7) **Jesus will not speak. Herod sends Jesus back to Pilate in a royal robe.**(Lk23:11)
8. **Between 7:30-8:30 Pilate tries several times to release Jesus. Pilate speaks with Jesus. Jesus is beaten and sentenced to crucifixion. The soldiers in the Praetorium (Antonia) mock, spit on & hit Jesus** (Mt.27:27)
9. **Jesus carries the cross outside the city walls. He is crucified at 9:00 A.M.** (Lk.23:26; Mt.27:31)
10. **By 3:00 in the afternoon Jesus is dead. He is buried in a tomb near by.**

Let's now begin to see the details of these trials as they unfold. I'll tell you now: it will take a month of preaching to get through all these trials. There is a lot here to digest... Truly, what Jesus endured is absolutely mind-boggling to me. Let's begin to see it together:

### **Matthew 26:57-68**

<sup>57</sup> Then those who had seized Jesus led him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders had gathered. <sup>58</sup> And Peter was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest, and going inside he sat with the guards to see the end. <sup>59</sup> Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking false testimony against Jesus that they might put him to death, <sup>60</sup> but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward <sup>61</sup> and said, "This man said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days.'" <sup>62</sup> And the high priest stood up and said, "Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?" <sup>63</sup> But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, "I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." <sup>64</sup> Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven." <sup>65</sup> Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has uttered blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy. <sup>66</sup> What is your judgment?" They answered, "He deserves death." <sup>67</sup> Then they spit in his face and struck him. And some slapped him, <sup>68</sup> saying, "Prophecy to us, you Christ! Who is it that struck you?"

Now the Jewish Legal system was very, very elaborate. In fact, the sense of justice and jurisprudence that we have in America today, finds its origins in the Judaic justice system. The Jewish system of law and judgment was predicated on the Old Testament passage found in Deuteronomy 16. What does Deuteronomy mean? It means: "Repeating of the Law." "Deutero" means: Second, or repetition. "Nomos" means: Law. See the screens...

### **Deuteronomy 16:18-20**

<sup>18</sup>“You shall appoint judges and officers in all your towns that the Lord your God is giving you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment. <sup>19</sup>You shall not pervert justice. You shall not show partiality, and you shall not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and subverts the cause of the righteous. <sup>20</sup>Justice, and only justice, you shall follow, that you may live and inherit the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

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Church family, Annas, Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin violated everything about these commands from the Lord. What we’ve just read in Matthew 26 is Watergate on steroids! They had already paid Judas a bribe to betray Jesus. This farce was well underway. **Look again at verse 59.**

**Matthew 26:59-60**

<sup>59</sup>Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking false testimony against Jesus that they might put him to death. <sup>60</sup>but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward.

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Folks, this is after midnight (which is BY THE WAY, against the law...no Jewish council could hold court until after sunrise, so there was no look of secrecy), and yet; the chief priests and the Sanhedrin (the council) are doing all they can to use the cover of night to scrounge up 2 witnesses (you had to have 2 witnesses according to the Law) to lie about Jesus. Can you see the hypocrisy in this? Why did the Sanhedrin even care if they had 2 witnesses? It’s a kangaroo court...it’s all a bunch of lies and false testimony. This is the antithesis of anything that even remotely looks like justice. And yet, the Sanhedrin was the highest court in Israel!! It was the Supreme Court of the nation of Israel. Let me show you where they are supposed to meet...

**This is a depiction of the Temple. See the dark brown area to the left?**



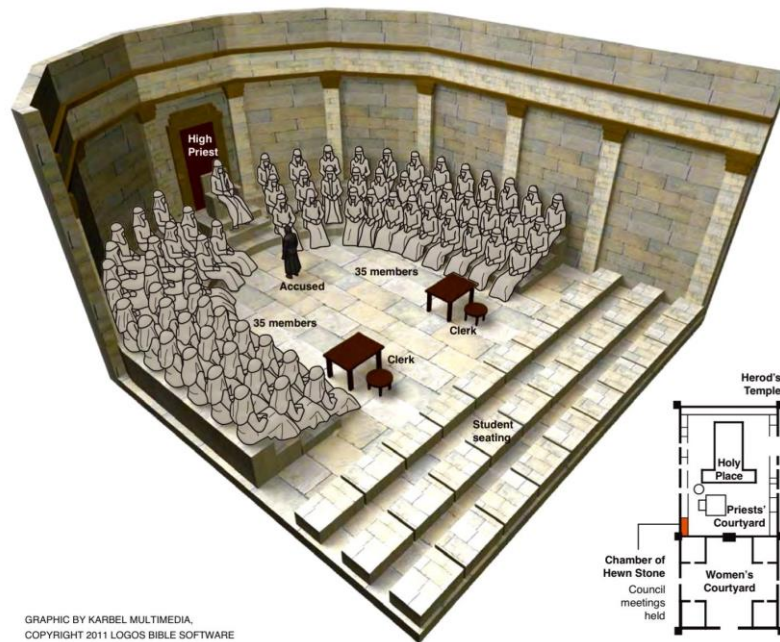
That’s the Chamber or Hall of Hewn Stones where the Sanhedrin met. Here’s a depiction of the inside of it.

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# The Sanhedrin

The Jewish high court of justice consisted of 71 men and was led by the high priest. The council could decide almost any fate of its people—except the death penalty, which was decided by the Romans. The court was located within the Chamber of Hewn Stone inside Herod's Temple.



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The Sanhedrin was made up of 71 men, including the High Priest and you had to have 23 to have a quorum (so any vote taken would count). I'm confident they had a quorum that night. You see, the person being tried would come stand in the middle. See this depiction of Jesus as he was taken before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin.



Church family, may I repeat again the travesty of what the Sanhedrin did that night! What they did was an absolute mockery of justice. **Let me give you 4 other reasons why.**

1. According to the Jewish Mishnah (their code of Jewish laws), it stated that no one was to be tried by the Sanhedrin at any other place other than the Hall of Hewn Stones at the Temple complex. That didn't happen.



2. The law also stated that the council couldn't hold court on a feast day or during a feast season. Folks, they are in Passover Season.
  3. The law said, if a person was condemned by the Sanhedrin to die, the council had to allow a day in between the sentence and the execution. Furthermore, they were commanded to fast that day...all day...to make sure they had heard from the Lord and that no other witnesses might come forward. Of course they didn't do this with Jesus. No! They sentenced and killed Him the same day!
  4. Jesus was supposed to have been appointed someone to defend Him? That never happened either. This was a travesty of justice!
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Truly, a violation of everything in the Sanhedrin's system of lawful jurisprudence. In fact, the Sanhedrin had an axiom that said: "The Sanhedrin is to save, not destroy life." What a joke! But, they knew they didn't have the power to kill Jesus. Why? Because they were under Roman tyranny and the Romans only allowed the Jews to have their own system of justice, up and to a point. What was that point? Execution. And that's why the Sanhedrin needed the Romans involved.

But, you may ask: "Why! Why did they hate Jesus so much that they wanted to kill Jesus?" Well, it's pretty simple. Jesus was destroying their system of religion. It was crumbling beneath them. Caiaphas knew this... See the depiction of the High Priest...



You see, to Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin Jesus represented everything that was holy and they resented Him! They resented His perfection because they were so utterly vile. Everything about Jesus caused them anger and venomous hatred Jesus, because He exposed them as frauds! You see, they are afraid of losing their authority, power, and their position with Rome and that would mean they would lose the ability to fleece the people and take their money. So, they've got to kill Him so that this can never happen! This is mafia, Gestapo type of stuff.

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So, what do they do? They bribe 2 liars. Here's how that's recorded in Mark's Gospel.

**Mark 14:56-59**

<sup>56</sup> For many bore false witness against him, but their testimony did not agree.<sup>57</sup> And some stood up and bore false witness against him, saying, <sup>58</sup> "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.'" <sup>59</sup> Yet even about this their testimony did not agree.

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Let me ask you: Have you ever been misquoted? That happens to me all the time. There are all kinds of things people say that I said that I never said. It happens when you speak a lot or are on Television or do a lot of public speaking. I guess it comes with the territory. But, I'll see this...it's much worse when you're speaking TRUTH.

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You see, Church family, the world hates “truth-tellers” and it will do everything it can to destroy those who speak the truth. And speaking of truth and honesty, I’ll see this...because of the persecution of those who tell the truth, there are many Christians today who have stopped speaking the truth. It’s because it costs you something when you speak the truth...friends, family, business...sales. **Listen! Don’t be afraid...** Speak the truth and watch what Jesus does. He will bless you much more for your sacrifice than anything you could possibly gain from compromising the truth! Yes, the truth is costly, but worth. Oh...it’s the irony of ironies: Jesus will be executed for telling the truth.

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Well, the Sanhedrin has found their two witnesses, bribed them and brought them in, but even they couldn’t agree on their testimony, and therefore; it should have been thrown out...but, it wasn’t. Here’s what they misquoted Jesus saying. It comes from:

**John 2:19-21**

<sup>19</sup> Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” <sup>20</sup> The Jews then said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?” <sup>21</sup> But he was speaking about the temple of his body.

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They didn’t understand it then, and they don’t now. He was talking about His own body and His own death, and they were too dense and too blinded by their own evil to see it. **So, what did Jesus say? Nothing!**

**Matthew 26:62**

<sup>62</sup> And the high priest stood up and said, “Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?”

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Call you feel the tension? See this depiction...



Caiaphas can’t get him to speak! And the frustration is mounting. You know the silence of Jesus fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah from 780 years earlier...

**Isaiah 53:7**

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.

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Peter says it this way:

**1 Peter 2:23**

<sup>23</sup> When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

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Caiaphas is trying his best to get Jesus to admit that He is the Messiah...the King of the Jews...that way he can go to the Romans and say that Jesus is seeking to commit insurrection,

rebellion against Rome and therefore, Jesus should be tried by Pilate for treason. But, Jesus says nothing!

Oh the silence! According to the law of the Jews, Jesus could remain silent. You've heard that before... YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN SILENT. That's part of our Miranda Right's in this country, based on this principle from Scripture. Jewish law said that you do not have to incriminate yourself. The law provided for Him to stand there silent. He could remain silent, because the witnesses and evidence had to prove Him guilty. But, it didn't. They had nothing on Him. They had proved nothing.

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Oh, it was the silence of innocence. It was the silence of dignity. It was the silence of integrity. And that silence was deafening, paralyzing, and infuriating to Caiaphas!

Might I hasten to add this... Sometimes it would do us all a lot of good to say nothing in certain situations. Did you hear that? In our age of speaking our minds and setting people straight...might we be like Jesus and if something is really stupid, don't say anything...don't argue...and by the silence, there might come conviction. Yes, sometimes it's better to say nothing at all.

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But Caiaphas isn't finished! He comes back to Jesus again... See the depiction...feel the hatred:



Caiaphas has a new plan to get Jesus to speak.

**Matthew 26:63**

<sup>63</sup> But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, "I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God."

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Caiaphas said, "I adjure you." This is an oath. It's the most sacred oath that a Jewish council could ever call for. It's to say: "You must answer this question truthfully on the basis that you are vowing before the living God, the living God who is alive and hears you at this moment." "I adjure you, are you the Son of God?" Now, Jesus can respond, because He's been asked a question about the truth of who He is. And OF COURSE, they all know the answer. Sure He is! Who else could do what He has done! He has performed thousands of miracles, including raising the dead...of course He is the Son of God.

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I love how the words of Jesus are recorded in Mark's Gospel:

**Mark 14:62**

<sup>62</sup> And Jesus said, "I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."

We've heard that before haven't we? "I Am" in the Garden last week. That's when everyone (700+ people) fell over like dominos. Do you understand...Jesus was saying, "I am God!" And He is. Jesus and the Father are one. Jesus is the second person of the Trinity of God. He is God in the



flesh who came to dwell among us. And what is more, Jesus went one step further and this really got their goat...

**Matthew 26:64-66**

<sup>64</sup> Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven." <sup>65</sup> Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has uttered blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy. <sup>66</sup> What is your judgment?" They answered, "He deserves death."

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Jesus quoted from Daniel 7, a very great and familiar Messianic prophecy. He said, "I'm coming back and you'll see my power." Meaning...Caiaphas, you're going to stand before me at the Great White Throne judgment and the tables will be turned and you'll bow at my feet.

At hearing this...Caiaphas performs more theatrics and tears his robe. According to Leviticus 21:10 he could only do that in extreme moments of grief. **He's not grieved!** It's all a show to get rid of Jesus so he can keep his job and keep raking in the money from the people.

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So, what did those men do to Jesus then?

**Matthew 26:67-68**

<sup>67</sup> Then they spit in his face and struck him. And some slapped him, <sup>68</sup> saying, "Prophecy to us, you Christ! Who is it that struck you?"

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What a classy bunch! These men were supposed to be the elite of the elite of the religious aristocracy of Judaism; and yet, they begin to punch, slap and spit on an innocent man. Unbelievable! Can you tell SATAN is having field day with those men! Luke 22 says this:

**Luke 22:63-65**

<sup>63</sup> Now the men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking him as they beat him. <sup>64</sup> They also blindfolded him and kept asking him, "Prophecy! Who is it that struck you?" <sup>65</sup> And they said many other things against him, blaspheming him.

I'm sure some of what they said and did was unspeakable and so crude that it shouldn't be uttered.

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**As we close today, might I say this.** If you are here today and you wonder if Jesus Christ is the Son of God. This should prove, yet again, He is. Jesus Christ was and is the perfect and sinless Son of the living God. You see, all that Satan and hell had to throw at Jesus came at Him in the house of Caiaphas that day and later in the Chamber of Hewn Stones. Truly, Satan used every resource he had.

Listen, and we're done. Satan and that brain trust...the Sanhedrin tried everything they could to find something on Jesus Christ. But, they couldn't. That tells me there wasn't anything to find. And do you know what that means: Jesus is the truth teller and that means everything He ever said or did is the truth. He is the way, the truth and the life. Yes, what we've seen today is one of the greatest apologetics in all of the Bible, if you ask me. Jesus Christ was and is the Son of the Living God...spotless! Perfect! THE GREAT I AM! Do you believe that? If you do, you can have eternal life. If you don't, you'll be like Caiaphas, who is in Hades today. I've made my chose. Jesus is the Great I Am!

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