

## **Rays Of Glory In Jesus' Trial.**

Text: Luke 22:66-71

1) The Declaration

Suggested Hymns:

2) The Prophecy

Tan: 81, 70, 55, 292, 48

Ade: 81, 353, 70, 55, 48

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Luke 22:66-71, *“As soon as it was day, the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, came together and led Him into their council, saying, <sup>67</sup> “If You are the Christ, tell us.”*

*But He said to them, “If I tell you, you will by no means believe. <sup>68</sup> “And if I also ask you, you will by no means answer Me or let Me go. <sup>69</sup> “Hereafter the Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God.” <sup>70</sup> Then they all said, “Are You then the Son of God?” So He said to them, “You rightly say that I am.” <sup>71</sup> And they said, “What further testimony do we need? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth.”* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

*“What further testimony do we need? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth.”* This is what the elders of the people, chief priests, and scribes said about Jesus. They had been working hard to establish some accusation against Jesus so that they could condemn Him to death.

They had arranged a special session of the Sanhedrin, which consisted of seventy-one men who were considered the church court and with whom rested the decision of religious questions. It was made up of elders, priests, and teachers of the Law who were mostly Pharisees. The Sanhedrin possessed absolute power in religious matters. It also had the power to pass a sentence of death, subject, however, to the ratification of the Roman governor.

They had summoned a great number of witnesses to testify against Jesus and to support the charges produced against Him. But no head-way was made. No

two witnesses could perfectly agree as to what they had heard Jesus say. It seemed as if the entire trial brought about with the greatest pains would result in a miserable failure.

But the elders, chief priests, and scribes were anxious to put Jesus out of the way. It was a foregone conclusion with them that Jesus must die. They were determined to find something on which to base the sentence of death.

Now in a fair trial the accused is never required to testify against himself. The charges laid against the defendant must be established by witnesses, not by the defendant. But what do we find the elders, chief priests, and scribes doing? Having failed to procure evidence by witnesses, they question Jesus to make Him testify against Himself.

Then upon Jesus' own words, made in open court, they base a verdict of death and say, "*What further testimony do we need? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth.*"

What had they heard from His own mouth? Was it the confession of a crime? Was it anything worthy of death? No; it was a solemn declaration of His divine majesty and a divine prophecy concerning His divine glory.

If their eyes had not been blinded by an intense hatred against Jesus, they would have seen in Jesus, who was standing before them and uttering this divine declaration and prophecy, the King of kings and the Lord of lords, the Ruler of heaven and earth.

What we hear from Jesus own mouth is a declaration that He is the Son of God and a prophecy that He will be exalted to the right hand of God. Rays of divine glory are seen in the suffering and dying Christ is our general theme for this Lenten season, and here we see the rays of His divine glory breaking forth as He is standing before the Sanhedrin.

Jesus makes to nought all their evil counsel and will, confusing the witnesses against Him, and solemnly proclaiming His divinity. The subject of our sermon, accordingly, shall be with the help of God's Holy Spirit, Jesus under trial revealing His divine glory by a declaration and by a prophecy. May the Lord bless our meditation.

## **1. The Declaration.**

Our texts says, *“As soon as it was day, the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, came together and led Him into their council.* This was about five o’clock in the morning. Their first session was held the night before and lasted until midnight, perhaps longer.

After His apprehension in the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus was led into the city of Jerusalem and taken to the high priest’s palace where he had a sort of a preliminary hearing in the apartments of Annas, while the council was being summoned to assemble.

Jesus was then led across the yard into the council chamber where the members of the Sanhedrin were assembled for the trial. All had to be done in the greatest hurry and in the dead of night, while all Jerusalem was asleep. This was because the rulers feared that there would be a revolt and the people would set Jesus free, if He was not delivered to the custody of the Roman governor in time.

So all had to be done before the dawn of day, or, at least, before the people could find out what was going on. This is the reason why the trial which in the night had developed so unsatisfactorily to them was resumed so early in the morning.

The question put to Jesus at this trial was, *“If You are the Christ, tell us.”* Jesus was generally believed by His followers to be the Christ, or the promised Messiah, whom all Israel was expecting to come. However, the Sanhedrin could not prove that Jesus had ever said so, in as many words, so therefore they urge Him to own up to it now.

And what is Jesus’ answer? *“If I tell you, you will by no means believe.* <sup>68</sup> *“And if I also ask you, you will by no means answer Me or let Me go.”* This was not meant as an evasive answer. Jesus was not afraid to own up to it that He is the Christ. But He wanted to let them know that He saw right-through them, and that He knew why they put that question to Him. It was not for the sake of obtaining information, but merely to convict Him.

Jesus could tell them a thousand times that He is the Christ and they would not believe Him, because they had made up their minds not to believe it. Jesus could produce the most convincing arguments and ask them why they would not receive Him as their Messiah, when they themselves had to admit that all the

requirements of the Messiah were fulfilled in Him. They remained silent in this respect, because they simply did not want such a Messiah.

But they were bent on getting from Jesus a positive answer, and so they ask Him again, "***Are You then the Son of God?***" From this it appears that they knew that the promised Messiah must be both God and man in one person. Possibly it was Jesus Himself who had enlightened them on this point.

Some time ago Jesus had disputed with them in the temple and had asked them, "***What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?***"<sup>1</sup> And when they answered, "***The son of David,***" He plainly showed them from the book of Psalms that David calls the Messiah his Lord and God.

What is Jesus' answer when they put to Him the question, "***Are You then the Son of God?***" ***So He said to them, "You rightly say that I am."***

This was a solemn declaration in the affirmative. The English translation, "***You say that I am,***" is a literal translation of the Greek text. As every language has its own idioms and peculiar ways of expressing things, so it was peculiar with the Greeks to answer in the affirmative by saying, *You say that I am*, or, *That I do*, and so forth.

In plain English it was as much as if Jesus had said, *I am exactly that which you are asking me; I am the Son of God*. Imagine the Lord Jesus standing before the Sanhedrin when the fatal question is put to Him and all the members of the council are stretching their necks to hear what He will say and what will be His answer.

Jesus knows what will be the consequence if He answers in the affirmative. He knows their plot. He is aware of the fact that the trial will be ended in one moment if He answers, Yes. But not a second does Jesus hesitate. He solemnly declares that He is the Son of God.

Jesus' affirmative answer takes us back to the very beginning of St. Luke's Gospel when the angel Gabriel said to Mary, ***therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.***<sup>2</sup> For the Jewish council this claim of Jesus constitutes the grossest form of blasphemy. They are not willing to consider the evidence which supports His assertion. They are intent only on bringing about His death.

When Stephen, the first Christian martyr, stood before the council, we are told that they “*saw his face, as if it had been the face of an angel,*”<sup>3</sup> but how must Jesus have looked before that same council when He declared His divine majesty! How must His divine glory have shone forth and forced itself upon the conviction of His enemies who were determined to put Him to death!

## 2. The Prophecy.

In this trial Jesus revealed His divine glory also by a prophecy. He said, “*Hereafter the Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God.*” Jesus often used the title “*Son of Man*” to describe Himself. He directs attention away from the false hope of an earthly Messiah to His heavenly rule as Son of Man at the right hand of God.

The prophecy itself is plain. Jesus was now in His deepest humiliation, apparently forsaken by God, and destitute of divine power. But He predicts that this state of humiliation will be followed by a state of exaltation, that from this earth He will be taken up into heaven and occupy the divine throne, receiving all power in heaven and upon earth.

And there, His enemies who are now putting Him to death shall see Him hereafter. They shall see Jesus whom they have pierced. All people shall see Him, when on the last day, He shall return to judge the living and the dead.

But now we must picture in our minds the Lord Jesus before the council as a prisoner and bound, on His way to death. His case is lost. Jesus knows that He must die. Yet with an all-seeing eye Jesus sees what will be done to Him beyond the grave.

Jesus sees not only His death, but also His resurrection, His ascension into heaven, His sitting at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, and His return to judge the living and the dead. Is not this a most glorious manifestation of His divinity? It certainly is!

Did not the subsequent events show that Jesus prophesied the truth when He said that He would sit on the right hand of the power of God? Was not Jesus at the right hand of God when from heaven He called to Saul on his way to Damascus to persecute the Christians and said to him, “*Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?*” ... “*I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.*”<sup>4</sup>

Are we not told of Stephen that, when standing before the council, *being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God,*<sup>56</sup> and said, *“Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!”*<sup>5</sup>

All of Christ’s prophecies came true. His prophecy came true concerning His suffering, death, and resurrection. His prophecy came true concerning the destruction of the city of Jerusalem. His prophecy came true concerning the fate of the Jewish race. And so also this prophecy is fulfilled which He spoke before the members of the Jewish Sanhedrin, *“Hereafter the Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God.”* We read in Luke 21:33,<sup>33</sup> *“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.”*

Who, then, went into suffering and death on Calvary? It was the eternal Son of God who will on the last day return from the seat of His divine glory to raise the dead.

It was the King of kings and the Lord of lords, who merely refrained from the use of His divine power on this earth that He might endure for us His painful sufferings and bleed and die for our sins that we might live before God in heaven forever.

Let us love Jesus; because He has first loved us. Let us believe in Him truly and sincerely and deplore sin which caused Him His suffering. And when He comes again in the clouds of heaven we shall meet Him with joy and be with Him and praise Him forever and ever.

Let us close with the words of the hymnist<sup>6</sup>

O dearest Jesus, what law hast Thou broken,  
That such sharp sentence should on Thee be spoken?  
Of what offences must Thou make confession,  
Of what transgression?

9

Lord, I will ponder on Thy grace unceasing,  
Earth’s empty treasures shall no more be pleasing;  
To do Thy bidding shall be my endeavour  
Now and for ever.

And when, Lord Jesus, at Thy throne in heaven  
The crown of glory shall to me be given,  
Where all the ransomed sweetest hymns will raise Thee,  
I, too, shall praise Thee. Amen

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and  
minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 22:42

<sup>2</sup> Luke 1:35

<sup>3</sup> Acts 6:15

<sup>4</sup> Acts 9:4

<sup>5</sup> Acts 7:55-56

<sup>6</sup> Hymn 55, v 1, 9, 10