

Jesus' sufferings

Now we enter into the period of Jesus' intense sufferings. It is what we would call the early hours of **Friday** morning.

1. Betrayed

1. **Jesus suffers betrayal.** A heavily armed crowd arrives, sent by the senior priests, the theologians and the Pharisaic elders¹. They were temple-soldiers and officials of various kinds². They come in an authoritative manner. No arrest is made in the first few moments. Then as had been arranged as a signal, Judas kissed Jesus³. The kiss had been arranged so as to keep the arrest as quiet as possible. If Judas had simply shouted 'He's the one!' an uproar would certainly have followed. Jesus was arrested⁴.

¹ 14:43
² see John 18:12
³ 14:44-45
⁴ 14:46

Jesus experienced the pain of having a close associate betray Him in a most deceitful manner.

2. Deserted

2. **Jesus is deserted by His friends.** Initially the disciples were ready for a fight. One of them immediately became violent and one of the employees of the high-priest lost an ear¹. But when it became clear that Jesus had no intention of putting up a fight or leading a violent revolution², the disciples fled³. One of Jesus' followers was willing to abandon his clothes and run away naked rather than be captured⁴.

¹ 14:47
² 14:48-49
³ 14:50
⁴ 14:51-5

No one will ever be able to say that Jesus does not know what it feels like to be abandoned by His friends. He went through that very experience Himself.

3. Hated

3. **Jesus experiences animosity at the hands of the nominal church.** It must not be forgotten that at this stage of events the people showing such hatred towards Jesus are the religious people. There was the high-priest and all the other senior priests¹. There were theologians and religious scholars². This violent and burning hatred of Jesus was not being conducted by the common people of Israel or by specially wicked people. It was the religious people who were showing Jesus hatred. Peter was there as well, trying to look like a casual bystander, warming himself at the fire³.

¹ 14:53
² 14:53
³ 14:54

It is always especially painful when the very people who should be receiving a work from God are the very ones who hate it most. Jesus knows what it feels like. He went through it Himself.

4. Slandered

4. **Jesus knows what it is like to face slander and invented stories.** The religious people start looking for evidence with which to charge Jesus¹. It was not a case of being innocent until proved guilty. It was not even a matter of being guilty until proved innocent. It was a matter of being known to be innocent but made to look guilty regardless of the facts of the matter.

¹ 14:55

Have you ever been through that? Someone with sheer malice is determined to make a case against you. It is sheer malice, sheer jealousy, sheer ambition, and you are blocking the fulfilment of that ambition! So you have to be got rid of!

Jesus has been through it too. Jesus knows what it feels like.

5. Mis-represented

5. **Jesus knows what it is like to have stories about Him twisted.** The straightforward slander fails¹ so they try another method. They take stories which are half-true and twist them². Jesus did not say 'I

¹ 14:56
² 14:59-60
³ John 2:19

will destroy this temple' but He said something similar^{Ⓜ3}.

6. Pressurised to incriminate himself

6. Jesus was illegally forced into giving testimony against Himself. The high-priest then seeks to get Jesus to incriminate Himself. The history of Jewish law at this time is uncertain, but it seems unlikely that a sentence should be based on a trial in the middle of the night in which a man is put under pressure to incriminate himself. But the high priest urges Jesus to say whether He claims to be the Messiah^{Ⓜ1}. It will never be able to be said that Jesus lacked clarity in claiming to be the Messiah. He boldly claimed to be the Divine Messianic king of Daniel 7:13, and tells the high-priest that he himself will soon see it. This is not a reference to the 'Second Coming' of Jesus. Rather it refers to events that will soon take place – the outpouring of the Spirit, the bold testimony of the apostles, the fall of Jerusalem – which will be a sign that Jesus has come to the Father to receive His kingdom. It is parallel to Mark 13:26.

Ⓜ1 14:60–61

Jesus' bold confession brings upon Him the charge of blasphemy^{Ⓜ1}. But the entire procedure of getting a man to testify against Himself at a middle-of-the-night trial was unjust.

Ⓜ1 14:63–64

7. Beaten and ridiculed

7. Jesus knows what it is like to face physical violence. The crowd of leaders began to spit on Jesus and punch Him and ridicule Him. These men were priests and theologians face-to-face with the Son of God. They knew their Old Testament better than most modern Christians. They were eminent men in society. They loved the Mosaic law. Yet their religion allowed them to do such things to Jesus^{Ⓜ1}. Following their leaders' example the guards beat Jesus.

Ⓜ1 14:65

We must not be surprised to find the vilest ill-treatment coming from surprising sources. But if we are treated in such a way we can know that Jesus knows what it feels like.

8. Disowned

8. Jesus knows what it is like to be disowned by a friend. Under scrutiny from a servant girl and from some of those standing by in the courtyard Peter denies having any involvement with Jesus^{Ⓜ1} and he fulfils Jesus' prediction about him^{Ⓜ2}.

Ⓜ1 14:71

Ⓜ2 14:72

He is able to sympathise

Jesus was put through many sufferings. Because He Himself suffered, He is able to help those who are being tempted^{Ⓜ1}. He has experienced every kind of trouble and in every situation we might find ourselves in, He knows what it feels like. His sufferings enable Him to sympathize.

Ⓜ1 see Hebrews 2:18

	<p>Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His <i>Preaching Through The Bible</i> (PTTB) books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.</p>	
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