

Matthew 26:67-68

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/matt/matt-26/matthew-2667-68/>

Having reached their guilty verdict, the priests mock and physically abuse Jesus.

The parallel gospel accounts of this event are found in Mark 14:65 and Luke 22:63-65.

- Note: Throughout this portion of commentary, each time a Jewish law was broken by the chief priests and elders as they prosecuted *Jesus*, we identify that rule by means of brackets—i.e. [Rule 2: Neutrality]. The numbering of these rules is according to The Bible Says’ series about the Religious Prosecution of *Jesus*.

For a complete listing of the broken rules see The Bible Says Article: [Jesus's Trial, Part 1. The Laws Broken By The Religious Leaders: A Summary.](#)

Matthew’s Gospel narrative details the physical and emotional abuse *Jesus* received at the hands of His political adversaries after the conviction and sentence were announced in His second religious trial.

Jesus had three religious trials between His arrest in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:47-56) and being handed over to Pilate (Matthew 27:2)

1. Jesus’s Preliminary Trial in the home of Annas, the former high priest (John 18:12-14, 19-24)
2. Jesus’s Night-Time Trial in the home of Caiaphas, the sitting high priest (Matthew 26:57-68; Mark 14:53-65; Luke 22:54; John 18:24)
3. Jesus’s Sunrise Trial before the Sanhedrin (Matthew 27:1; Mark 15:1; Luke 22:66-71)

Jesus’s second religious trial, which occurred in the home of the high priest Caiaphas, most likely took place on the night of Nisan 15 (sometime during the dark morning hours on Friday, by Roman reckoning).

To learn more about the timing and sequencing of these events, see The Bible Says, [“Timeline: Jesus’s Final 24 Hours.”](#)

After the guilty verdict for the crime of blasphemy and *Jesus’s* death sentence were unanimously proclaimed (Mark 14:64) in the same instant by the Sanhedrin [Rule 16: Faulty Verdict; Rule 17: Hasty Sentence], Matthew describes how *they* began to abuse *Jesus* physically and emotionally [Rule 10: Abuse].

Then they spat in His face and beat Him with their fists; and others slapped Him (v 67).

Matthew describes three specific ways how *Jesus’s* judges and/or jailers physically abused *Him*.

1. *They spat in His face.*
2. *They beat Him with their fists.*

3. *Others slapped Him with their open hands.*

Spitting *in* someone's *face* was a highly insulting act. It was intended to defile, belittle, and humiliate the person whose *face* was spit upon.

They also beat Him with their fists. Hitting someone with a closed fist physically injures and bruises a person's *face*. Being hit in the face with a closed fist can be very painful. The initial punch hurts, and so does the lingering bruises as *the face* becomes discolored and begins to swell. If a person is hit hard, as Jesus likely was, *the face* can also bleed. It appears that *they beat and punched Jesus's face with their fists* repeatedly.

Matthew writes that *others slapped Him with their open hands*. Slapping someone's face is both insulting and painful. As an insult, a slap is a sharp rebuke—similar to being *spit* on. The initial slap stings sharply and then the sting gradually fades. But being *slapped* again and again, as Jesus was, causes the sting of the slaps to maintain their intensity. Jesus was slapped on His face and He was punched with fists; the physical pain of having his bruises and welts slapped would have been intense and very unpleasant.

Jesus's abuse at the hands of His judges and/or jailers fulfilled Isaiah's Messianic prophecy:

“I gave My back to those who strike Me,
And My cheeks to those who pluck out the beard;
I did not cover My face from humiliation and spitting.”
(Isaiah 50:6)

Apparently, *they* also pulled out hair from *His* beard. This would have added both insults and extremely sharp pain to the abuse He was already suffering. The physical abuse Jesus suffered at the hands of his judges and/or jailers was a violation of how prisoners were to be treated under Jewish law [Rule 10: Abuse].

David in Psalm 35 also prophesied of the ridicule and violent abuse the Messiah would receive.

“But at my stumbling they rejoiced and gathered themselves together;
The smiters whom I did not know gathered together against me,
They slandered me without ceasing.
Like godless jesters at a feast,
They gnashed at me with their teeth.

“LORD, how long will You look on?
Rescue my soul from their ravages,
My only life from the lions.”
(Psalm 35:15-17)

The sustained physical abuse probably had a significant effect on *His* appearance. He was probably bloodied, and *His face* discolored and swollen with welts and bruising. His beard was mangled and red as skin and facial hair were plucked away.

This is likely a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophesy about the Messiah's appearance:

“So His appearance was marred more than any man
And His form more than the sons of men.”
(Isaiah 50:14)

Through all of this, in obedience to His Father, Jesus quietly took the abuse and did not strike back (Matthew 26:39). He knew “the Lord GOD helps [*Him*], Therefore [He is] not disgraced,” He “set [His] face like flint” knowing that He would not be ashamed (Isaiah 50:6). For the joy set before Him He despised the shame (Hebrews 12:2).

Matthew also writes about the mockery that Jesus suffered as they physically abused and insulted Him.

As they beat and slapped Him they said to Him: “Prophesy to us, You Christ; who is the one who hit You?” (Matthew 26:68).

His abusers said this in reference to *Jesus’s* reputation for working miracles, prophesying, and for being the *Christ* (Messiah).

The Messiah was believed to be a prophet like Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15-18). Prophets spoke on behalf of God. Some could accurately predict the future or have special knowledge. Jesus’s abusers, who did not believe *His* claims, cruelly mocked and made sport of Jesus as *they* hit *His* face.

This indicates that several people were gathered around Jesus taking turns, men who *beat* and *slapped Him*. Mark and Luke, who also report similar abuse (Mark 14:65, Luke 22:63-65) add that Jesus was blindfolded as *they* hit *Him* so that He could not see where the hits were coming from (Mark 14:65; Luke 22:64).

As they were saying and doing these things as a punishment for Jesus’s supposed blasphemy, according to Luke *they* were the ones who were actually blaspheming (Luke 22:65).

Mark’s reports seem to indicate that the abuse began as soon as the sentence was announced, meaning that the members of the honored Sanhedrin were the ones who spit, beat, and blindfolded *Him* before “the officers received Him with slaps in the face” (Mark 14:65).

Luke reports that the abuse and sporting of Jesus was at the hands of “the men who were holding Jesus in custody” (Luke 22:63) sometime before *His* third and final official religious trial began once it was day (Luke 22:66).

Also from Luke’s account, it appears that Peter’s second denial came as Jesus’s second trial began (Luke 22:58; John 18:24-25); and it seems as though Peter’s third denial came shortly after it ended, perhaps as they were transferring Jesus (Luke 22:59-61). Luke says Peter’s third denial came “about an hour after” the second one (Luke 22:59). All of this would suggest that Jesus’s second trial from start to finish lasted “about an hour.”

Harmonizing these three accounts from Matthew, Mark, and Luke indicates that Jesus was beaten and abused nearly continuously from the conclusion of His second religious trial in the

home of Caiaphas until His third and final religious trial began in the Council Chamber located on the temple mount, which began at sunrise (Matthew 27:1; Mark 15:1; Luke 22:66-71).

For a detailed explanation of the principles that were broken during Jesus's trial, see The Bible Says Article: [Jesus's Trial, Part 4. The Judicial Principles That Were Violated.](#)

For a detailed explanation of the other laws that were broken during Jesus's trial, see The Bible Says Article: [Jesus's Trial, Part 5. The Laws Of Practice That Were Violated.](#)

To skip to Matthew's summary of Jesus's third religious trial, see the Bible Says commentary page for [Matthew 27:1-2.](#)

To learn more about Luke's account of Jesus's third religious trial, see the Bible Says commentary page for [Luke 22:66-71.](#)

Biblical Text

67 Then they spat in His face and beat Him with their fists; and others slapped Him, 68 and said, "Prophecy to us, You Christ; who is the one who hit You?"