

JESUS CHRIST BEFORE CAIAPHAS  
Matt. 26:57-68

Intro: Caiaphas was the high priest of Israel during the earthly ministry of our Saviour. But it was a priesthood, in many respects, which was only outward. His father-in-law, Annas, was the real high priest, but he chose to run things behind the scenes through Caiaphas, as well as through several of his own sons.

The priesthood had fallen on sad days. Outwardly the people gave them respect, mainly from fear, but Edersheim tells us that "the names of those bold, licentious, unscrupulous, degenerate sons of Aaron were spoken with whispered curses" (II, 547).

These were the men who had turned the house of God into "a den of thieves" (Matt. 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46).

But, as you read over the Scriptures which deal with Caiaphas, it is hard to miss seeing that the heart of God seems to have been set on Caiaphas in a special way.

The first mention of him (and of Annas) is in Luke 3:2—in connection with the ministry of John the Baptist.

The last mention is in Acts 4:6—in connection with the ministries of the Apostle Peter and the Apostle John.

Think of the people Caiaphas had the opportunity to know—not the least of whom was our Lord Jesus Himself!

And as you turn from these passages in the Word of God you get the impression that I have given my message tonight the wrong subject. Instead of being "Jesus Christ Before Caiaphas" it should be "Caiaphas Before Jesus Christ." He had so many opportunities. He was exposed to so much truth. He knew so many of the right people. He was even used of God to make a prophetic statement concerning the death of Christ. BUT IN SPITE OF ALL OF THIS HIS HEART REMAINED UNTOUCHED.

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When the Lord stood on trial before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin, the "trial" centered around four things:

- (1) The disciples (John 18:19).
- (2) His doctrine (John 18:19).
- (3) The Lord Himself (Matt. 26:63, 64).
- (4) Although it is not specifically mentioned at the time, the miracles of our Lord were one of the main reasons for the terrible hatred which the Jews had for the Saviour. Cf. John 11:47, 48.

## I. THE DISCIPLES (John 18:19).

We can dispense with this very quickly because it is just mentioned—and that is all!

What a strange picture the disciples presented at that time! They had all forsaken Him, but not until Peter had tried to kill the high priest's servant, Malchus (John 18:10).

If you were looking at the disciples, how wasted the work of the Lord seemed to be at this time! And it is especially pathetic when we read how the Lord had prayed for them in John 17.

That which was to become the mightiest force in the spread of the Gospel looked like nothing now.

## II. THE DOCTRINE (John 18:19).

This, too, the Lord did not discuss because everyone knew what He had been teaching. Cf. John 18:20, 21.

The Jews brought false witnesses, but they did not agree with each other. Cf. Mark 14:55, 56.

At last two came who said, "This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days" (Matt. 26:61). But this was not a false witness. Cf. John 2:18-22. There was nothing more vital in all of the teaching of the Lord Jesus than this: His death and His resurrection. And yet no one asked Him what He meant by it.

Earlier Caiaphas had spoken some prophetic words which had significance which could have brought the light to his darkened heart, but it went unnoticed. Cf. John 11:49-52. There is no clearer statement of the death of Christ in the Gospels!

## III. THE LORD HIMSELF (Matt. 26:63, 64).

Is it not interesting that at this point the Lord spoke up? Cf. Matt. 26:63, 64; Mark 14:61, 62; Luke 22:66-71.

Note the change between "the Son of God" and "the Son of man." And note also that He speaks of His coming in glory which implies His resurrection and His ascension!

But they were like many other people who had dealings with the Lord—they did not stop to inquire about what He said; they just charged Him with blasphemy, so intent were they

on putting the Lord Jesus Christ to death! And yet, here Caiaphas receives this confirmation from the Lord.

To show both the background and the aftermath of Caiaphas' dealings with God, let us look finally at

#### IV. THE MIRACLES.

Why did Jesus Christ perform miracles?

You say, To meet human needs. Yes, BUT THERE WAS A GREATER REASON, and John tells us about it. Cf. John 20:30, 31. The miracles provide us with some of the greatest evidence for believing that Jesus Christ was God manifest in human flesh.

Caiaphas never denies the reality of the miracles. Note the two examples:

- (1) John 11:47-50, esp. v. 47 and v. 49. Cf. Acts 2:22.
- (2) Acts 4:5-22. See vv. 6, 16.

Concl: Three weeks ago I spoke on Judas. At that time I tried to bring out from the Word of God how much God to reach and win the heart of Judas.

Tonight we see the same thing about Caiaphas.

Think of all of the things that he had to do as the high priest which would have had the OT pictures of Christ before him constantly--BUT HE NEVER SAW ANY OF IT!

With all of this evidence, can we possibly blame God? NEVER!

And this leads me to say this as I close tonight: IS IT POSSIBLE THAT THERE IS SOMEONE HERE, AND GOD HAS BEEN SPEAKING TO YOU JUST AS CLEARLY AS HE WAS SPEAKING TO CAIAPHAS? Caiaphas knew much about the Scriptures, but his heart was not open to the One who is seen in those Scriptures more than anyone else.

Oh, that God would give us eyes to see, and ears to hear, and hearts to understand what He has been seeking to tell us in so many ways and for such a long time.