

The Passion Of The Lord

Christ Before Caiaphas In The Evening - Part 1

Introduction

The first observation is that only Matthew, Mark, and Luke record that which happened before Caiaphas. John mentions nothing of it. That which John tells us of is the trial of the Lord before Annas (Jn. 18:19-24). The Lord was brought twice before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin, the first being during the night and the second in the early morning (Mk. 15:1; Lk. 22:66-71).

The relevant scriptures of the trial by Caiaphas are (Matt. 26:57, 59-68; Mk. 14:53-65; Lk. 22:63-65). It must be recognized that these were not High Priests according to God's directives but as appointed by the Romans. Matthew and Mark all mention, "all the chief priests" (Matt. 27:1; Mk. 14:53), and this could present a problem for there was only to be one high/chief priest at a time. Reality is that at the time of our Lord's arrest and crucifixion there were no less than five chief priests, hence the word "All" in Matthew and Mark. The order for the Chief Priests was:

Chief Priest	Date of position	Appointed by	Related to
Annas	6-15 A.D.	Quirinus the Roman	
Ishmael	15-16 A.D.		Son of Annas
Eleazer	16-17 A.D.		
Simon	17-18 A.D.		Son of Annas
Joseph Caiaphas	18-37 A.D.	Valerius Gratus	

In the taking of our Lord to and between the trials there are several different Greek words used. They are:

Translated	Reference	Greek Word	Meaning
Took they	Matt. 26:55; Mk. 14:48 Lk. 22:54; Jn. 18:12	Sullambano	To seize and hold firmly thus making the individual a permanent prisoner.
Brought	Lk. 22:54	Eisago	To lead in, to bring to a predetermined place
Led	Mk. 14:53	Agago	To lead the individual away especially one being led off to trial, prison, or punishment
Carried Him away	Mk. 15:1	Apophero	To carry off or bring away. Possibly being carried away by the confines of the multitude thus allowing no possibility of the Lord "passing away" as He had done before (Lk. 4:30)
Delivered	Mk. 15:15; Lk. 23:25	Paradidomi	To give into the hands of another or others for to be judged, condemned, punished, scourged, tormented, put to death, to deliver up
Led	Lk. 22:66	Anago	To lead up, to lead or bring into a higher place of navigators; launch out, set sail, put to sea

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Translated	Reference	Greek Word	Meaning
Led	Lk. 22:54; 23:1	Ago	To lead, take with one to lead by laying hold of, and this way to bring to the point of destination; of an animal to lead by accompanying to (into) a place to lead with one's self, attach to one's self as an attendant to conduct, bring to lead away to a court of justice, magistrate, etc. to impel.
Sent	Lk. 23:7, 11	Anapempo	To send up to a higher place to a person higher in office, authority, or power to send back
Released	Lk. 23:25	Apoluo	To send up to a higher place to a person higher in office, authority, or power to send back
Laid hold	Matt. 26:57	Krateo	To take, seize, to lay hands on one in order to get him into one's power to hold fast, to keep carefully

While these words may not mean much to us, yet I am sure that if this was someone we physically knew and this was their experiences at the hands of the religious and governmental leaders, we would feel for them.

The Emphasis on “Night” and “Darkness”

In the recording of these twenty-four hours the words “night” and “darkness” become quite prominent. We read:

- a) “This is your hour, and the power of darkness” (Lk. 22:53)
- b) “And there was darkness over all the land / earth” (Matt. 27:45; Lk. 23:44)
- c) “And it was night” (Jn. 13:30)
- d) “All ye shall be offended because of me this night” (Matt. 26:31; Mk. 14:27)
- e) “This night, before the cock crow” (Matt. 26:34; Mk. 14:30)

When reading the account of the announcement of our Lord’s birth, the inspired record is: “Shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night (Lk. 2:8), then this is followed by: “For unto you is born this day” (Lk. 2:11). What made the difference? Christ had come into the world. God always works from the night to the day: “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning” (Psa. 30:5). This was a dark night for the Light of the world had been rejected, man’s hatred against the Lord was about to be manifested, the full manifestation of man’s undeserving of God’s mercy or grace was about to be manifested by their rejection of the Saviour of the world.

Christ Brought Before Caiaphas and The Council

To be guilty and brought before a solemn assize is an intimidating experience. In judicial solemnity seventy-one men sat in the “Lishkat ha-Gazith”, the “Office of Hewn Stone” or, the “Hall of Hewn Stones”, the supreme religious court of the nation.

It was a formal setting with the High Priest who sat in the centre facing the others who sat in a semi circle. The other high priests and distinguished elders sat close to the High Priest and the younger members sat toward the outer edges. This was a special meeting called by the chief priest where the elders, the scribes, and the whole Jewish council attended. They all had one thing in common, their hatred for Jesus. There was no room for compassion in this religious meeting. Mercy was not to be considered. Only one thing needed to be decided, “How can we best destroy this man?”

It would seem to me that when the door opened all idle talking would have stopped, and all eyes would be trained on the door, with the question, “Have they got Him this time?” They had tried several times before but it always ended in miserable failure (Jn. 7:30, 32; 10:39). The first wave of officers and band of men come in, and then in

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the midst, comes the accused. There is no halo around His head, and yet I have no doubt there was a majestic dignity that was unmistakable, having the glory of unsullied moral, and judicial perfection. It was to these He had asked: "Which of you can convict me of sin?" (Jn. 8:46). How could they convict Him of sin a work only the Spirit of God could do to sinful men?

Then the accused being brought in stood, and one by one witnesses were brought in to lay the accusations.

One of the laws of Israel was that there was to be a witness to the innocence of the accused, yet from the record of the four gospel writers no such rule was observed. Even Nicodemus failed to step up and give his attestation to it. It is very possible that the Lord, to enforce their awareness of personal wrongdoing, claimed the rights of it by saying: "Why askest thou me? Ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said" (Jn. 18:20, 21). It was this law that Paul, when standing before Festus, called for. He said: "My manner of life (my generation) from my youth, which was at the first among my own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee" (Acts 26:4, 5).

The False Witnesses

What a sight it must have been. The first witness is called, and undoubtedly in a show of fidelity he is questioned, but found to be false. Then the second, third, fourth, fifth, and more take their place to give their sacred vow of truthfulness, all of which are evidently false. They give their accusations, and as the time passes, possibly several hours, the accused stood silent.

The wording of Matthew and Mark indicates determination:

- a) "Now the chief priests, and elders, and ALL the council, sought (were seeking) false witness" (Matt. 26:59; Mk. 14:55), and "Though many false witnesses came" (Matt. 26:60; Mk. 14:60).
- b) Their determination to put the Lord to death is seen by the change of expression in Matthew and Mark. In Mark they sought witnesses, but in Matthew it is "they sought false witnesses". It would seem that they sought true witnesses, and failing this sought for false witnesses, but could find none whose witness agreed.

Almost in a panic they are searching and continuously seeking anyone whom they could use to solidify an accusation. The only stark fact was that the more they brought the more agitating the situation became, for not only did no two witnesses agree, but the accused stood silent! They were at a complete stalemate. The witnesses were of no value, the accused was in perfect control, and with each passing minute the case for His death was slipping from them. How could they find a true witness who could find fault in the person of the Lord? They had intently watched Him, they had subtly set snares for Him, but he never failed. In John 8 they seek to accuse Him but He is the Light and who can find fault with the perfect Light?

- a) Never once, for the slightest iota of time was there ever any action committed by Him which was contrary to his teaching or unbecoming to His declarations concerning who He was.
- b) Never did He ever rebel against God, nor was there ever a word or attitude of an insubordinate nature.
- c) He never broke the law of God, deviated from the will of God, or distorted the character of God, impeccable, undefiled and untainted.
- d) Throughout His entire life He loved the Lord with all His heart, strength, mind, and soul with the result that in every point His life rose before God as a sweet fragrance.

Finally an accusation is found which can be used when two false witnesses: accused Him of saying: "I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days" (Matt. 26:61); "I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands" (Mk. 14:58). Several things are observed:

- a) The Lord did not say: "I will destroy this temple"; neither did he say anything about "His hands".
- b) The Lord said: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (Jn. 2:19).

When the Lord said: "Destroy this temple and I will raise it again the third day", the disciples did not understand what he meant, but the religious rulers caught the fact that He was speaking of His resurrection.

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The response of the Lord to the accusations of the witnesses was silence for the high priest would not have asked him about answering had he said anything. Caiaphas, aware of the conviction of His silence, as when the Lord stooped and wrote on the ground (Jn. 8:6), now asked the Lord two questions: "Answerest Thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee?" (Mk. 14:60). Again it is stated: "Jesus held His peace", with Mark adding: "and answered nothing" (Matt. 26:63; Mk. 14:61). This must have been infuriating and frustrating with the Lord just standing there silent and in calm composure. He was in control and they were being judged. He was the personification of inward serenity. The task of killing Him was not as easy as they had anticipated.

The Response of Caiaphas To The Silence of The Lord

Caiaphas sees everything slipping from their hands, and then using the scriptures compels the Lord to answer. The law stated: "If a soul sin, and hear the voice of swearing, and is a witness, whether he hath seen or known of it; if he do not utter it, then he shall bear his iniquity" (Lev. 5:1). Putting it in modern language: "If an individual is put under oath, hears the word of adjuration, then he must answer that which he knows or suffer the consequences". Caiaphas said to the Lord: "I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God" (Matt. 26:63). Mark words it differently: "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" (Mk. 14:61).

Only on two occasions is the Lord put under the voice of adjuration, although two different Greek words are used. The high priest answered and said unto him: "I adjure [exorkizo] thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God" (Matt. 26:63). The demons cry: "What have I to do with thee, Jesus, [thou] Son of the most high God? I adjure [horkizo] thee by God, that thou torment me not" (Mk. 5:7). The word "horkizo" indicates to put one under an obligation. Rienecker & Rogers translate it as "to implore", whereas the word "exorkizo" is a much stronger word and brings the thought of an oath into it.

What was meant by these terms?

- a) What did it mean to be the Christ? It meant that this individual was the God appointed anointed king (1 Kgs. 1:34); prophet (1 Kgs. 19:16); Governor (1 Chron. 29:22); and priest (Lev. 16:32). These men were the anointed of God in localized spheres, for a limited time with limited functions. Christ was, is, and ever will be God's Anointed, the Messiah, the Christ universally, perpetually, and with unlimited functionality. This Messiah has all the authority that is needed for administration, all the empathy needed for priestly activity, and all wisdom, knowledge, and understanding needed for supreme prophethood.
- b) The Son of God, the Son of the Blessed. Both terms indicating the unreserved deity of the Lord.

It was on this very point that Mark and John wrote their gospels (Mk. 1:1; Jn. 20:30-31). It was not that these men did not know and see the evidences, but being bias against all the evidences, witnesses, they refused to see the Lord for who He was and therefore the Holy Spirit did not reveal further enlightenment who Jesus was. In contrast to them Peter accepted the evidences, and the Father then revealed further truth to him.

The Answer of The Lord

Jesus said: "I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Mk. 14:62).

The answer of the Lord is from Daniel, and they would have known this scripture and the true interpretation of it. At His birth they took the scriptures of truth and sought to nullify them. They believed the part they wanted and tried to cancel out the balance. That is, they knew where the Lord was to be born but they did not want the part "Shall come a governor who shall rule". In this situation they denied that this Galilean peasant was the One who was to come in the clouds. Their religiosity blinded their minds to the truth. This was the developing of Isa. 53:2 "No beauty that we should desire Him". The passage has nothing to do with the physical appearance of the Lord but that there was nothing on Him that signified the sort of Messiah they expected. The ascension of the Lord was

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“with the clouds of heaven” for His coming again is in the same way. Luke in Acts informs us, His return shall be “in like manner” in the clouds (Acts 1:11; Matt. 26:64), and “with clouds” (Rev. 1:7). The clouds are not fluffy white things but “clouds” of the saints, the holy Ones, namely the angelic beings (Jude 1:14-15).

So very often they had asked for a sign (Matt. 12:38) or a sign from heaven (Matt. 16:1). The Lord informs them that in time they will see the supreme sign from heaven. It will be His coming “in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory” (Matt. 24:30; Mk. 13:26; Lk. 21:27), and accompanied by the hosts of heaven (Rev. 19:11-14).

He will come “In flaming fire taking vengeance” (2 Thess. 1:8), the “brightness of His coming” (2 Thess. 2:8). He “cometh to judge the earth” (Psa. 96:13; 98:9); to eradicate the world of the beast and false prophet (Rev. 19:20); and break the power of their armies (Rev. 19:21).

There has been debate whither the Lord was referring to Daniel 7 because Daniel does not say anything about the Lord sitting on the right hand of the power, that is God, and the coming in Daniel is not His coming to the world in judgment but His coming before God to receive the kingdom (Dan. 7:13-14) and that is the subject of (Rev. Chs. 4-5). However, there are ample scriptures showing that a passage can have several truths. For instance, Joel speaks of the young men etc., and Peter on the days of Pentecost says: “This is that which was spoken by Joel the prophet” (Acts 2:16) but he does not say this is the fulfillment, for that waits for a future day. So the Lord does not say that this is the fulfillment of Daniel, but takes the words and by simply quoting them they understood the deeper meaning.

The Rending of The High Priests Robe

It is sad to see how blinded by sin and rage this man was, that instead of the words of the Lord making him tremble, he suddenly in a state of fury and pseudo spirituality took hold of his robe and ripped it apart. Because of how God had said the robe was to be made: “And there was a hole in the midst of the robe, as the hole of an habergeon, with a band round about the hole, that it should not rend” (Ex. 39:23), it indicates that this was an action of uncontrolled anger.

It indicated the end of the priesthood by man. Two pieces of material were rent in this twenty-four hour period, the high priest’s robe and the veil.

- a) The rending of the robe indicated ceremoniously the end of the earthly priesthood, the rending of the veil the end of the blockage of man into the Holiest.
- b) The rending of the robe was done by a man who was ignorant of its significance. The rending of the veil was done by God fully aware of its significance.
- c) The rending of the robe and the veil, God understood the significance but not man.

If an individual was wanting to speak on this robe in the gospel they could speak of:

- a) The robe of pseudo spirituality (Lk. 20:46)
- b) The robe of mockery (Matt. 27:28; Mk. 15:17; Lk. 23:11; Jn. 19:2)
- c) The robe of restored fellowship (Lk. 15:22)
- d) The robe of the redeemed (Rev. 7:9, 14)
- e) The robe of ended priestly ceremonialism (Matt. 26:65)

There are at least six “rent robes” / “garments” indicating grief for various reasons:

- a) The rent robe (mantle) of Job (Job 1:20)
- b) David rent his robe when hearing of the death of Saul (2 Sam. 1:1, 2, 11)
- c) David rent his robe when he heard Absalom had killed Amnon and David’s sons (2 Sam. 13:28, 30-31)
- d) When Hushai met David who was fleeing from Absalom his coat was rent (2 Sam. 15:32)
- e) Elisha rent his own garments and rent them in two pieces and clothed himself with the garment that fell from Elijah (2 Kgs. 2:11-14). When Elijah told Ahab of the impending judgment from God because of his sin, he rent his clothes (1 Kgs. 21:27)

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- f) Josiah rent his garments when he heard the words of the law and knew how Israel had broken them (2 Kgs. 22:11).

There are at least three rent robes indicating the end of something:

- a) Saul laid hold of Samuel's robe and rent it and it signified the end of Saul's dynasty (1 Sam. 15:27-28)
- b) Ahijah rent the new garment and giving ten pieces to Jeroboam signifying the end of the united kingdom (1 Kgs. 11:29-31)
- c) Caiaphas rent his robe signifying anger of the flesh but also the end of the earthy priesthood (Matt. 26:65)

Only the robe worn by Caiaphas was the one that was made never to be torn (Ex. 39:23), and it signified the end of a spiritual exercise.

The Final Night Decision and Mockery

After having rent his clothes Caiaphas asked: "What think ye?" (Matt. 26:66); "What need we any further witnesses?" (Mk. 14:63); and "Ye have heard His blasphemy; what think ye?" (Mk. 14:64). The answer came swiftly: "He is guilty of death" (Matt. 26:66); and "They all condemned Him to be guilty of death" (Mk. 14:64).

Up to this time it had been mainly verbal abuse, but now it is the outpouring of a frozen hatred enflamed by satanic venom. He was the object of hatred, vicious torturing, and debasement. It is recorded: "They spit in His face, and buffeted Him: and others smote Him with the palms of their hands, saying, Prophecy unto us, Thou Christ. Who is he that smote Thee?" (Matt. 26:67-68). Mark and Luke add: "To cover His face" (Mk. 14:65; Lk. 22:64); that it was the servants that smote Him (Mk. 14:65); and "Blasphemously spake they against Him" (Lk. 22:65).

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Before Caiaphas

The rabid crown around Him pressed
Cared not His soul was sore distressed
The object He of mocking shame
He was the Son of God who came.

False witnesses they did obtain
For to secure, their own way gain
No righteousness in them was found
His death, a way must then be found.

They had the witnesses come in
“Give evidence of just one sin”
They contradict what each one said
To find a way to cause his death.

In dignity He silent stood
Before His God, he had done good
No matter just how much man lied
By God he would be justified.

Enraged and clear for all to see
He must be nailed soon to a tree
So Caiaphas now gave an oath
Condemned was he by words he spoke.

It was clear now that under oath
Speak now the truth give us thy troth
“Art thou the Son of God” said he
“Messiah whom we wait to see?”

The Lord now answered, speaking plain
You’ll see the Son of man again
At God’s right hand, majestic power
In a soon coming fearful hour.

In flaming fury then he tore
The sacred gowns the priest then wore
For blasphemy, He now must die
The judges voiced, “Yea crucify”.

Thus in the Judgment Hall he stood
The Holy one spat on, so rude
They mocked and jeered the sinless One
And failed to see, he was the Son.

With spit upon His lovely face
How insolent of human race
And then to mock with evil sneer
Derisions hurtful to His ear.

Proud men then raised the smiting rod
He dared to smite the Son of God
Oh man think clear, can this be true
He suffered this, for you, for you.

Praise God he died on Calvary
He paid the price for sinful me
For me he suffered in my stead
For me was numbered with the dead

Let man now seek to find a way
To put to death this very day
No fault could ever thus be found
To Pilate now they send Him bound.

*Rowan Jennings
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Wither the Lord was imprisoned from the end of this session until the morning is uncertain. Apart from the scripture: “He was taken from prison and from judgment” (Isa. 53:8), it would seem He would have to be kept inward until the morning session. I am aware that it has been translated: “By oppression and judgment He was taken away” (ASV DBY RSV). However, the Lord had to be kept somewhere in the intervening hours.

Closing this meditation one must feel the depth of the hymnist’s words

*On such love my soul still ponder, love so rich, so full, so free
Say, while lost in holy wonder, Why O Lord such love for me?*

**May God grant us good understanding as He, by his Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.
John 16:13**

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