

## **JESUS BEFORE THE HIGH PRIEST.**

– MAY 12, MARK 14:53-64; – MATT. 26:47-75; LUKE 22:47-65;  
JOHN 18:2-27. –

**Golden Text – "He is despised and rejected of men."  
– Isa. 53:3.**

MARK 14:53. Jesus was first led to Annas (John 18:13), who, although deposed by the Romans, was the rightful high priest according to the law, the office being for life, and he was probably so regarded by the Jews, who, therefore, sought counsel of him first. His son-in-law, Caiaphas (the same who had prophesied that it was expedient that one man should die for the people – John 18:14), was the acting high priest appointed by the Romans. Apparently, Annas agreed with the general sentiments of the rulers, and, after asking Jesus a few questions about his doctrine and his disciples, sent him bound to Caiaphas. – John 18:19-24.

Since it was contrary to the Jewish law to hold a session of the Sanhedrin for the trial of capital offences by night, and this being the night of the paschal supper, making it still more objectionable, it is clear that this was an irregular meeting of this assembly of the nation's representatives, drawn together by common consent to participate in the crime of condemning their Messiah, Jehovah's Anointed. From it, however, were carefully excluded, evidently, a few such men as Joseph of Arimathaea, Nicodemus (John 19:38,39; 7:50,51) and probably a few others known to be favorably inclined toward the new teacher. They probably knew nothing of it.

Verses 55-59. What an astonishing fact is here stated: that the great men of the most favored nation on earth, – the learned men, the wise men, the rulers, the men of years and experience, the religious teachers – should thus deliberately, and of long premeditation, wickedly conspire against the purest and most noble character that had

ever graced the earth. Not only had they frequently deputed emissaries to catch him in his words as he taught in public, but finally they had bribed an apostate disciple to betray him and a band of Roman soldiers to arrest him, although there was no charge against him. And then this august, learned and dignified assembly, having secured their hated prisoner, busied themselves to find some two witnesses whose testimony should agree together, according to the requirement of the law (Deut. 19:15), in order to his condemnation. They found many who willingly bore false witness against him, but none whose witness agreed together.

Verses 60-62. Failing in their effort to satisfy this requirement of the law, the high priest then endeavored to force Jesus to criminate himself, saying, "Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee?" But he (wisely) held his peace and answered nothing, knowing that the truth was not desired and would avail nothing with these men who so warmly cherished murder in their hearts. And, further, he had no disposition to defend himself, knowing that his hour was come for the sacrifice of his life. But when further urged to express himself by the inquiry – "*Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?*" – knowing that his reply would be like the signing of his death warrant, he deliberately answered, "I am," and added this prophecy – "And ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

This prophecy compassed the certainty of his death and resurrection, and pointed to his return in the end of the Gospel age in power and great glory – the power and glory of his Kingdom, which he had previously affirmed was not to be of this world, or dispensation, of which Satan is the prince (John 14:30), but of the world to come, wherein dwelleth righteousness. – Heb. 2:5; 2 Pet. 3:13.

This frank and fearless acknowledgment of his divine origin and appointment as the long predicted Messiah, the Savior of Israel and the world, was taken as blasphemy, and the hypocritical high priest, whose

very robes were symbolic of the blessed one who stood in their midst fulfilling to the letter the predictions of the prophets, rent his clothes in token of astonishment and horror at such blasphemy, saying, "What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned [R1809 : page 111] him to be guilty of death" – the prescribed punishment for blasphemy. – Lev. 24:16; Deut. 18:20.

Thus fell the Jewish hierarchy into the ditch of unbelief and crime, and the masses of the people, who had shifted upon them their personal responsibility in the matter of receiving and rejecting Christ, considering first whether any of the Pharisees or of the rulers believed on him, fell with them, crying, "His blood be on us and on our children." Well hath the Psalmist said, "It is better to trust in the Lord [in the word of his truth] than to put confidence in man; it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes." Let Christians of the present day heed this in this corresponding period of the Gospel age, when again the unfolding of truth in its due time is bringing the professed people of God to a crisis "which shall try every man's work [of faith], of what sort it is." If we lean upon human props, we shall surely fall; but the word of the Lord endureth forever.

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