

(Matt. 26:57) – We know that all of humanity having fallen by Adam into a state of sin, depravity, and spiritual death are naturally opposed to the Lord God, His Christ, and His way of salvation (Rom. 3:10-12; 1 Cor. 2:14). Even if we are God's elect, before we are born again by the Spirit and brought to believe in and love Christ and His truth, we must include ourselves with those who naturally reject and even hate the Lord Jesus Christ and His message of salvation by God's grace. And we, as the elect of God, must realize that it was our sins imputed to Him for which He was nailed to the cross as our Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer. However, it is significant to know that the greatest opposition and hatred towards our Lord and Savior came from the most religious and outwardly pious of men – *“AND THEY THAT HAD LAID HOLD ON JESUS LED HIM AWAY TO CAIAPHAS THE HIGH PRIEST, WHERE THE SCRIBES AND THE ELDERS WERE ASSEMBLED.”*

According to John, before Christ was led to Caiaphas, he was taken to Annas, who was the ex-high priest and the power behind the priesthood (John 18:12-14, 19-23). Here is Caiaphas, the high priest whose very office was created to typify and point to the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal High Priest of God's people. Here are “the scribes and elders,” who were supposed to be experts in the Holy Scriptures, denying and hating the One of Whom the Scriptures testified (John 5:39). Why did they hate Jesus so much? It was because His truth exposed their lies and hypocrisy (Matt. 5:20; 23; John 3:19-20; 5:39-45; 8:44). Christ told them the same thing that John the Baptist told them – *“But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance”* (Matt. 3:7-8).

(Matt. 26:58) – *“PETER FOLLOWED HIM AFAR OFF”* into the palace but, according to John, he stood outside the door, and another disciple (possibly John) went into the palace (John 18:15-16). Some have surmised that maybe Peter was intent on proving Christ wrong about Peter betraying him, but we do not know this. *“TO SEE THE END”* – Obviously both of these disciples, though afraid, were wanting to see firsthand what was going to happen to the Lord after His arrest and during His trial.

(Matt. 26:59) – These ultra-religious men *“SOUGHT FALSE WITNESS AGAINST JESUS, TO PUT HIM TO DEATH.”* It is amazing to see the extremes that self-righteous men will go to in order to reach their goal. And they do this in the name of religion, justifying it by claiming to defend the honor and glory of their god. They believed the end justified the means. But we may ask, “Why would they seek false witnesses?” It was because even they recognized at that time that they had no legitimate charges against Jesus of

Nazareth. He always was (and always will be) the perfect Godman without blemish and without spot (1 Pet. 1:18-19; Heb. 7:26). He did no sin, and He knew no sin (2 Cor. 5:21).

(Matt. 26:60-61) – At first they found no witnesses, but *“AT THE LAST CAME TWO FALSE WITNESSES.”* These men misquoted Christ as recorded in John 2:19. They accused Him of saying, *“I AM ABLE TO DESTROY THE TEMPLE OF GOD, AND TO BUILD IT IN THREE DAYS.”* What He actually said was, *“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”* In that statement, the Lord was answering a question from unbelieving Jews after He had driven the money-changers from the temple – *“What sign shewest Thou unto us, seeing that Thou doest these things?”* (John 2:18). But He was not speaking of the physical temple. He was speaking of *“the temple of His body”* in reference to His resurrection three days after His death (John 2:20-22). The Lord came to this earth to put away the sins of His people, pay our sin-debt in full, and establish a perfect righteousness for us by which we are justified before Holy God. This successful work that He accomplished insured His resurrection and the resurrection of all for whom He lived and died (1 Cor. 15:20-23).

(Matt. 26:62-64) – Caiaphas pressed the Lord to answer to defend Himself, but Christ *“HELD HIS PEACE”* (cf. Isa. 53:7). He could have rightfully defended Himself as in the sight of men He was totally innocent of all charges. But in the sight of His Father, He was guilty because of the sins of His people imputed to Him. So, as He was set to go and die for the sins of His people, He would not speak in defense of Himself. Caiaphas then said, *“I ADJURE THEE BY THE LIVING GOD, THAT THOU TELL US WHETHER THOU BE THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD.”* The Lord then spoke to identify Himself plainly – *“THOU HAST SAID: NEVERTHELESS I SAY UNTO YOU, HEREAFTER SHALL YE SEE THE SON OF MAN SITTING ON THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, AND COMING IN THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN.”* It was foretold in prophecy that the Messiah would die, rise from the dead, and return in glory to judge the world and receive His people unto Himself. This is the promise of the Gospel.

(Matt. 26:65-68) – To the unbelieving high priest, Caiaphas, this was *“BLASPHEMY.”* And if Jesus had not been telling the truth, it would have been a damnable heresy for Him to make such a claim. But He was (and is) the Messiah of God, God manifest in the flesh, the one and only Savior of God’s people, the one Mediator between God and men, and the King of kings. Not believing Him, they judged Him to be *“GUILTY OF DEATH.”* They began to deride Him, hurt Him physically, and mock Him. This was all according to prophecy (ex., Isa. 50:6; Micah 5:1). This was all expressing their hatred of Jesus and His message. All of this shows us that if we have faith in and love for Christ and His truth, we are truly blessed by God’s grace and power in Christ. We have nothing in ourselves in which to boast over these who hated the Lord and His Gospel. Thank God for His grace!