

The High Priest

John 18:12-24

Blessings of Grace and Peace from the Lord Jesus Christ, he is our risen Savior and it's Him we magnify and glorify with our lives. We are glad to be with you again this week, thank you for joining us. We are *Heralds of Hope* and every week our Bible teaching is broadcast around the world via radio. This is one way we are achieving our vision of using media to make disciples of Jesus Christ and we believe Christians working together can accomplish the great commission in our lifetime.

Another way *Heralds of Hope* is accomplishing our vision is of making disciples is through Bible and literature distribution. Working with partners throughout the world we distribute the Bibles in areas where the Bible is not easily accessible.

Our lesson today is from John 18 and the title is "The High Priest." This is the story of Jesus before Annas, then Annas sends Jesus to Caiaphas. We have the High Priest of the new covenant standing before the High Priest of the Old Covenant. The Priests and many of the OT Jews did not recognize Jesus as the Messiah. They were waiting and looking for the Messiah yet when he was right in front of them, they missed him. How did this happen? How could they have been so blind?

There are two verses in Thessalonians which help us understand this kind of blindness. The verses are II Thessalonians 2:10-11, and I would summarize them by saying, they perished because they refused to love the truth and be saved. To guard against this kind of blindness and to protect ourselves from deception we must love the truth. The priests who missed Jesus loved power and influence more than they loved the truth. When the truth was right in front of them, they missed it. This is very sad, but we must recognize that we have similar tendencies. We won't be deceived if we continue to love the truth and walk with Him.

Again, we are so glad you joined us, and we pray you will be encouraged in your walk with the truth today!

In examining the circumstances of Jesus' death, I take the records in the Bible as reliable. I believe those records are a true report of what happened. He was arrested by the security guard and first brought before the religious court headed by the high priest.

Some of Jesus' teachings clashed with the interpretation of the religious leadership. He had encountered them on different occasions. It is not surprising, then, that after His arrest He would be brought first before the religious court. The recorder was careful to give the essential details in each of the events which led up to Jesus' death. The death of Jesus is the most important event of history.

In John 18 the role of THE HIGH PRIEST in the trial of Jesus comes plainly into view.

12 *Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him,*

13 *And led him sway to Annas first; for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year.*

14 *Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.*

15 *The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine.*

16 *Jesus answered him, I spoke openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing.*

17 *Why do you ask me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said.*

18 *And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Do you answer the high priest so?*

19 *Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why do you strike me?*

20 *Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.*

From this record we underscore the several **PROCEDURES** that were undertaken in this religious court headed by the high priest.

We will first scan the historical background as **The Court Is Examined.**

Going back into the history of the high priesthood I find that the first high priest in the days of Moses was his brother, Aaron. God had established this priestly line by selecting the tribe of Levi to be the priestly tribe. Both Moses and Aaron were of that priestly tribe, Levi. God had said to Moses that the sons of Aaron should follow him in the office of high priest.

Some years before the Christian era, however, the appointment of the high priest was made by the Roman government, instead of being selected and anointed by the religious leaders in Israel. This man, Annas, was appointed in his thirty-seventh year to be high priest by the Roman government.

Caiaphas, his son-in-law, however, was the functional high priest. From other records we learn that his name was Joseph Caiaphas. He was the one who had spoken like this: "It is expedient that one man dies for the people and that the whole nation perish not". He had said this after Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead. He said it because he feared the revenge of Rome, as he saw how everybody was

following after Jesus. He was really afraid that Rome would come and destroy the nation. But he said more than he knew when he said, "It is expedient that one man dies for the people". The court then was a religious court with the high priest in charge.

They gathered to investigate the problem of Jesus. So, **The Problem Is Explained.**

First of all, the problem needed to be stated. The high priest asked Jesus of His disciples and of His doctrine. Reading through the Gospel of John, we have learned that Jesus had many disciples. They came to Him from many different areas. People enjoyed His teaching. We are told on one occasion that even the officers of the temple had said, "No one ever spoke like this man". Others had said about Him that He taught with authority. So, this high priest's court wanted to know about Jesus' disciples.

They also wanted to know about His doctrine. You recall some of Jesus' teachings were opposite to the interpretation of the religious leaders of His day. Jesus simply reminded them that He had never taught in secret; His teaching had always been in the open. He had taught in the synagogues and the temple where the Jews always gathered. If they wanted to know what He had taught, the most practical thing to do would be to call in those who had heard Him. He assured them, "They know what I said".

Here is a very important consideration: the result of the teaching. I have observed even today that what happens to people who accept the teaching of Jesus is something to observe, to watch, to analyze. Jesus faced the problem very well, "Ask those who heard me, they can tell you what I taught". So the problem is explained.

The third procedure in this trial shows up the weakness of man: **The Criticism Is Exposed.**

That officer standing by drew a conclusion which was not valid. Instead of listening, he quickly struck Jesus because he interpreted what Jesus said to be an insult to the high priest. But he violated the very law he wanted to defend, for Moses' law declared a man innocent until convicted. The trial was not over. He took justice in his own hands, and it didn't turn out so well.

Jesus exposed him very quickly saying, "If I have spoken evil, then bear witness of the evil." In other words, tell me where I was wrong. If I answered incorrectly, I will accept the justice, but if I have answered well, you have struck me illegally. Justice was the purpose of the trial and Jesus exposed this officer's violation. It is important that we catch that truth.

The religious court had their hearing. I would say, it was proper that they did. One fault comes to the surface though: the sentence was implied before the trial was completed. We now know that Jesus

was destined to die. Yet, it must be clear, justice was not carried out with respect to Him in this trial. Why? Because, to bring about peace with God for us, for you and me, the death of Jesus was the only way.

Men still bring Jesus to their court of judgment to be examined; they still have a problem explaining Jesus; and He can expose unjust criticism today as He did then, by His Word. Remember, He came to die and accept His gift of eternal life.

Gracious God our Heavenly Father, how grateful we are for the opportunity you gave us today to look into your word together. We know that Jesus was unjustly tried and condemned; He was totally innocent of any wrongdoing. And yet, He came to earth with a mission to fulfil and that mission was to die for the sins of humanity. And just like back then, many today still reject Him. Oh Father, have mercy upon them!

I pray for each person listening to this teaching today, that you will help them to understand that, just like the High Priest in our text, they will need to give an answer to you for what they do with Jesus. Help them, in that day, to be able to answer you with joy; "I am your child by faith in Jesus." I pray in His name, Amen.

Thank you, J Mark for this teaching from God's word and thank you for joining us. It is a privilege for us to study God's word and learn from it. Now take what you heard and put it into practice. The teaching and instruction in the Bible are for us and they are meant to be lived.

Don't be like the man in James 1 who see himself in a mirror then goes away and forgets what he looks like, instead be like the man in v 25 who looks intently into the word and is a doer of the work. God says, "that man will be Blessed in what he does."

And we want to bless you as you follow Jesus and share Him with those around you. If you have any questions or if you would like today's teaching just contact us and ask for it by title or tell us the passage. We also have a study guide available designed to help you learn more from each lesson, it is called the Hope Herald. Please let us know if you are interested, and we would be happy to give you one.

Here are several ways you can reach us. The quickest and easiest way is through email. Our email is mail@heraldsofhope.org. If you don't have email, you could send us a letter, send it to Hope for Today, Box 3, Breezewood, Pennsylvania 15533. Another way you can contact us is through our website. Our website is heraldsofhope.org. Please look on our website for this teaching and other similar teaching. There you will also find other resources available from Heralds of Hope. Again, the website is heraldsofhope.org

We thank you again for joining us for today's program. I encourage you to join us again next week as Pastor J. Mark continues teaching from the Gospel of John. We look forward to being with you then and will leave you with this blessing from Number 6. The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.