

## 69. Jesus Was Tried Before Annas

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to understand that Jesus willingly chose to bear the wrath of God against sin in order to pay the penalty for each of us. Jesus explained this to Peter after He had just been betrayed by Judas. In our topic today, we are going to see that Jesus was first tried by Annas who had been the high priest but had been removed by the Roman governor. However, Annas was still recognized by the Jews even though five of his sons plus his son-in-law, Caiaphas, officially held the position of high priest at various times.

Once Judas betrayed Jesus, He was taken by the Jewish religious leaders to Annas. John 18:12-14 says, “Then the detachment of *troops* and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him. And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was high priest that year. Now it was Caiaphas who advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.” Here, we see that the troops, along with the captain and the officers of the high priest, arrested Him and bound Him so that from this point they treated Jesus like He was a common criminal.

The first person to whom these men took Jesus was to Annas. He had been the Jewish high priest for ten years but had been removed as the high priest by Valerius Gratus, who had been the Roman governor before Pilate became the governor. Although the Romans did not recognize Annas as the high priest any longer, He still had a great influence among the Jews. Luke 3:2 says, “While Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.” Then, Acts 4:6 says, “As well as Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the family of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.” Even though Annas had been officially removed as high priest by the Roman governor 15 years earlier, Luke shows us that the Jews still considered him as one of two in that office along with his son-in-law, Caiaphas.

John made it clear that Caiaphas was the one that was recognized by the Romans as the high priest. John 11:49-53 shows that Caiaphas was the one who spoke officially as the high priest even though his father-in-law was also recognized as high priest. Those verses say, “And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, ‘You know nothing at all, nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.’ Now this he did not say on his own *authority*; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad. Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death.” Caiaphas had a great hatred for Jesus. However, as high priest, he gave a prophecy that came from God, even though he did not realize it.

Meanwhile, we see that other things were happening during the time of the trial before Annas. John 18:15-18 says, “And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so *did* another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest. But Peter stood at the door outside. Then the other disciple, who was known to the high priest,

went out and spoke to her who kept the door, and brought Peter in. Then the servant girl who kept the door said to Peter, ‘You are not also *one* of this Man’s disciples, are you?’ He said, ‘I am not.’ Now the servants and officers who had made a fire of coals stood there, for it was cold, and they warmed themselves. And Peter stood with them and warmed himself.” We see that Peter and another disciple had also followed the group to the house of Annas.

The other disciple is not named. John never mentioned his own name in the book of John so this and other things in the book of John would indicate that this was John. John 19:26-27 says, “When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, ‘Woman, behold your son!’ Then He said to the disciple, ‘Behold your mother!’ And from that hour that disciple took her to his own *home*.” The “disciple whom Jesus loved” is also mentioned in John 13:23. The fact that this disciple from that hour also took Mary to his own home would indicate that John had a home in Jerusalem as well as a home in Galilee. We see here, that this disciple went into the courtyard of the high priest with Jesus.

Meanwhile, Peter had stayed by the door leading from the outside. The disciple that knew the high priest then went to the door to bring Peter into the courtyard where these events were taking place. The servant girl who was at the door knew that the disciple Jesus loved was a disciple of Jesus. As a result, she asked Peter the question, “You are not also *one* of this Man’s disciples, are you?” Peter immediately answered, “I am not.” Jesus had told Peter earlier in the evening that he would deny Him three times. Peter had been very bold when these men came to arrest Jesus. Mark 14:50 says, “Then they all forsook Him and fled.” Then, Luke 22:54 says, “Having arrested Him, they led *Him* and brought Him into the high priest’s house. But Peter followed at a distance.” Here, we see that Peter first fled and then followed at a distance. As long as he was standing beside Jesus, he was ready to take on the whole army. However, once Peter started to depend on his own strength, he immediately began to act out of fear. This also happens in our lives.

We see the next thing that happened in the life of Peter because of the fact that he was depending on his own strength. The servants and officers had built a fire in the courtyard because it was cold that night. Peter also became cold so he stood with the men around the fire and warmed himself. Peter did not realize it but that was actually a dangerous place for him to stand because he was now standing with some of the men who had arrested Jesus just a short time before. 1 Corinthians 10:12 says, “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.” Peter had earlier said to Jesus in Luke 22:33, “But he said to Him, ‘Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death.’” Many times, we are like Peter and have good intentions but fail because of the fact that we depend on our own strength instead of being led by the Holy Spirit.

Meanwhile, while Peter warmed himself by the fire, Jesus was being questioned by the High Priest. John 18:19-23 says, “The high priest then asked Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine. Jesus answered him, ‘I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet, and in secret I have said nothing. Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have heard Me what I said to them. Indeed they know what I said.’ And when He had said these things, one of the officers who stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, ‘Do You answer the high priest like that?’ Jesus answered him, ‘If I have spoken evil, bear witness of

the evil; but if well, why do you strike Me?” We see that Annas asked Jesus about two things. First, he asked Jesus about His disciples. Second, he asked Jesus about His doctrine.

The Jewish religious leaders were the most concerned about the teaching of Jesus because they wanted an excuse to accuse Jesus before Pilate, the Roman governor. The Jewish law said that in a formal Jewish hearing it was against the law to question the person on trial to condemn himself. Deuteronomy 17:6 says, “Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness.” Then, Deuteronomy 19:15 adds, “One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established.” Later, the religious leaders told Pilate in John 19:7, “The Jews answered him, ‘We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.’”

Jesus knew their plans and that was why Jesus told Annas that he needed other witnesses. Jesus said that all of His teaching of the multitudes was done in public. Matthew 4:23 says, “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.” Then, John 8:20 says, “These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come.” Many people had heard Jesus speak either in one of the synagogues or in the temple. Jesus said that Annas should ask those who had heard Him what He taught. Jesus made it clear that He did not do His teaching in secret. Jesus said that they should be questioning witnesses who had heard Him speak. Later, the entire Sanhedrin did call false witnesses in their efforts to condemn Jesus. Matthew 26:59-60a say, “Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none.”

A Jewish officer immediately struck Jesus with the palm of his hand and said, “Do You answer the high priest like that?” This officer knew that Jesus was rebuking the high priest because Annas was breaking the commandments given in Deuteronomy. This officer also broke the law by striking Jesus with his hand. Jesus then answered the officer, “If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you strike Me?” These two men made it very clear by their actions that they did not intend to give Jesus a fair trial. It was also illegal for them to have a trial at night. However, they were determined to condemn Jesus to death and did not care how many laws they broke in order to condemn Jesus. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that the religious leaders were willing to do whatever was necessary in order to condemn Jesus even if it meant that they had to break the law. Here, we see a real example of the rebellion of mankind against God. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children to understand the sinful rebellion of mankind.