

The Price of Our Redemption I

Youth Instructor

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"And the chief priests and all the council sought for witness against Jesus to put him to death, and found none. For many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together. And there arose certain, and bare false witness against him, saying, We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands. But neither so did their witness agree together. And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God."

This appeal was made by the first magistrate of the nation--a man occupying the highest position in earthly courts. But Caiaphas was not accepted by God as the high priest. His fitness for this position ended with the garments that he wore. He was incapable and unworthy. His religion was a cloak that hid the deformities of a hard, cruel heart.

Christ knew that Caiaphas was unworthy to occupy the position he did. But knowing this, he responded to the high priest's appeal. He knew that he himself was appointed to his office by God, and there and then he might have glorified himself. He might have exercised a power that would have made his judges quail. But a body of flesh had been prepared for him. Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself. The true High Priest stood before the false high priest to be criticized and condemned.

To the charge of the high priest, Jesus said, "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." With dignity and assurance were these words spoken; for they fell from the lips of One whose spirit went with them. The only begotten Son of God was the speaker, and into the hearts of his hearers flashed the conviction, "Never man spake like this man."

Weighted with such great results, this was to Christ one of the most wonderful moments of his life. He realized that now all disguise must be swept away. The declaration that he was one with God had been made. He had openly proclaimed himself the Son of God, the One for whom the Jews had so long looked.

"Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." At that day Christ will be the Judge. Every secret thing will be set in the light of God's countenance. What a contrast there will then be between those who have refused Christ and those who have received him as a personal Saviour. Sinners

will then see their sins without a shadow to veil or soften their hideousness. So woeful will be the sight, that they will desire to be hidden under the mountains or in the depths of the ocean, if only they may escape the wrath of the Lamb. But those whose life is hid with Christ in God can say: "I believe in him who was condemned at Pilate's bar, and given up to the priests and rulers to be crucified. Look not upon me, a sinner, but look upon my Advocate. There is nothing in me worthy of the love he manifested for me: but he gave his life for me. Behold me in Jesus. He became sin for me, that I might be made the righteousness of God in him."

The idea that there was to be a resurrection of the dead, when all would stand at the bar of God, to be rewarded according to their works, was not a pleasant thought to Caiaphas. He did not wish to think that in the future he would receive sentence according to his works. If there was to be no resurrection, he would flatter himself with the thought that he could securely keep his counsel. But if there was, what a revelation would be made of his dark deeds! There rose before his mind, as on a panorama, the scenes of the final Judgment. For a moment he saw the fearful spectacle of the graves giving up their dead, with secrets he had hoped were hidden forever. For a moment he felt as if he were standing before the eternal Judge, whose all-seeing eye was reading his soul, bringing to light mysteries supposed to be hidden with the dead.

But the scene passed from his vision. Christ's words cut him, a Sadducee, to the quick. He was maddened by satanic fury. Was this man, a prisoner before him, to be allowed to assail his most cherished theories? Rending his robe, that the people might see his horror, he demanded that without further preliminaries the prisoner be condemned for blasphemy. "He hath spoken blasphemy," he said: "what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye?" "And they all condemned him."

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