

Caiaphas: The Punishment Must Be Exact

Selected from the collection
"SEVEN STEPS to the CROSS"

By Roy Wiegand

Cast: 1 m

Length: 1 ½ pages of dialogue (807 words)

Performance time: About 5 minutes

The Story

Caiaphas, the regal high priest of the temple, is ready to have this madman named Jesus arrested. He has just made a deal with a grimy little man claiming to be a disciple who, for 30 pieces of silver, will identify Jesus with a kiss. Caiaphas plans for the arrest to take place before dawn in adherence with the law which forbids the taking of prisoners during the daylight hours of Passover. Caiaphas says, "He must be found, he must be arrested, he must be sentenced, and he must be put to death."

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CAIAPHAS: THE PUNISHMENT MUST BE EXACT

(AT RISE: CAIAPHAS stands center stage. He is a bearded man approaching middle age, wearing a white undergarment which is covered with a bright robe. He stands very erect and gives the appearance of nobility.)

He must be found, he must be arrested, he must be sentenced, and he must be put to death.

If I, Caiaphas, high priest of the temple, am to continue to receive the respect that befits this station, and if the ways that have been passed down from generation to generation from our forefathers of centuries passed are to continue, all this must happen now, while He is here in Jerusalem during Passover.

Passover. What is it about Passover that brings these madmen to the forefront? I have seen more than one of them push themselves before the people, calling themselves prophets, seers, and yes, even the Messiah himself. But they have always stepped too far, their trickery eventually exposing themselves. This one, however, has grown too strong, too fast, and He has not yet slipped.

His name is on the lips of people in the remotest of villages. Jesus the rabbi, Jesus the Master ... Jesus the Messiah.

Messiah is he? *(Disdainfully.)* He and his ragged band of vagabonds drag themselves from village to village practically begging for food and lodging and He proclaims Himself to be King of the Jews. Their Savior of whom ... prostitutes and tax collectors? They who sin the most seem to be the first to curry His favor.

If they had learned the scriptures, they would know that the Messiah would be descended from the line of David and come from David's city, Bethlehem. This man is from Galilee. Galilee. Nothing of any value has ever come from Galilee.

His treachery has deceived even those of this court who have heard Him preach and have then come to me saying, "What peril does this man represent by his doing good deeds and healing the sick?" Fools! Do they not realize that if this Jesus develops a following the people will revolt. This is just what the Romans would like to see. A rebellion of disquieted Jews would give them the excuse that they have long awaited. A reason to squash us with their military might and create a more docile extension of their empire. Is it not better for one man to die than to have an entire nation destroyed?

He is a traitor whose entire existence is a dedication to the disruption of the affairs of the temple. Only this week He entered the temple courtyard and turned over the tables of the money lenders and released the sacrificial animals, proclaiming the temple as the house of His Father. Maniac! The money that is taken in by those vendors is needed to keep the temple going.

Yes, His time has come. He has blasphemed by calling Himself the Son of God. In the past, He has escaped stoning with the use of His clever tongue which speaks riddles so muddled that His accusers, after having spoke with Him, find themselves to be the accused. He should have been taken earlier this week when I sent the temple guards to where He preached, but they returned without Him saying, "Never has a man spoken in this manner." This Jesus has made a mockery of the temple too long, but now His good fortune may have played out. A man was escorted to my courtyard this evening. He was a grimy little man with close-set eyes and quivering voice, and he would not look upon me as he spoke. He claimed to be one of the followers of this Jesus, and, for a price, he would lead us to Him.

End of Freeview

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