John 18:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

> And led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year.

Analysis

"And led him away to Annas first" (καὶ ἤγαγον πρὸς Ἄνναν πρῶτον/kai ēgagon pros Hannan prōton)—the initial destination was Annas, not the current high priest Caiaphas. The adverb πρῶτον (prōton, "first") indicates a strategic preliminary hearing before the official trial. Ἄννας (Hannas) was the power behind the high priestly throne, having held the office himself (AD 6-15) and placing five sons and his son-in-law Caiaphas in the position. Though Rome had deposed him, Jews still recognized Annas as the legitimate high priest, since the office was supposed to be lifetime (Numbers 35:25).

"For he was father in law to Caiaphas" (ἦν γὰρ πενθερὸς τοῦ Καϊάφα/ēn gar pentheros tou Kaiapha)—John explains the family connection that made Annas the patriarch of a high priestly dynasty. Jesus's attack on the temple money changers (John 2:14-16) threatened Annas's economic empire—personal vengeance motivated this preliminary interrogation.

"Which was the high priest that same year" (ὃς ἦν ἀρχιερεὺς τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ ἐκείνου/hos ēn archiereus tou eniautou ekeinou)—John's phrase "that year" emphasizes the providential timing. The ἀρχιερεύς (archiereus, "high priest") should have served for life, but Roman manipulation made it a political appointment. Caiaphas served AD 18-36, unusually long tenure suggesting effective collaboration with Rome. "That year" ironically highlights that the very year of Christ's sacrifice, God had positioned the exact high priest who would engineer it.

Historical Context

The high priesthood had become thoroughly corrupted by Roman occupation and Herodian politics. Annas and his family controlled temple operations and amassed wealth through the temple tax, sacrificial animal sales, and money-changing fees. When Jesus cleansed the temple (John 2:13-17), He directly assaulted their economic interests, making them implacable enemies. Taking Jesus to Annas first was procedurally irregular but politically astute. Annas would conduct a preliminary hearing, gather information, and coordinate strategy before the official Sanhedrin trial under Caiaphas. The overnight interrogation violated Jewish legal procedure, which forbade capital trials at night.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does the corruption of the high priesthood illustrate the danger of mixing religious authority with political power and wealth?
2. What does bringing Jesus to Annas reveal about the personal and economic motivations behind His crucifixion?
3. How did God's sovereignty work through the corrupt appointment of Caiaphas 'that same year' to accomplish redemption?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ἀπήγαγον	αὐτὸν	πρὸς	Ἄνναν	πρῶτον·	ἦν	γὰρ
And	**away**	**him**	**to**	**Annas**	**first**	**he was**	**for**
G2532	G520	G846	G4314	G452	G4412	G2258	G1063

πενθερὸς	τοῦ	Καϊάφα	ὃς	ἦν	ἀρχιερεὺς	τοῦ
father in law	G3588	**to Caiaphas**	**which**	**he was**	**the high priest**	G3588
G3995		G2533	G3739	G2258	G749	

ἐνιαυτοῦ	ἐκείνου·
year	**that same**
G1763	G1565

Additional Cross-References

John 18:24 (Parallel theme): Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.

Luke 3:2 (Word): Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

Acts 4:6 (Parallel theme): And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.

Matthew 26:57 (Parallel theme): And they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.

Matthew 26:3 (Parallel theme): Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas,

John 11:51 (Parallel theme): And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation;