

# Mark 14:63

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses?

## Analysis

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**Then the high priest rent his clothes** (ό δὲ ἀρχιερεὺς διαρρήξας τοὺς χιτῶνας αὐτοῦ, ho de archiereus diarrēxas tous chitōnas autou)—The verb διαρρήγνυμι (diarrēgnymi) means to tear completely. Leviticus 21:10 actually forbade the high priest from tearing his garments, making this act doubly significant: Caiaphas violated priestly law while claiming to defend it. The tearing symbolized horror at blasphemy, but ironically occurred as the true High Priest stood before him.

**What need we any further witnesses?** (τί ἔτι χρείαν ἔχομεν μαρτύρων; ti eti chreian echomen martyrōn?)—Having failed to secure legal testimony, Caiaphas seizes Jesus's confession as self-incrimination. Jesus had declared Himself the Son of Man who would come on clouds of glory (v. 62), claiming the divine 'I am' (ἐγώ εἰμι, egō eimi) of Exodus 3:14. The high priest recognized this as the ultimate claim to deity.

## Historical Context

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The high priest wore multiple layers: inner tunic, outer robe, ephod, and breastplate. Tearing referred to the inner garments. Tradition held that witnessing blasphemy required visible mourning through garment-rending. However, Leviticus 21:10 explicitly forbade this for the high priest: 'he shall not...rend his clothes.' Caiaphas thus committed sacrilege while accusing Jesus of it. After AD 70, the Talmud records that temple doors spontaneously opened, fulfilling Jesus's prophecy of the temple's destruction.

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

## Study Questions

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1. What is the irony of the high priest tearing his garments while the true High Priest (Hebrews 4:14) stands intact?
2. How did Caiaphas violate the very law he claimed to defend in his dramatic response?
3. Why was Jesus's self-identification as the Son of Man more threatening than His earlier miracle-working?

## Interlinear Text

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ο δὲ ἀρχιερεὺς διαρρήξας τοὺς χιτῶνας αὐτοῦ  
G3588 Then the high priest rent clothes G846  
G1161 G749 G1284 G5509

λέγει Τί ἔτι χρείαν ἔχομεν μαρτύρων  
and saith What any further need we witnesses  
G3004 G5101 G2089 G5532 G2192 G3144

## Additional Cross-References

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**Matthew 26:65** (Witness): Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.

**Numbers 14:6** (Parallel theme): And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes: