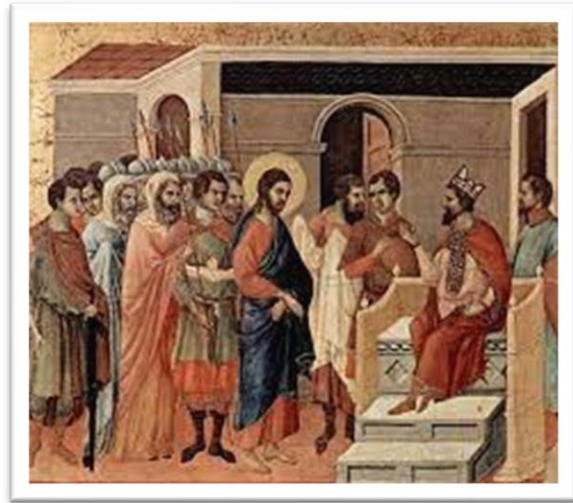


## The Tribunal of Caiphas

To enter Caiphas's tribunal persons had to pass through a large court, which may be called the exterior court; from thence they entered into an inner court, which extended all round the building. The building itself was of far greater length than breadth, and in the front there was a kind of open vestibule surrounded on three sides by columns of no great height. On the fourth side the columns were higher, and behind them was a room almost as large as the vestibule itself, where the seat of the members of the Council were placed on a species of round platform raised above the level of the floor. That assigned to the High Priest was elevated above the others; the criminal to be tried stood in the centre of the halfcircle formed by the seats. The witnesses and accusers stood either by the side or behind the prisoner. There were three doors at the back of the judges' seats which led into another apartment, filled likewise with seats. This room was used for secret consultation. Entrances placed on the right and left hand sides of this room opened into the interior court, which was round, like the back of the building. Those who left the room by the door on the righthand side saw on the left-hand side of the court the gate which led to a subterranean prison excavated under the room. There were many underground prisons there, and it was in one of these that Peter and John were confined a whole night, when they had cured the lame man in the Temple after Pentecost. Both the house and the courts were filled with torches and lamps, which made them as light as day. There was a large fire lighted in the middle of the porch, on each side of which were hollow pipes to serve as chimneys for the smoke, and round this fire were standing soldiers, menial servants, and witnesses of the lowest class who had received bribes for giving their false testimony. A few women were there likewise, whose employment was to pour out a species of red beverage for the soldiers, and to bake cakes, for which services they received a small compensation. The majority of the judges were already seated around Caiphas, the others came in shortly afterwards, and the porch was almost filled, between true and false witnesses, while many other persons likewise endeavoured to come in to gratify their curiosity, but were prevented. Peter and John



entered the outer court, in the dress of travellers, a short time before Jesus was led through, and John succeeded in penetrating into the inner court, by means of a servant with whom he was acquainted. The door was instantly closed after him, therefore Peter, who was a little behind, was shut out. He begged the maid-servant to open the door for him, but she refused both his entreaties and those of John, and he must have remained on the outside had not Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, who came up at this moment, taken him with them. The two Apostles then returned the cloaks which they had borrowed, and stationed themselves in a place from whence they could see the judges, and hear everything that was going on. Caiphas was seated in the centre of the raised platform, and seventy of the members of the Sanhedrin were placed around him, while the public officers, the scribes, and the ancients were standing on either side, and the false witnesses behind them. Soldiers were posted from the base of the platform to the door of the vestibule through which Jesus was to enter. The countenance of Caiphas was solemn in the extreme, but the gravity was accompanied by unmistakable signs of suppressed rage and sinister intentions. He wore a long mantle of a dull red colour, embroidered in flowers and trimmed with golden fringe; it was fastened at the shoulders and on the chest, besides being ornamented in the front with gold clasps. His head-attire was high, and adorned with hanging ribbons, the sides were open, and it rather resembled a bishop's mitre. Caiphas had been waiting with his adherents belonging to the Great Council for some time, and so impatient was he that he arose several times, went into the outer court in his magnificent dress, and asked angrily whether Jesus of Nazareth was come. When he saw the procession drawing near he returned to his seat.