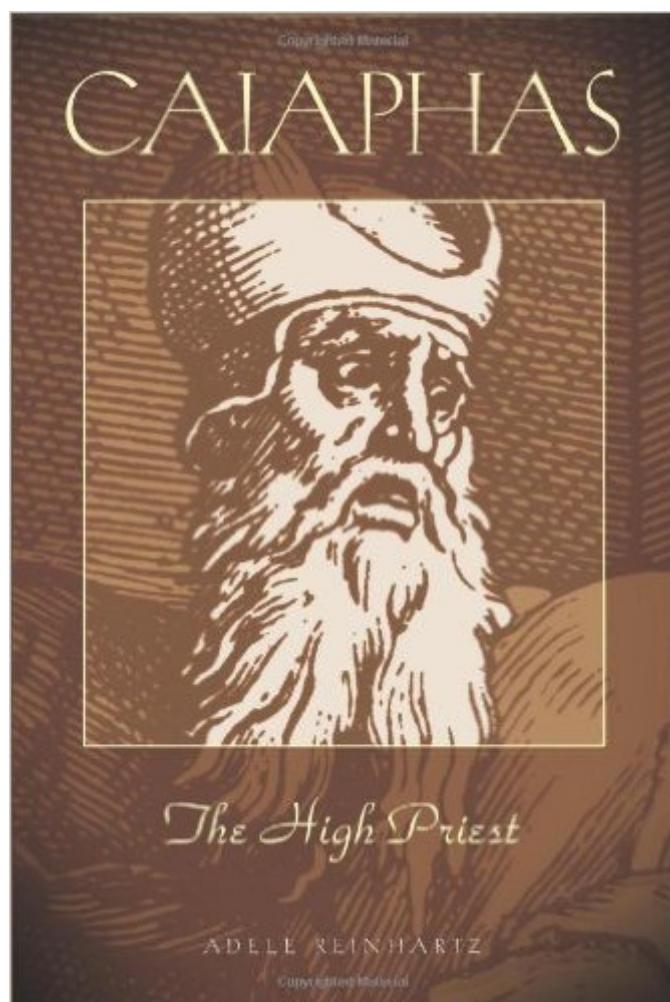


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Caiaphas The High Priest (Studies On Personalities Of The New Testament)



Synopsis

Adele Reinhartz offers a thorough reconsideration of Caiaphas in the Gospels and other ancient texts as well as in subsequent visual arts, literature, film, and drama. The portrait that emerges challenges long-held beliefs about this New Testament figure by examining the background of the high priesthood and exploring the relationships among the high priest, the Roman leadership, and the Jewish population. Reinhartz does not seek to exonerate Caiaphas from culpability in the crucifixion, but she does expand our understanding of Caiaphas's complex religious and political roles in biblical literature and his culturally loaded depiction in ongoing Jewish-Christian dialogue.

Book Information

Series: Studies on Personalities of the New Testament

Paperback: 264 pages

Publisher: Fortress Press (January 1, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0800699408

ISBN-13: 978-0800699406

Product Dimensions: 5.9 x 0.7 x 8.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (1 customer review)

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Customer Reviews

I really didn't know quite what to expect of this book, but I'm such a first-century history geek that I couldn't resist taking it on. Would it be a dry history lesson? A bit of speculative guesswork, given that the historical record is so sparse? As much as a book about an ancient priest can be considered a page-turner, this one was for me. It was just an enjoyable read from cover to cover. Caiaphas is, of course, the Jerusalem high priest in the time of Jesus. The unscrupulous, conniving villain who orchestrated Jesus' death. Or did he? The Gospels--all four of them--portray Caiaphas as not much more than a neutral minor player. But in the early centuries of Christianity, our church fathers quickly glommed onto Caiaphas as an antihero. An anonymous collection of "chief

priests and scribes" as the God-killer wouldn't do; a proper villain was needed. Caiaphas filled the role splendidly, especially as anti-Semitism developed within the Church. The Gospel account of Caiaphas "prophesying" in John 11:52 proved particularly troubling for the early church. How could such an ungodly character be a prophet? Origin spends a great deal of time on this conundrum, finally concluding that somehow, the despicable fellow managed to rather accidentally utter a prophecy. Reinhartz then takes us on an enlightening romp through artwork, literature, theater, and Hollywood, exposing the dastardly role Caiaphas plays. Finally, the journey culminates in a more serious look at the Caiaphas of history, and the priestly role in general. Reinhartz's visible fascination with this ancient character has made for a highly readable account.

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