

The Gospel of John

Chapter 11:45-57

August 3, 1997

- **The Gospel of John Outline:**

- - Chapter 1 Our Lord is the Word, the Light and the Life
 - Chapter 2 The Lord of the Wedding Feast; Zeal for the purity of the temple
 - Chapter 3 Spiritual Birth, Belief and Salvation vs. Unbelief and Condemnation
 - Chapter 4 The Ministry in Samaria, The Harvest, The Faith of the Nobleman
 - Chapter 5 Paralytic man healed on the Sabbath, Unity of The Father and Son
 - Chapter 6 The Bread of Life
 - Chapter 7 The public debates about Jesus during the Feast of Tabernacles
 - Chapter 8 Public debates: Woman caught in adultery; The Son makes you free; Abraham's true children
 - Chapter 9 Jesus heals a man born blind.
 - Chapter 10 Jesus is the Door and the True Shepherd
 - Chapter 11 Our Lord is the Resurrection and the Life

- **Review and Introduction**

Earlier in this chapter, our Lord raised Lazarus who had been dead for four days. Prior to the miracle, Jesus told the disciples that Lazarus had died so that He could raise him from the dead and demonstrate the glory of God. In this remaining section of the chapter and much of the subsequent chapter, we will see that both responses to the miracle will ultimately bring glory to God.

- **Exposition of John 11:45-57**

- ● *⁴⁵ Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him.⁴⁶ But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did.*

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- We very clearly see the two kinds of responses to the miracle in these two verses. For some people, this miracle was the occasion to become a disciple of Christ. For others, it was the occasion to seek His arrest and silence Him. The world has always been like this and we should not ever be surprised when wicked men revile the things that we hold dear. (Luke 16:31, Phil 1:29, Eph 2:8, 2 Tim 2:25)
- What is it that makes two very divergent responses to the same incontrovertible evidence of being sent by God? Clearly, some combined the event with faith and declared the Lordship of Jesus. Others did not combine it with faith and it only served to harden their hearts further. It is the Father who makes this difference. We must remember that faith is not our side of the bargain; God does not require us to muster up the requisite faith before He will accept us. No, in fact He knows that we are unable to muster up faith. Therefore, God grants us faith, He grants us repentance, He grants us wisdom, He grants us understanding and He grants us trials. If God does not grant these things to us, we would never have them.

- ● *⁴⁷ Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, "What shall we do? For this Man works many signs."⁴⁸ "If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation."*

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- It would appear by the constituents that the council that was convened here was the Sanhedrin. This ruling body was composed of 71 seats but business could be conducted with only 23 seats present. The High Priest was the chair of the meeting and the seats were divided between Sadducees and Pharisees. The Chief Priests were primarily the Sadducees but not all members of the Council were Priests.
- The response of the leaders is very telling. They feared that the people would switch their allegiances from the Council to Jesus. Doing so would jeopardize the relationship held with the Romans such that they feared the situation could lead to a war with Rome. In addition, unlike many who came before Him, Jesus was not waging a military coup; this threat was one that the Jews did not know how to fight against.
- It is very ironic to see the leaders who, wanting to protect the nation from the Romans sought to squelch the very power that protected them. In much the same way, our leaders today will use the authority that God has granted to them to drive

all notion of Him far from our nation.

● ● ⁴⁹ *And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all,⁵⁰ "nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish."*

- Caiaphas, who not being very skilled in flattery, rebukes the Council for declaring their confusion regarding the proper course of action. Clearly the proper course of action, according to Caiaphas, was that Jesus should be killed before the nation become unstable in their relationship with Rome. He justifies his claim by declaring that such a plan would be in the best interest of the country.

● ● ⁵¹ *Now this he did not say on his own authority; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation,⁵² and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.⁵³ Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death.*

- This reveals a number of remarkable things about our Lord. First, John declares that Caiaphas was not simply declaring his plan for killing Jesus, he was actually speaking the very words of God. Obviously at the intellectual level, he was speaking blasphemes yet simultaneously God had him uttering prophetic words about the true nature of the death of Christ.
- Secondly, John tells us that Caiaphas did not say these things as an ordinary man, but rather, as the High Priest. The implication here is that as the highest office in the land (other than Herod) Caiaphas represented the entire ecclesiastical order in Jerusalem and the entire nation. The act of plotting Christ's death was not done by a lone renegade who acted alone, this plot came from the nation.
- John reveals that the comments of Caiaphas were convincing. From that point on, as though it was a point of no return, the Jews plotted against Jesus. Although they had attempted a number of times earlier to catch Him or stone Him, it appears here that the entire council (perhaps with some dissenters) were of one mind now although they had not yet determined in what manner He would be killed. (Matthew 26:57-68)

● ● ⁵⁴ *Therefore Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there into the country near the wilderness, to a city called Ephraim, and there remained with His disciples.⁵⁵ And the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went from the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves.⁵⁶ Then they sought Jesus, and spoke among themselves as they stood in the temple, "What do you think—that He will not come to the feast?"⁵⁷ Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a command, that if anyone knew where He was, he should report it, that they might seize Him. NKJV*

- This is the third Passover mentioned in this book and it is the last one prior to our Lord's death. The exact location of Ephraim is uncertain but Eusebius writes that it is about 8 miles north of Jerusalem.
- Aware of the plot, Jesus decides to not walk around in public. He does not do this because He is afraid of the leaders but because He is aware that the proper time has not yet come for Him to be betrayed and turned over by Judas. Everything Christ did was done exactly how the Father instructed Him. The people had been commanded to turn Jesus over to the leaders for arrest not yet execution. Given the command, the people speculate as to whether Jesus will attend the Feast. As we will see in the next chapter, Jesus does not attend the feast incognito but does so in a manner which pleases the Father.