

The Conspiracy Against Christ

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John 11:45-57

The RAISING of LAZARUS is JESUS's GREATEST MIRACLE outside his OWN RESURRECTION.

- John 11:43 – [43] *When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out."* [44] *The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."*

The Reaction to the Event

- John 11:45 – [45] *Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary had seen what he did, believed in him,*
- Praise be to GOD. That is the proper response to seeing the SIGN.
 - John 20:31 – [31] *but these [signs] are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*
- Notice, John says "many of the Jews." What's interesting about that?
- He doesn't say "all of the Jews!"

Think about this. Not only do some of the JEWS walk away NOT BELIEVING. They essentially move against Jesus.

- John 11:46 – [46] *but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.*
- These JEWS in a state of unbelief go and tell the Pharisees (essentially the religious leaders of the DAY), what JESUS had done.
- And this sets in motion the events which will bring about his death!

We must never forget the SPIRITUAL BATTLE.

- We must never forget that SATAN is the "*god of this world*" (2 Cor 4:4).
- We must never forget that there are two kingdoms. There is a kingdom of light and a kingdom of darkness (Col 1).
- We must never forget that John said (1 John 5:19b)... [19b] *the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.*
- We must never forget Ephesians 6:12 – [12] *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rules, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.*
- Paul says in Ephesians 2:1 – [1b] *...following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience..*
- People are NOT just neutral to CHRIST.
- They are opposed to CHRIST because they are in the KINGDOM of DARKNESS.

There is a SPIRITUAL WORK of DARKNESS which OPPOSES the KINGDOM of GOD. What WE SEE in this PASSAGE is how the KINGDOM of DARKNESS works to OPPOSE the WORK of GOD. Though not explicitly mentioned, we know that SATAN is WORKING.

- *This text is a CASE STUDY to HOW SATAN and WORLDLY POWERS OPPOSE the KINGDOM.*
- You need to be able to “STAND AGAINST THE SCHEMES of the DEVIL” (Eph 6:11)
- 2 Cor 2:11 – [11]...*so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.*

The Tactics used by the Kingdom of Darkness

Prevention

John 11:47 – [47] *So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, “What are we to do? For this man performs many signs.*

- Describes is a GATHERING of the SANHEDRIN.
- Together (chief priests and Pharisees) they constituted the “ruling Council of the Jews”
 - The CHIEF PRIESTS were the SADUCEES – the upper class.
 - The PHARISEES – were the popular teachers of the Law.
- So the COUNCIL gathered – Here is the TOPIC of DISCUSSION for their AGENDA – “What are we to do? For this man does many signs.”
- The NEWS would go out over the countryside. This TRUTH demanded a RESPONSE.
- NOTICE what the RESPONSE is NEVER – “LET’S CONSIDER the TRUTH.”
- It is SIMPLY OPPOSITION and PREVENTION of the TRUTH.
- The reason being – they are part of Satan’s Kingdom.
- John 8:44 – [44] *You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*
- Satan opposes the TRUTH.
 - He is the father of lies.
 - It is the TRUTH which is OPPOSED.
 - *The ultimate dividing line between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness is the TRUTH.*
 - 2 John 1b – [1b] *whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all who know the truth, [2] because of the truth that abides in us and will be with us forever.*
 - 3 John 4 – [4] *I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.*
 - The church is the “*pillar and buttress of the truth*” (1 Tim 3:15)

APPL: This is IMPORTANT to REMEMBER. We read the APOLOGETIC BOOKS.

- When you make your APOLEGETIC DEFENSE of CHRISTIANITY.
- 1 Peter 3:15 – [15] *but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.*
- We MUST EXPECT OPPOSITION.

The PRINCIPLE: The GREATER the PROJECTION of the TRUTH the GREATER the WORK at PREVENTING the TRUTH.

Protection

John 11:48 - [48] *If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.*"

- There is agreement in the Sanhedrin. If JESUS is allowed to continue, everyone will believe in HIM.
- They mean, everyone will come to believe that He is indeed the MESSIAH.
- Their fear was then that they would MAKE HIM KING, and that would throw the POLITICAL EQUILIBRIUM with Rome into a firebox.
- They THINK that JESUS has come for a POLITICAL THEOCRACY.
- They fail to understand the NATURE of the KINGDOM.
 - Though he tells Pilate in John 18 that "His kingdom is not of this world."
 - If this happens, they reason, the Romans will take away our place "topos" – where we get word topography.
 - By this they mean, the TEMPLE MOUNT. Mount Moriah.
 - In Acts 6, the same word is used to describe the TEMPLE.
 - In addition they fear that the ROMANS will ABOLISH their proxy-nation state, which functioned under ROME.
- They are NOT INTERESTED IN the TRUTH.
- What MOTIVATES them is PROTECTING their STATUS.
- They are interested in PRESERVING WEALTH. POWER. FAME. The NATION.
- So OFTEN this is why CHRISTIANITY is OPPOSED.
 - Acts 16:19 – [19] *But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers.*
 - Acts 19:23 – [23] *About that time there arose no little disturbance concerning the Way. [24] For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought no little business to the craftsmen. [25] These he gathered together, with the workmen in similar trades, and said, "men, you know that from this business we have our wealth. [26] And you see and hear that not only in Ephesus but in almost all of Asia this Paul has persuaded and turned away a great many people, saying that gods made with hands are not gods.*

Incidentally, by rejecting the TRUTH, these leaders brought the VERY JUDGMENT to ISRAEL and the TEMPLE that they hoped to prevent.

- By their rejection of JESUS, the very thing they didn't want to happen happened.
- The Jews ushered in the prophesied destruction of their TEMPLE and JERUSALEM. Daniel 9
- Daniel 9:26b – [26b] *And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.*
- There has never been a MORE DESTRUCTIVE SEIGE nor will their ever will be as what the ROMANS did to Israel in 70 A. D.
- Matthew 24:17 – [17] *Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, [18] and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. [19] And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in*

those days! [20] Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. [21] For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.

The WORLD thinks it is getting AHEAD by OPPOSING the TRUTH, but they are ACTUALLY SETTING UP THEIR DESTRUCTION.

Plotting

John 11:49 – [49] *But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all. [50] Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish.”*

- Bio Sketch. Joseph Caiaphas – He was appointed high priest by the Roman curator Valerius Gratus in A. D. 18, and held the position while Pontius Pilate was procurator.
- He married into a very powerful family. His father-in-law was Annas, who was the high priest before him.
- In terms of PERSONSANALITY – HE IS *confident, dogmatic, assertive, prideful, and boorish, and a dramatist.*
- He tells the SANHEDRIN – “You know nothing at all”
- *You don’t understand that it is better for you (the Sanhedrin) that one man should die rather than the whole nation.*
- What Caiaphas PROPOSES is the PERSECTUION of the RIGHTEOUS MAN for the ADVANTAGE of the ELITE.
- Proverbs 17:15 – [15] *He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous are both alike an abomination to the LORD.*

The LORD is WORKING through this incredible EVIL STATEMENT. God uses evil for GOOD

- Acts 4:27 – [27] *for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, [28] to do whatever your hand and your and had predestined to take place.*
- Proverbs 19:21 – [21] *Many thoughts are in a man’s heart, but it is the counsel of Yahweh that will stand.*
- The WORLD will retaliate with EVIL against us. It is all part of GOD’s purpose.

John 11:51 – [51] *He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, [52] and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.*

- There is a DOUBLE MEANING. PROPHETIC MEANING
- By NATION – Caiaphas meant the POLITICAL ENTITY of ISRAEL.
- What GOD means is something different and DEEPLY THEOLOGICAL.
- It’s the IDEA of SUBSTITUION. That One man would be the substitute for sinners. It’s the MEANING of the CROSS.
 - 1 Peter 2:24 – [24] *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.*
 - 1 Peter 3:18 – [18] *For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God.*

- Isaiah 53:5 – [5] *But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.*
- The WAY that GOD meant it...
- He would die for the ELECT of ISRAEL (you can't atone for a political entity – you atone for people) and the GENTILES who are scattered abroad.
 - See John 10:4, 11, and 16
 - John 10:11 – [11] *I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.*
 - Very SIMILAR to what JESUS had said in JOHN 10:16 – [16] *And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.*

SOMETIMES this is called the doctrine of **PARTICULAR REDEMPTION**.

- *Particular Redemption* - Christ died to SAVE a PARTICULAR PEOPLE made of both Jew and Gentile. The atonement secures these “particular” people certainly.
- IT GATHERS JEWS. And it GATHERS GENTILES.
- It actually SECURES the SALVATION of Christ's CHILDREN.

Jesus brings into one both Jew and Gentile.

- It will bring into one the children of God who are scattered ABROAD.
- NOW, there is ONE PEOPLE of GOD.
- Ephesians 2:14 – [14] *For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility [15] by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two so making peace, [16] and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.*
- Galatians 3:28 – [28] *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*
- Just as Caiaphas prophesied, He has gathered us into ONE FAMILY.

Persecution

John 11:53 – [53] *So from that day on they made plans to put him to death.*

- This is the official ruling of the Jewish Sanhedrin. There is a PLAN to put him to death.
- EVIL MOTIVES are TURNED INTO EVIL PLANS.

John 11:54 – [54] *Jesus therefore no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there to the region near the wilderness, to a town called Ephraim, and there he stayed with the disciples.*

- Jesus finds out about these plans... and goes to a town called Ephraim... about 14 miles Northeast of Jerusalem essentially in the middle of nowhere.
- Ephraim – means fruitlessness... symbolizing the failure of ISRAEL as a nation to carry out GOD's PURPOSES.
- Christ, as the true Israel, will ultimately fulfill what ISRAEL as a NATION failed to do.

John 11:55 – [55] *Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves. [56] They were looking for*

Jesus and saying to one another as they stood in the temple, "What do you think? That he will not come to the feast at all?"

- Undoubtedly, they had heard about Jesus's miracle.
- But there was a question that he would come to the FEAST.

John 11:57 – [57] Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where he was, he should let them know, so that they might arrest him.

- The ORDERS had gone out to all the PEOPLE that JESUS was to be ARRESTED.