

46. Jesus Knew the Religious Leaders Were Plotting His Death

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to clearly explain the Word of God to others so that the Holy Spirit can convict, the Father can draw and the Son can seek and save. Then, each person is able to make his or her own choice whether to believe or to reject that message. In our topic today, we are going to see that most of the Jewish religious leaders chose to reject the fact that Jesus is God.

We concluded our last topic by seeing that some of the Jews who saw Lazarus raised from the dead went to tell the Pharisees. John 11:47-48 says, “Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, ‘What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. 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.’” The chief priests were Sadducees. Normally, the Pharisees and Sadducees were against each other. However, both groups saw Jesus as a threat to their power. As a result, we see that the chief priests and the Pharisees are now joining together to destroy Jesus.

The Jewish religious leaders had to admit one thing as they talked together. They said, “What shall we do? For this Man works many signs.” Here, we see that they had to admit that Jesus had performed many miracles as signs. Jesus had just shown His power over death by raising Lazarus from the dead after he had been dead for four days. The religious leaders had been able to control the people for many years because they maintained their religious and political power by cooperating with the Romans. That was why they asked, “What shall we do?” Their power and control were much more important to them than obedience to God.

The religious leaders realized that if Jesus continued to perform other signs that soon all of the people would believe Jesus and recognize Him as the Messiah promised in the Word of God. The religious leaders mentioned two things that they feared. First, they were afraid the Romans might take away their place or position of power over the people. Second, they feared that the Romans might just completely destroy their nation. Either way, the religious leaders recognized that they would lose their power over the people. The Pharisees had earlier shown their own pride and their contempt for the people. John 7:47-49 said to the officers, “Then the Pharisees answered them, ‘Are you also deceived? Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him? But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed.’” The chief priests and Pharisees had sent these officers to arrest Jesus because of their fear of losing their power.

We then see what the high priest said. John 11:49-54 says, “And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, ‘You know nothing at all, 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.’ 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, and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad. Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death. 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.” Here, we see that the high priest spoke and said what they should do to protect their power.

Growing Godly Family Series – Helping Our Children Present Jesus as the Son of God 46. “Jesus Knew the Religious Leaders Were Plotting His Death”

Updated July 2023

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The word translated “expedient” means *to bring together, to be profitable or to be for our benefit*. Caiaphas used this word to tell the religious leaders that it would be for their benefit to kill Jesus so that they would not lose their power and positions and so that the Romans would not decide to destroy the Jewish nation. Here, we see that the only thought of Caiaphas and the other religious leaders was to maintain their power over the people by putting Jesus to death.

However, God had a much greater purpose for causing Caiaphas to speak those particular words. Here, we see that God could even speak through a very ungodly high priest to tell what Jesus was actually going to do. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, “For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” It was the plan of the Father that Jesus, who had never committed any sin, become sin for us. In that way, the Father could place the righteousness of Jesus on us so that we could become righteous in the sight of God. Peter further explained this in 1 Peter 2:24 where we read, “Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.” Jesus took our sins on Himself. That made it possible for the power of sin over our lives to be put to death. We are now able to make the choice to live for righteousness because we have been healed from the eternal consequences of sin.

We see that the prophecy of Caiaphas was not limited to the fact that Jesus would die for the Jews. John explained clearly that this was also a prophecy that was good news for the Gentiles. This prophecy did not just apply to the nation of Israel or just to the Jews. In this prophecy, Caiaphas also prophesied “that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.” Jesus had earlier said in John 10:16, ““And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.”” The other sheep mentioned in this verse includes all of the Gentiles that would later place their faith in Jesus.

This promise also explains that Jesus “would gather together in one the children of God.” Ephesians 2:13-16 says, “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.” Here, we see that God caused the high priest to even prophesy that Jesus would bring both Jews and Gentiles together and make us one in the church.

The fact that the Jewish religious leaders had determined that Jesus should be put to death meant that it was necessary for Jesus to leave the area near Jerusalem so that they would not be able to put Jesus to death until the time planned before the world was ever created. As a result, we see that Jesus left the area of Jerusalem and went to a city called Ephraim. This city was near the wilderness and so this moved Jesus far enough from the city of Jerusalem that the chief priests and Pharisees could not carry out their plan to kill Jesus until the time that had been determined by the Lord. Jesus spent the next few weeks in that area teaching His disciples before the time of the

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Passover when Jesus would return to Jerusalem to pay the penalty for our sins and the sins of the whole world.

John 11:55-57 says, “And the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went from the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves. 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?”” 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.” Meanwhile, we are given a summary of the things that were happening in Jerusalem during the time that Jesus was with His disciples in the city of Ephraim.

Two Passovers earlier, John 2:13 says, “Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.” In both John 2 and John 11, we see that as the Passover got close, the Jews from other areas would travel to Jerusalem early so that they could purify themselves in preparation for the Passover. They would do this purification after they arrived at the city of Jerusalem. Then, John 18:28 says, “Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover.” Here, we see that the Jews were very careful to purify themselves so that they could eat the Passover.

Since the people did not find Jesus in the temple, they began to ask among themselves if Jesus would even come to the Passover. The people had heard that the religious leaders wanted to put Jesus to death. We also see the group that wanted to put Jesus to death. Most of the chief priests were also Sadducees. Normally, the Pharisees and the Sadducees were in opposition to each other. The Pharisees focused on keeping both the Old Testament Law and also their traditions that they had added to the Law. In contrast, the Sadducees denied miracles, spirits and many other things that are taught in the Old Testament. However, we see that both groups wanted to seize Jesus because of the fact that both groups were afraid that they would lose their power if Jesus continued to gain in popularity. Both groups were showing that their hearts were filled with unbelief.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that many people today are like the Pharisees and the Sadducees. John 3:20 says, ““For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.”” The religious leaders knew that Jesus was teaching the truth. However, they did not like the truth because the truth exposed the fact that their thoughts and actions were evil. We want to help our children understand that those who are doing evil do not like the truth because the truth will expose their deeds. That is the reason why those who are doing evil oppose the message of the death and resurrection of Jesus. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children to understand why many religious people oppose Jesus.