The Plot to Kill Jesus

John 11:45-57
4-27-2025

Introduction: vv.45-46

**** The Death of Jesus Christ would be no accident, but the essential element of God's eternal plan of redemption!***

In John 11, the stage was being set for God's Son to be crucified.

I. The <u>Predicament</u> of the Religious Leaders (v.47-48)

II. The <u>Prophecy</u> of Caiaphas (v.49-52)
(God uses an unbelieving High Priest to pronounce the death of His Son)

Caiaphas predicts that…

A. Christ's death would be "expedient" (absolutely necessary) (v.50a)

B. Christ's death would be substitutionary (v.50b)

C. Christ's death would be for many nations (v.52)

III. The <u>Plan</u> of the Jews (v.53-57)

A. The plan <u>determined</u> (v.53)

B. The plan <u>avoided</u> (until God's perfect timing) (v.54-56)

C. The plan <u>announced</u> (v.57)

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Verses 45-57 describe the reactions of the Jews to Jesus' raising of Lazarus, who had been dead and buried for four days.

v. 45
The miracle Jesus performed basically brought about two results:

1) Faith in **"many"** (v. 45)
2) Fear and a hardening of the heart in others (v. 47)

As the saying goes: "The same sun that melts the wax, hardens the clay."

Christ's miracles always brought on two opposite reactions – to some, trust; to others, animosity.

The motive of these reporters is uncertain. They might have been border-line believers who, like so many, sought the confirmation of man to affirm their faith.

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I. The Predicament of the Religious Leaders (v.47-48)

v. 47
"A council" – lit. A Sanhedrin

"What do we?" – What should we do? The obvious answer is "believe on Jesus."

They were confronted with bona fide, genuine, undeniable, supernatural miracles and yet stubbornly refused to believe the facts that the miracles pointed to.

This proves that miracles in and of themselves do not produce faith. Seeing is not always believing.

Jesus Himself stated that if people refused to believe God's Word, neither would they be persuaded even if someone rose from the dead (Lk. 16:31).

v. 48
The fear factor that these religious Jews struggled with was this: If they didn't stop Jesus, He would continue to perform miracles, which would continue to convince people to follow Him, which would pose as a threat to Rome's rule. Such a powerful following would force them to take action, removing the relative freedom the Jews enjoyed.

They feared losing both:

1) "their place" (their place of worship – the Temple)
2) "their nation" (their country – their homeland)

The very thing they feared would become reality (the Temple destroyed and the city burned), and all because of their rejection of Jesus.

II. The <u>Prophecy</u> of Caiaphas (v.49-52)

(God uses an unbelieving High Priest to pronounce the death of His Son)

Verses 49 – 52 are among the most intriguing verses in the Bible. God inspires an unbelieving High Priest to utter words of truth. Words that were in a way disconnected and disjointed from the discussion at hand, yet a message that did relate to their topic. You see, they feared that Christ would bring enslavement and loss to the nation, but Christ's death would bring a form of liberty and redemption to the nation.

The Spirit of God uses this lost, spiritually-blind religious leader to utter the Gospel. Caiaphas says words he doesn't really understand the full meaning of. If God could speak via a donkey (Baalam's donkey) and if God could prophesy through the questionable character of King Saul, then He cans peak even through this High Priest of Israel.

(Note: One feature of predictive prophecy [even among God's prophets like Daniel and Isaiah] was that they often uttered messages that they didn't even completely understand.)

Caiaphas predicts that…

A. Christ's death would be "expedient" (absolutely necessary) (v.50a)

"Expedient" – profitable; to your advantage; for your benefit.

They were concerned for their safety and benefits, and this is exactly what Christ would accomplish by His death.

In Caiaphas' mind, he may have been thinking: "If we kill Jesus, Rome will stay off of our back."

But in God's mind, the true intent would be this: "If God punishes His Son, sin and its consequences would be removed off our back."

"One man" – one and only one; no other sacrifice would be necessary. "Neither is there salvation in any other. . ."

"What Caiaphas has in mind is the giving of Jesus to death to keep the nation from perishing at the hands of the Romans. Politicians are often willing to make a sacrifice of the other fellow." (Robertson, p. 209).

"The high priest, Caiaphas, was a Sadducee, not a Pharisee (Acts 23:6-10); but the two factions could always get together to fight a common enemy." (Wiersbe, p. 338).

B. Christ's death would be substitutionary (v.50b)

"Die for the people" –

"For" = *huper* – on behalf of, to take the place of

'Perish not" – to not be destroyed

The "perish" that Caiaphas had in mind was physical and temporal, but God's intent was a spiritual and eternal rescue from being destroyed in Judgment.

"This is my body which is given <u>for</u> you" (Lk. 22:19)
"This cup is the new testament in my blood which is shed <u>for</u> you" (Lk. 22:20)
"The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give <u>for</u> the life of the world" (Jn. 6:51)
"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life <u>for</u> the sheep" (Jn.10:11)
"I lay down my life <u>for</u> the sheep" (Jn. 10:15)
". . . He (Caiaphas) prophesied that Jesus should die <u>for</u> that nation. . . and not for that nation only . . ." (Jn. 11:51-52, cp. 18:14)
"Christ died <u>for</u> the ungodly" (Rom. 5:6)
"Christ died <u>for</u> us" (Rom. 5:8)
"He . . . delivered him up <u>for</u> us all" (Rom. 8:32)
"Christ died <u>for</u> our sins" (I Cor. 15:3)
"For he hath made him to be sin <u>for</u> us" (II Cor. 5:21)

"Christ . . . gave himself <u>for</u> our sins" (Gal. 1:4)
"Christ . . . loved me, and gave himself <u>for</u> me" (Gal. 2:20)
"Christ [was] . . . made a curse <u>for</u> us" (Gal. 3:13)
"Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself <u>for</u> us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour" (Eph. 5:2)
"Christ also loved the church, and gave himself <u>for</u> it" (Eph. 5:25)
"Our Lord Jesus Christ. . . died <u>for</u> us" (I Th. 5:10)
"Who gave himself a ransom <u>for</u> all" (I Tim. 2:6)
"He by the grace of God should taste death <u>for</u> every man" (Heb. 2:9)
"But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice <u>for</u> sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God" (Heb. 10:12).
"Christ also suffered <u>for</u> us" (I Pet. 2:21)
"Christ also hath once suffered <u>for</u> sins" (I Pet. 3:18)
"Christ hath suffered <u>for</u> us in the flesh" (I Pet. 4:1)
"He laid down his life <u>for</u> us" (I Jn. 3:16)

<u>Little Jim's Substitute</u>

First day of school!

The boys and girls registered and the teacher let them make their own rules and the punishment for disobeying them. They decided there was to be no stealing, fighting, etc. The punishment for doing these things would be ten stripes across the bare back.

One day a boy could not find his lunch. The boys and girls looked everywhere and finally each one was questioned. Little Jim was found guilty.

Perhaps he was hungry; but whatever was his reason for doing it, he was guilty. So the teacher commanded him to take off his shirt, all saw how weak and underfed he was. Then he walked to the front crying, "I can't bear it! I can't bear it!"

Jimmy's pitiful cry touched many hearts. Just then, Big Tom, a big, strong boy, stood up and said, "I'll take Little Jim's place."

The teacher turned to the boys and girls and asked, "Will it be right if Big Tom takes Little Jim's punishment?"

Yes, they agreed this would be just and fair. So Big Tom took off his shirt and received the stripes across his bare back which were Little Jim's due for stealing the dinner-pail. Then the teacher said, "Little Jim, you come now and take your punishment."

"Oh, no," shouted the children, "you can't punish Big Tom and Little Jim, too. Big Tom took Little Jim's place and Jimmy is free."

The teacher now turned to the children and said, "Yes, you are right, Little Jim is free and this is just what I want to tell you about the Lord Jesus and ourselves. We are all guilty sinners and deserve to be punished forever but the Lord Jesus went to the cross and bore our punishment instead. Like Big Tom, He took our place, and if we believe in Him and accept Him as our Substitute, we go free. God who in love gave His Son and punished Him in our stead will not punish us too, if we believe in Him."

<u>The Judge & the Criminal</u> - Suppose on the streets of our city was a man with a gun. This man one day pointed the gun at an innocent person & shot him and killed him. He then attempted to run away, but a police officer caught him, arrested him, and brought him to jail. The day finally came when he was to go to court to stand trial for his murder. After hearing the evidence, the jury found him clearly guilty of cold-blooded murder. The Judge then rendered this verdict: *"Because of your crime, you will have to pay for it with your life - You will have to die in the electric chair!"* The convicted criminal went back to his prison cell to wait. Finally, the dreaded day came for him to be executed. The guards brought him over to the electric chair, strapped him in, and the officials were about to pull the lever. Suddenly, a stranger entered the room. The officials noticed it was the city Judge, the same one who had found this man guilty and given him the death penalty. They asked the Judge, *"Sir, why did you come here?"* To which he replied,

"Do you see that man? He is guilty of murder, and there is no doubt in my mind that he deserves to pay for it with his life." With a tear rolling down the Judge's cheek, however, he said, *"But I love that man, and I would be willing to take his place."* The room was silent. The man in the chair could not believe that someone would love him so much. [Rarely would anyone die for a good man; never mind for a criminal - Rom. 5:7-8] But suppose the Law allowed such a transaction. The man in the chair got up, and the Judge sat down in his place. The lever was pulled and the Judge was electrocuted, giving his life for the criminal so that he could go free.

Even though we have never heard of such a thing, that is exactly what Jesus Christ did for you. You see, He is the Judge of the universe. And the judge Himself stepped down from His throne in Heaven, came into this world -- all for the purpose that He might die on the cross and take your place and pay for the sin you committed. He became your substitute. He paid your penalty so that you could be free from the wages of your sin. Jesus died on your behalf so that you wouldn't pay for your sins yourself in the Lake of fire! What love! What a sacrifice!

The Wise & Just Ruler - A wise and just ruler established a series of laws for his people to follow. One day his mother broke one of the laws and was brought to the ruler after being caught. The penalty was twenty lashes. How could the ruler remain just and still fulfill the demands of his love for his mother? He chose to take the lashes on his own back. Justice was satisfied, while love was revealed in full measure.

The Rescue Dog - A man was lost in the Alps. The owner of the lodge where he had been staying sent out his best rescue dog to look for him. The dog found the man half-conscious, grabbed him, and started to shake him in order to wake him up. On coming to his senses the man, seeing the dog and thinking it was a wolf, stabbed the animal. The dog let go and returned to the lodge, where it died shortly thereafter. The dog's owner followed the trail of blood, came to the lost man, and saved him. The dog had given his life so that another might live.

> **The Burnt Hen** - One day a certain farmer saw that a fire had ignited in his wheat fields, and was being blown toward his barns by the wind. To save the stored grain there, he lit a backfire, in hopes that it would impede the progress of the other flames. After both fires had subsided--and the barns had been saved--the farmer walked out through the smoldering ashes of the nearby fields. There he discovered the dead body of one of his hens, which had been caught in the blaze. Sadly, he turned over her black, charred body with his foot--and out from underneath ran four baby chicks. Her sacrifice saved her young ones. Such is the work of Christ on the cross, a place where the love of God dealt with the justice of God, where God's mercy matched God's wrath. Our Lord's sacrifice has saved us." (attributed to Donald Grey Barnhouse)
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> **The Train & The Bridge**
>
> John Griffith's childhood ambition was to travel. He fantasized about it frequently, but that ambition crashed with the Great Depression of 1929. As the howling winds turned Oklahoma, his native state, into a dust bowl, this young man with his wife and small child packed his belongings in an old car and headed out to try to find a life somewhere else.
>
> They made their way to Missouri and, as Dennis E. Hensley tells the story, John finally found a job as the controller of a great railroad bridge spanning the Mississippi River. Each day at certain hours, this massive bridge was raised so that the great freight and passenger trains could rush across. John found some delight in this because he often wondered what far places these people were visiting; and so he had some joy in their experience.
>
> In the summer of 1937 John Griffith took his eight-year-old son, Greg, with him to work for the first time. Little Greg was understandably thrilled at the great railroad bridge and the stirring and exciting trains that roared across it. He marveled at the control house, filled with all sorts of levers over which his daddy had absolute, sovereign control. His father took him to an observation deck and told him that out here he could watch the boat and trains go by.

At noon, John Griffith but the bridge up to allow for some ships that were coming. Since there would not be a train to some while, he made his way along the catwalk to the observation deck. There he opened his brown bag and he and Greg had lunch. As they ate, John shared with his son some of the stories of various ships that had gone by and of the time the great flood had overflowed the banks of the Mississippi.

Just as John was telling his son that story, he was startled by the shrieking of a train whistle in the distance. He quickly looked at his watch. It was 1:07. He had forgotten the express for Memphis. With four hundred people on board, it would be roaring across the bridge in only a few moments. He leaped from the observation deck to the catwalk.

John raced back to the control tower. He placed his hand upon the massive controls and started to close the bridge. He glanced down under the bridge to see if there were any ships beneath it. A sight caught his eye that brought his heart leaping into his throat. Greg had slipped from the observation deck, and fallen into the gears that operated the bridge.

Greg's left leg was caught in the cogs of the two main gears. John knew if he pushed the lever, his son would be ground between four tons of whining, grinding steel. His mind whirled in panic and desperation. There was no way to free his son before the train would be upon the bridge. Again, the train whistle shrieked. He could hear the clicking for the locomotive wheels and rapid "puffing" of the approaching train. There were four hundred passengers on that train—four hundred souls!

John was a father, and this was his boy. He knew what he had to do. He heaved the lever of the massive gears. The Memphis Express thundered across the bridge. John lifted his face, smeared with tears, and looked into the passing windows of the train. Businessmen were reading their afternoon papers, conductors were looking at their large, vest-pocket watches and finely dressed ladies sipped coffee in the dining car, while children pushed long spoons into dishes of ice cream. With wrenching agony, John Griffith cried out to the steel train, "I sacrificed my son for you! Don't you care?" Nobody heard. The train rushed by.
From Coral Ridge Messenger – Fort Lauderdale, FL

v. 51
This utterance did not originate with Caiaphas, but because He was the High Priest who would be involved in the Day of Atonement sacrifice for the sins of the nation of Israel, God allowed him to utter a message of God's true sacrifice for sin.

C. Christ's death would be for many nations (v.52)

Caiaphas' intent was <u>mean</u> and <u>selfish</u> (God's was good and gracious).

Caiaphas only thought of <u>his nation</u> (God had the world in mind).

(cp. Robertson, p. 209-210).

"Not for that nation only" – Not just for Israel. Christ's death would bring liberty to more people than just Jews who would believe on Him.

God has children scattered all over the earth.

Romans 10:12-13
For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. [13] For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Acts 10:36
The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)

Acts 10:43
To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

Both Jew and Gentile are reconciled to God by the death of His Son. This mystery is detailed in Ephesians 2:11-19.

III. The <u>Plan</u> of the Jews (v.53-57)

A. The plan <u>determined</u> (v.53)

"They took counsel together" – They plotted and planned to kill Jesus.

"The official decision that day was that Jesus must die (SEE: Matt. 12:14; Lk. 19:47; Jn. 5:18, 7:1, 19-20, 25). The leaders thought that *they* were in control of the situation, but it was God who was working out His predetermined plan (Acts 2:23). Originally, they wanted to wait until after the Passover, but God had decreed otherwise." (Wiersbe, p. 338).

B. The plan <u>avoided</u> (until God's perfect timing) (v.54-56)

v. 54
Jesus did not depart because He was scared. Rather, because **"His time had not yet fully come."**

He would only give Himself right on Passover, so that He could fulfill the meaning of Passover.

v. 55
"To purify themselves" – What hypocrisy! They seek purity while at the same time they plot the murder of an innocent man.

v. 56
They questioned: "Will He not show p at the Passover feast at all?"

Yes, He would! As a matter of fact, He would become the Passover feast when, as God's Passover Lamb, He would be killed and His death appropriated by all who believe.

C. The plan <u>announced</u> (v.57)

Judas would enter into this conspiracy a short time later (12:4).

CONCLUSION:

Who is really in control here? Was Jesus' death an accident or mistake (as "Rev. Moon" of the Unification Church teaches)?

Who killed Jesus? Was it the Jews? No. Was it Rome? No.

It was God the Father who sacrificed His Son for your salvation (Isaiah 53).

*God chose to <u>send</u> His Son.

Isaiah 42:1
Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

Matthew 12:18
Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles.

1 Peter 2:6
Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

*God chose to sacrifice His Son

Matthew 26:39
And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

Matthew 26:42
He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

1 Peter 1:20
Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

Rev. 13:8
And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Christ's death for sinners was a predicted event

1) **Abraham** by faith said to his son Isaac: "God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering" (Gen. 22:8). Note: Abraham's offering of Isaac on Mount Moriah was not only a test of faith (Heb. 11:17-19), it was a foreshadowing of God offering up His "only begotten Son" (Heb. 11:17; Jn. 3:16).

2) **Isaiah**, who lived over 700 years B.C., foretold of Christ's substitutionary death with these words:

"But He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." (53:5)

"The LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (v. 6)

"For the transgression of my people was he stricken" (v. 8)

"Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin" (v. 10)

"He shall bear their iniquities" (v. 11)

"He bare the sin of many" (v. 12)

3) **Daniel**, speaking of the Messiah's death, said: "Messiah [shall] be cut off, but not for himself" (Dan. 9:26).