

# The Plot to Kill Jesus

## John 11: 45-54

**DIG:** What responses does the miracle with Lazarus produce, and why? What does it show about their view of **Messiah**? What are the main concerns of the Jewish leaders? What do they fail to see in this text-message? How does **Caiaphas** murderous threat unwittingly convey prophetic truth regarding the effect of **Yeshua's** death? What did this prophecy have to do with the **Gentiles**? How does **Christ** respond to this new situation? What do you think the crowds would be expecting as **Pesach** approached?

**REFLECT:** When in your life have you used the, "My mind's made up, don't confuse me with the facts" approach? How did that work out for you? What have you learned since then? To whom can you pass your wisdom on to? How old were you when you realized you'd better think before speaking? Who do you know that hasn't figured that out yet? Who can you disciple and help with these important life lessons?

As we read about the events leading to **Messiah's** death in Yerushalayim, it might appear as though the **Jewish leaders** and **Roman** authorities had the upper hand and were in control of the events that were about to unfold. In reality, however, **ADONAI** was behind everything that happened as **He** firmly guided **His** plan to completion. **He** even used **Caiaphas**, **Israel's high priest that year**, to prophesy that **Yeshua** would **die for the nation**. **Caiaphas** meant to say nothing more than that **killing the troublemaking Rabbi** was the politically expedient thing to do - but **God** had other plans.

The miraculous sign of **Jesus** raising Lazarus from the dead was a resounding and convincing proof that **Yeshua** was indeed **the Messiah**. Even though the miracle was not designed as a public display, news of the miracle spread very quickly and **many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary** and comfort her, **and had seen what Jesus did, believed in Him (John 11:45)**. It is interesting that Martha isn't mentioned. Evidently **Mary** seemed to be the most sorrowful and disconsolate of the two. But Martha, who always took the role of a hostess, seems to have used her ministry of hospitality to mask **her** grief. Both sisters were equally devastated, but displayed their sorrow in their own way.

**But some of them** who were not believers **went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done (John 11:46)**. This is a predictable result for people who have hard hearts. You can show them the complete truth of **God**, but they still won't respond to it. There is no capacity for an unbelieving person to perceive the truth. As long as a person refuses to accept new information, you will be unable to communicate. People like that cannot

understand because they don't want to understand. Someone with a predetermined unbelief doesn't even bother to rationalize, let alone investigate the evidence. The unbelieving Jews who collaborated with **the Sanhedrin** didn't even concern themselves with the miracle. Anyone who could stand by a tomb and watch a man who had been dead for four days walk out, and not believe, is a hopeless case. That's why **no one can come to Messiah unless the Father . . . draws them** (John 6:44a). **No one can come to Christ** until the Holy Spirit reaches into his or her heart and melts away the unbelief. **For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast** (Ephesians 2:8-9). Therefore, before you witness to someone, pray that **God** will till the soil so the Word can take root in that person's heart.<sup>1148</sup>

Then the **Sadducees** and the **Pharisees**, who normally opposed each other, cooperated on this occasion and called a meeting of the **Sanhedrin**. This development upset the **Sanhedrin** (see Lg - **The Great Sanhedrin**) so much that they felt forced to call together a special session in order to deal with this **renegade Rabbi** once and for all. It is amazing that even though they knew **Jesus** resurrected Lazarus, they continued to **plot** against **Christ**. "What are we accomplishing?" they asked. "Here is this **Man** performing many signs (John 11:47). Notice there was no denial of the miracles or any talk of Lazarus.

At this juncture all turned to the **high priest Caiaphas**. Surely, they thought, he should be able to offer some solution to the difficult problem that faced the nation. For some twelve years already he had been their leader. He was the successor of his father-in-law **Annas**, having been appointed by the Romans. The discussion suddenly stopped as the long-robed **high priest** of the **Sanhedrin** rose from his chair to announce his decision. All were breathless with anticipation to hear what the sentence would be. He reasoned: **If we let Him go on like this, everyone will believe in Him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our Temple and our nation**" (John 11:48-49). **Ironically, this is exactly what happened in 70 AD. Their institution became more important than God; they clung to their institution and lost the chance to follow the Messiah.**

The **high priest** continued and announced confidently: **You know nothing at all! You do not realize that it's better for you if one man dies on behalf of the people, so that the whole nation won't be destroyed. Now he didn't speak this way on his own initiative; rather, since he was high priest that year, he unwittingly prophesied that Jesus was about to die on behalf of the nation** (John 11:49-51 CJB). **Caiaphas** had unwittingly uttered a prophecy, a deeper truth than he knew. He meant to be selfish and mean and he expressed his bloodthirsty decision to the **Sanhedrin**. But didn't realize that all he was prophesying was the downfall of the priesthood, the **Temple** and the **nation** whom he professed to be saving by his decision to **kill Messiah**. This was the last prophecy of the high priesthood in **Isra'el**, pronouncing sentence against itself. **Yeshua** would indeed **die for the**

**nation** in a sense far deeper than **Caiaphas** ever intended. **Caiaphas**, in virtue of his office of **high priest**, unconsciously announced the eternal plan of **ADONAI** - that **His Son** should **die** instead of **the nation**, and on behalf of not only **the Jewish people** but also all **Gentiles** who would be gathered from among the tribes and nations of the world.<sup>1149</sup>

**He died not only for that nation but also for the Gentiles, the other scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one (John 11:52).** That is the great mystery of the Church. **Ephesians 2:14** says **Messiah's death has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility between Jew and Gentile.** All those who place their faith in the **Living Word** become one in **Him**. So **there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male or female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28).**

**So from that day on they plotted to take his life (John 11:53).** The **Great Sanhedrin** concluded that **the Giver of Life** deserved **death** and began to **plot** how to do it. **The Jewish people**, however, weren't part of **the plot** until the very end, when **they** cried: **Crucify him! His blood is on us and on our children (Matthew 27:22b and 25).** **Yeshua Ha-Mashiach** made no attempt to thwart **the plot of the Sanhedrin.**

In some way, perhaps through **His** friend Nicodemus, **Yeshua** came to know the dark decision of **the Sanhedrin.** **Therefore, Jesus no longer moved about publicly among the people of Judea. Instead He withdrew to a region near the wilderness, to a village called Ephraim, a city in northern Judea, where He stayed with His talmidim for a time of reflection and prayer (John 11:54).** **He** was driven out of the Holy City of Yerushalayim for the very last time. The next time **He** returned, it would be for the purpose of **dying.**

In 1915 Pastor William Barton started to publish a series articles. Using the archaic language of an ancient storyteller, he wrote his parables under the pen name of **Safed the Sage.** And for the next fifteen years he shared the wisdom of **Safed** and his enduring spouse **Keturah.** It was a genre he enjoyed. By the early 1920s, **Safed** was said to have a following of at least three million. Turning an ordinary event into an illustration of a spiritual truth was always a keynote of Barton's ministry.

There came a heavy fall of **Snow**, and the daughter of the daughter of **Keturah** ran in at noontime on her way home from school, and she was in **Sorrow.** And she wept and said: **Those boys are just as mean as they can be. They threw snowballs at me, and they got snow all over my Coat, and over my Cap and in my Hair, and some of it went down my neck. And look, I am covered with snow, and the boys wait just around the Corner to throw more snowballs at me.**

And I took off her Coat, and shook it. And I took off her Cap, and placed it where it would dry. And I picked out snow from her Golden Hair and from her neck. And Keturah came also and took the little girl to wash her face and wipe away her tears.

And I called up the daughter of Keturah and said, your daughter is here, and we desire that she should eat lunch with us, and go back to school from here. And the daughter of Keturah answered, It is well. So let her do as you wish.

Now Keturah had a Corking Good Lunch ready, and she set out another plate. And we sat down, and gave **God** thanks. And there was a bouquet upon the table, and Keturah turned it around so that the brightest flowers were toward the daughter of the daughter of Keturah. And Keturah said, The flowers desire to look across the table and welcome our Little Girl. And we had a Happy Luncheon together. And when it was over, I said, Now let me hear what Music you have learned lately.

And she said, I still can play Holy Night, that I learned at Christmas; and I have a piece that is called The Butterfly, where one hand crosses the other, and the Butterfly moves up and down in pretty curves among the flowers which the other hand plays. And I said, Let us hear that. And she said, I will do it. And, Grandpa, when I cross my hands, look and see how many Rings are on my fingers.

And I smiled at her little vanity concerning the Rings; neither did I scold her: for she will outgrow all that if grown folk have sense enough to leave her alone. And we had Fifteen Happy minutes at the Piano. And I remembered with what joy my father heard his Daughter and afterward his Granddaughter at the Piano, even as I do.

And the time came for the daughter of the daughter of Keturah to go back to school. And she said, What a happy time I have had, and this would not have come to me if those Naughty Boys had not thrown snow at me.

And I said, **Thus does the Good Lord God bring possibilities of good out of evil**, and I hope it will be like this forever more.

And she said, I am glad I came.

And I said, If I find those boys, I will thank them; but I will ask them not to do it Again.<sup>1150</sup>