

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #221

Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead

The Sanhedrin Plots to Kill Jesus

JN 11.45-53

45 Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him. 46 Some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. 47 Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin.

"What are we doing?" they asked. "Here is this man performing many signs. 48 If we let him keep on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our temple and our nation."

49 Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, spoke up, "You know nothing at all! 50 Do you not understand that it is more advantageous for you that one man die on behalf of the people, than the whole nation perish?"

51 He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus was about to die for the Jewish nation, 52 and not only for that nation, but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them all together and make them one.

53 So from that day on they made serious plans to take his life.

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	The Temple Compound in Jerusalem
Timeline	March (Month 38)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage VII: Jesus' Ministry in Perea
	B. Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead
Title	6. The Sanhedrin Plots to Kill Jesus

COMMENT:

This reading shows us the decisive impact of the resurrection of Lazarus in Jesus' life and ministry. There were two immediate reactions. On one hand, many of the mourners who had come to Bethany believed in Jesus as a result of seeing this incredible miracle. The report about Lazarus spread like wildfire. This caused the great acclaim and public favor with which Jesus would enter Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, in just five weeks.

On the other hand, when the report reached the Pharisees they quickly convened the Sanhedrin and made the death of Jesus the official policy of the council. They began to carefully plot how to arrest Jesus, then crucify him as a common criminal. The decision had been made. As soon as the logistics were finalized the plan would turn into action. Jesus now had a price on his head.

John again pointed out the irony in the Sanhedrin's decision to murder Jesus by quoting the prophecy of Caiaphas the high priest. He realized that if they did not stop Jesus from performing any more miracles, the majority of the people would believe that he was the Messiah. With the popular expectations of the Messiah to be a military/

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political conqueror, it was inevitable that such a Messiah would bring the wrath of Rome down upon the Jewish nation. It was therefore necessary for Jesus to die, in order for the nation to survive.

However, John saw the words of Caiaphas as an inadvertent prophecy that Jesus needed to die as a substitute--a sacrificial Lamb--for the sins of the people. The High Priest had no idea how truthful his words were in the divine plan for the salvation of the world.

John went on to explain that the death of Jesus was not only for Jews, but also for all the nations, and that it would bring both Jews and Gentiles together in unity into the fellowship of the Church. This was a theme that became the central message of the apostle Paul, who was especially called by the risen Jesus as his representative to the Gentiles. The unity of Jews and all Gentiles in the Body of Christ was at the heart of Jesus' understanding of the cross.

John also pointed out that Sanhedrin's decision was motivated by political self-preservation. They were afraid of losing their leadership status that was only theirs at the cost of appeasing Rome, and serving the Emperor's interests, not God's.

These men had repeatedly asked Jesus for a sign of his Messiahship. When he raised Lazarus from the dead they had the sign of Jonah in their midst! They acknowledged that this sign was of such a magnitude that the nation as a whole would believe in Jesus as Messiah if they let him live. Yet, they refused to even consider the meaning of this sign-evidence for themselves. They were every bit as blind as Jesus had said.

APPLICATION:

Jesus died to establish our peace with God, and one another. The unity that binds the Trinity together as One is the same unity that Jesus died and rose again to create within the family of God. Oneness that is the product of love is Jesus' unwavering design for all believers. He would have a great deal to say, and to pray about this unity in the final hours prior to his death.

How united in love is your family? Your church fellowship? Your relationships within the Body of Christ?

What can you do to create and protect the unity that Jesus died to give us?