



“WHAT ARE WE DOING?”

JOHN 11:45-57


An aerial view of a city, likely Jerusalem, with a large church spire in the center. A lightning bolt strikes the spire, and a plume of smoke or dust rises from the impact. The city is built on a hillside, and the surrounding landscape is hilly and arid.

LAZARUS the lightning rod

The events of the preceding verses provided ample evidence of the power of Jesus – a power He would later manifest in His own resurrection. But the display also proved to be divisive. There was no middle ground. One could no longer ignore or dismiss Jesus.


"The raising of Lazarus marks the highest point (not in the Manifestation, but) in the ministry of our Lord; it is the climax in a history where all is miraculous – the Person, the Life, the Words, the Work. As regards Himself, we have here the fullest evidence alike of His Divinity and Humanity; as regards those who witnessed it, the highest manifestation of faith and of unbelief. Here, on this height, the two ways finally meet and part. And from this high point – not only from the resolution of the Sanhedrists, but from the raising of Lazarus – we have our first clear outlook on the Death and Resurrection of Christ, of which the raising of Lazarus was the typical prelude."

Edersheim, *The Life And Times Of Jesus The Messiah*, Book 4, Chapter 21, p. 688



SOME BELIEVED – OTHERS TATTLED

- Belief does not require witnessing a miracle, but it is the logical conclusion. Given the evidence before them, "many of the Jews...believed in Him." They were a generation privileged to witness firsthand the miraculous power of the Lord. Seeing Lazarus come forth was the memory of a lifetime! Jesus reminds us, however, that faith does not require firsthand experience of the miraculous (John 29:29). Paul echoes this in 2 Corinthians 5:7 – "We walk by faith, not by sight." Also remember John 12:37-43.



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- Others were not so impressed. Instead of examining the event with clarity, they only saw more evidence confirming what they wanted to believe about Jesus (“He has a demon,” “He is of the devil,” “He is dangerous and a loose cannon”). They proceeded to tattle on Jesus, rather than engaging with Him.

SO THEY CONVENED A COUNCIL





“WHAT ARE WE DOING?”

- Indeed! This must be the question when we realize how at odds we are with Christ. “What am I doing, serving the flesh? What am I doing, working for my idols? What am I doing, treating spiritual problems like they don’t matter? What am I doing, looking for every excuse imaginable to avoid confronting my sin? What am I doing, pushing God away when God is the only eternal solution to my torment and emptiness?”



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- “This man is performing many signs” – The evidence itself was never in question. Even Jesus’ detractors couldn’t deny that something was exceptional about Him. Similar to Acts 4:13ff. What are you going to do with the evidence of the empty tomb?

**“THE ROMANS
WILL COME AND
TAKE AWAY BOTH
OUR PLACE AND
OUR NATION”**



1. Attachment can be deceptive



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- 2. Loss isn't always the worst thing in the world**



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- 3. Losing little, gaining much**



- 1. Attachment can be deceptive**
- 2. Loss isn't always the worst thing in the world**
- 3. Losing little, gaining much**
- 4. Don't give the Romans so much credit**





CAIAPHAS

- His father-in-law, Annas, served as high priest from 6-15 AD. He was deposed after the death of Augustus. As the position of high priest was considered very political, men would serve for short periods that typically corresponded with changes in Roman politics.
- Annas continued to serve as a powerful influence over the establishment in Jerusalem, as five of his sons (and Caiaphas, a son-in-law) were appointed as high priests between 15-63 AD.



CAIAPHAS

- Known primarily (and notoriously) as the priest who oversaw the trial of Jesus, Caiaphas is given some special attention in our text.
- He sharply criticizes his peers for failing to recognize the opportunity in front of them. The situation could be manipulated to their advantage! One man could die in order to assuage the Romans' growing frustration with separatist movements in Judea. If Jesus could be the focal point for unrest, His death could essentially "kill two birds with one stone."

WAS HE A PROPHET?

- First, it's possible that God used Caiaphas as a prophet, even to the point of inspiration. After all, Balaam said what God told him to say, in spite of his wickedness (remember Numbers 31:8, 16, Revelation 2:14). God used Nebuchadnezzar as a tool of prophecy, as well (Daniel 2:28).

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- It's also possible that Caiaphas was unwittingly prophesying. The phrase "one man should die for the people" was a common expression of the time, and frequently debated among the scribes. So by employing conventional wisdom, he is unknowingly expressing a gospel truth with much deeper implications.

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- Also understand that "prophesying" isn't always a miraculous activity, and it isn't always about predicting the future. In fact, Biblical prophets spent most of their time commenting on the events of their own day. So Caiaphas could just be "prophesying" in a loose sense by surmising that Jesus' death could have far-reaching implications for the Jewish nation (which, again, he fails to recognize in the deepest sense).



“...but that He might gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad”

John 12:31-32, Isaiah 2:2-4, Micah 2:12-13, 4:6-8