

The following is a rough transcript, not in its final form and may be updated.

The Fallout

John 11:45-53

Intro: Last time, we looked at the amazing miracle of Lazarus being raised from the dead; truly, a seminal moment in the ministry of Jesus Christ. I would like to make 2 points concerning this miracle before we move on to our study of the consequences that resulted from it. First, we need to understand that in this scene, Jesus fought with death at the tomb of Lazarus and in a sense, He plundered the grave. But this was not a complete victory over death itself. To affect a complete victory, Jesus would need to die Himself and then be resurrected to new life; which will happen soon. This was basically a shot across the bow. Jesus is letting death know it would soon be conquered completely.

Second, we should also understand that Lazarus was not actually resurrected here, merely resuscitated. It was significant that he was raised still in his grave clothes because he will need them again. Lazarus will eventually die for a second time. Jesus, on the other hand, would leave His graveclothes behind in His tomb because He would never have need of them again. When the resurrection occurs for all of God's people, it will be to new life in new bodies, never to face death again; never to be touched by the stain, bondage or consequence of sin ever again.

The raising of Lazarus was an amazing miracle, it was a public miracle that could not be discounted or ignored. As such, it produced some amazing consequences. For some people present, this miracle resulted in them placing their faith in Jesus Christ, for others, not so much. The remainder of this chapter will deal with the fallout from this miracle. Any time the truth of Jesus Christ is revealed, there is always a fallout – some for good and some for evil. In the next few verses, we will see the reaction of faith and the reaction of unbelief to the powerful revelation of the glory of God.

45-46- The raising of Lazarus was over and the people who were standing by and had witnessed this miracle were now left to wonder at it. What would be their reaction? Would they believe on Jesus or would they fail to believe? Would they become His followers or His enemies? As we can see, our text shows both of these reactions occur; some believe and some don't. The

believers were found in the group of people who came to mourn and weep with Mary. These were there due to honorable motivations. It's not surprising, after such a revelation of the glory of God, that many of them believed in Jesus. Whatever doubts they may have had before, it was now plain to them that He was the Sent One from God and they respond to this revelation of divine power with believing faith. Clearly, it was the sight of the miracle that brought this resulting faith and it's also true that a faith that's based on miracles is not the highest form of faith but in John's Gospel this kind of faith is accepted as being better than having no faith at all.

Many believed, but not all. In fact, these individuals did far worse than just refuse to believe; they actually reported on Jesus to the Pharisees, a group known to be the enemies of Jesus. John doesn't explicitly state their motivations here but the context implies that they were acting in a spirit of hostility towards Jesus. They were bearing the latest news to the enemy, not trying to win them over to faith in Jesus. This reaction is mindboggling. These people were so close to the kingdom they could hear the pearly gates squeaking on their hinges, yet there is no evidence that they even entertained the idea of faith in Jesus. How is that possible? If the heart will not yield to truth then the grace of God cannot bring salvation. These people could have experienced a spiritual resurrection in their own lives but they didn't. The effect of their tattletale resulted in an official gathering of the religious authorities of the nation

47-48- This was not just a strange council; it was an evil council! We just considered the actions of those who saw the miracle and then went and reported it to the Pharisees but when we see the reactions of those it was reported to, the hatred of the first group is mild by comparison! The bystanders reported the event to the Pharisees who, we can assume, informed the Sadducees, who then called a meeting of the great Sanhedrin, the top governing body of the nation of Israel. Here were the best men of the nation (in their own opinion). There were the chief priests in their robes (Sadducees). There were the Pharisees, the holiest men of all, in their phylacteries.

These men met in holy council. No doubt they opened the meeting with prayer. What were they meeting for? To plot against a perfectly innocent man! He was a man who had been doing great miracles, so great in fact that a proper council would have met to consider how to encourage His

work and lead more of the multitudes to follow Him.

This was also an unlikely coalition. The Pharisees were not a political party at all. They only had political power because they were so highly regarded in the community. They were actually a religious party (denomination). They were concerned mainly with observing each minute requirement of the law and with encouraging others to do so. They were sticklers for detail. On the other hand, the Sadducees were not religious men. They were the politicians. They were wealthy and aristocratic and they collaborated with the Romans to preserve their privileged position. These men had much to lose, especially if there was any civil disorder; that would bring swift intervention by Rome. They compromised to preserve their position. If justice and civil order ever came into conflict, the Sadducees would always be found on the side of the Romans in preserving civil order.

The curious thing is that these two groups were enemies. They hated each other and often opposed each other bitterly. Yet, they're here working together in opposition to Jesus. Why is that? Their opposition to Jesus was more important than their rivalry with each other. The Pharisees hated Jesus for His religious views; He exposed their sin. The Sadducees hated Him for being a threat to their privileged position. Both hated Jesus, so they collaborated. This gives us insight into the hearts of sinful men. People would rather unite with their enemies than follow Jesus. Many people will agree with and work with anyone if it means they don't have to agree with or work with Jesus.

We should also see that this evil council took up an evil discussion. At first, they floundered about in indecision. "What are we accomplishing? This guy performs many miraculous signs." The most interesting part of this discussion is the unintentional confession of Jesus' strength as opposed to their weakness! There's no attempt to deny the miracles. Before, they had sent officers to arrest Jesus and admitted they didn't know what He was doing (7:51). Now they know and they still deny Him! "They admitted the miracles, yet opposed the Miracle worker."

They also admit to being powerless over an extended period of time. They were acknowledging that their efforts to thwart Jesus had been ineffective for some time and now they were at their wit's end. They were alarmed that Jesus' popularity was growing despite their best efforts. The question in

vs47 implies that a new policy is needed because the old one wasn't working. Jesus' plans were working but theirs weren't. Their efforts were weak but He was strong.

Why did this not bring them to confess their sin and believe on Jesus? Because: sin had formed and hardened them. No matter what others did, no matter even what Jesus did, these men were determined not to believe on Him. They wouldn't even consider whether His miracles should be taken as evidence that He was who He said He was, or even that He was a prophet that they should listen to. Those whose minds are made up to oppose what Jesus stands for will not be convinced by any amount of evidence. They had already shut their ears to such considerations and were now only looking for a way to either stifle His influence in their world or eliminate Him from it completely.

As extreme or foolish as this sounds; it's not so different from what many people foolishly do today. It seems that they will run to any excuse that will prevent them from coming to grips with Jesus Christ. Once, a lady was invited by a friend to go to a gospel meeting. "I am afraid to go for fear I will get converted." Imagine that! She was afraid that she might get straightened out with God! Another time, a minister asked about the husband of a certain woman in his congregation, "I have not seen your husband lately. Has he lost interest in the gospel?" Her answer was, "Well, he is afraid to come; for when he comes and hears the Word, it takes him nearly 2 weeks to get over it." When presented with the truth, people often get convicted. Instead of dealing with the conviction properly, they just run from the truth. Has this been your policy? I hope not; for the truth will continue to be preached but you may not be around to hear it.

49-52- When an evil council convenes for an evil discussion, it can only result in an evil conclusion. Caiaphas the high priest has apparently heard enough and now rudely weighs in with his own opinion, but was it really his? There are 2 aspects to his statement here; a spiritual and a political. I would like to deal with the spiritual aspect of his statement first because it is the most significant, but the political aspect also has some important implications for us.

The amazing thing about this statement from this godless, self-centered, collaborating politician is that John informs us that his ruthless advice to this council was actually and unwitting prophecy. Caiaphas unintentionally

foretold not only that Jesus would die but also why He would die and the scope of His atonement.

Does it shock you that divine prophecy should come from such an evil source? It shouldn't when you consider God's dealings with men throughout biblical history. Didn't the Holy Spirit breathe through Balaam to pronounce blessings on Israel instead of the cursing he was hired to declare? Is unconscious prophecy really that incredible? Didn't Pilate do the same when he nailed that plaque over the cross that said, 'This is the King of the Jews,' in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin? He did it as a rude joke, but he was actually proclaiming an everlasting truth. When The Pharisees stood at the foot of the cross and taunted Jesus saying, 'He saved others, Himself He cannot save.' they spoke a deeper truth than they knew. Couldn't the lips of this unworthy, selfish, unspiritual, unscrupulous, cruel priest be used to unconsciously proclaim the glorious central truth of Christianity, that Christ died for the nation that killed Him and rejected Him; and not for them alone, but for the whole world?

This teaches us that God even uses the wrath of man to accomplish His purposes. In fact, Jesus could have said to Caiaphas exactly what Joseph said to his brothers after he revealed himself to them in Egypt. "You meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive" ([Gen 50:20](#)). This situation is both ironic and tragic. It's tragic because this was the only time in Israel's history when the eternal High Priest came and stood by the earthly high priest – the reality by the shadow – and through His sacrifice of Himself for sin, Jesus would empty the earthly priesthood and the earthly sacrifices of all their validity. Caiaphas was unaware of all this. Plus, he not only lost his place and his nation, but his office as well; hereafter it would forever be passed on to the One who alone is worthy of it and who alone is able to execute that office perfectly.

But Caiaphas did prophecy about Jesus' death. First of all, he told the nature of it. From the human perspective, the death of Jesus Christ was a ruthless murder for political ends. The Sanhedrin wanted to kill Jesus to preserve their power and privilege. Pilate consented to His death to avoid being accused of encouraging an insurrection. But, from the divine perspective, which is conveyed in the prophecy, the death of Jesus Christ was a vicarious sacrifice for sinners. Meaning, Jesus was taking their place,

dying in their stead, taking on Himself the guilt and punishment of their sins so that there might be nothing left for them but God's grace, God's forgiveness and God's heaven.

Thankfully, John amplified the prophecy of Caiaphas and informs us of both the power and scope of Christ's death. Jesus didn't just die for sin, He died specifically for sinners. His substitutional death is the heart of the Gospel, which Paul declares to be the power of God unto salvation ([Rom 1:16](#)). Jesus' death on the cross wasn't atonement for sin in the abstract, it was the ransom price paid for the eternal redemption of specific sinners. His death made possible the reconciliation of sinners to God, the putting away of their sin and their continual sanctification by His Spirit.

John also declares the scope of His atonement, which includes representative from the Gentile nations and from our own time too. Jesus didn't just die for Israel; He died so that He might bring many into glory from every tongue, race, tribe and nation. He's gathering them in. Maybe He's gathering you into the company of His people today.

Caiaphas' statement was an unwitting prophecy but it was also very much a political statement too. While the council hemmed and hauled about what to do, Caiaphas interjects and rudely tells them that they don't know what they're doing; then he counsels them in complete self-interest. Of course, he didn't present it that way. As politicians always do, he said in effect, "We must think of the good of the people!" It was on the level of self-interest that the council was swayed. Expediency and self-interest are the basis by which the most heinous crimes are committed.

Here again is another case of high dramatic irony. Caiaphas said it was better to kill Jesus than the entire nation perish. But this happened anyway. The very events they dreaded came to pass. Sure, they got rid of Jesus, at least in one sense. But in the aftermath of the crucifixion and the gradual scattering of the Christians from Jerusalem, the revolutionary spirit began to grow with intensity in Palestine; a war broke out, and the Romans intervened to crush the rebellion. In that great war, all the strongholds of Israel were defeated, Jerusalem was besieged and destroyed, and the temple was left in ruins. How different things might have been if these men had received their Messiah! But they didn't. They resisted Him, and the sin of resistance had consequences. One theologian notes that, "The very

steps they took to save their nation destroyed their nation.”

Since the destruction of Jerusalem took place about A.D. 70 and since John was writing some 20 yrs later, no one who read the Gospel in John's day would miss this irony. Also, they wouldn't miss the irony provided by a thriving Christianity either. The Sanhedrin acted as it did to put down Jesus. “If we let him go on like this,” they said, “everyone will believe in Him.” What happened? Men believed on Him. They killed Jesus; but it was through His death that the gospel spread, not only throughout Judaism but to all nations (52). In fact, as John wrote this Gospel, there were already Christians in every major city and in every country of the Roman Empire.

You can't frustrate God. You can oppose Him, but only you will pay the consequences, as these men did. You may oppose Jesus, but Christianity will spread. The Bible says, “There are many plans in a man's heart, Nevertheless the Lord's counsel – that will stand” (Prov 19:21).

53-57- The people wondered what Jesus would do; the authorities wondered where Jesus was but, Jesus simply waited. His hour hadn't yet come so He waited until the time was right and the day arrived for His return to the city. The stage is now set for the greatest drama in history where man would do his worst and God would give His best.

What about you? What are you doing with the Miracle-worker? You really only have 3 options: 1) Ignore Him. Many try this but they won't get far with it because He does too many miracles. How will you ignore Him when everyone close to you begins to believe on Him? How will you ignore Him on the day when every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father (Phil 2-11). Can He be ignored?

2) Oppose Him. Many have done this too. Caiaphas wasn't the first or even the worst persecutor of Jesus. History is full of those who opposed Jesus, but where are they? The church is still here but what happened to the persecutors?

Can you oppose Jesus? Do you really think you will be successful? Not for long.

3) Believe on Jesus and follow Him. Yes, He went to the cross but the cross

was the only way to victory; for Him and for us. It's only by losing your life that you can save it; it's only by following Jesus that victory is won. If you reject Him, you won't win. In fact, you'll lose all that you have, just as these Jewish rulers did. If you believe on Jesus and follow Him, you may lack some things now, but you will pass beyond all that and one day share in His glory. 😊