

THE WEEK BEFORE THE WEEK BEFORE
JOHN 11:45-53

Introduction:

1. Most of the 11th chapter of John relates the story of Jesus being called to the town of Bethany to help His sick friend Lazarus. This took place the week before the week of Passover that culminated in the crucifixion of Jesus.
2. Lazarus' sisters, Mary and Martha, had begged Jesus to come because they knew their brother was near death and Jesus could keep him from his earthly appointment. **Hebrews 9:27** *And as it is appointed to men once to die, but after this the judgment...*
3. Lazarus died and Jesus delayed coming for two more days.
4. Jesus let it be known that Lazarus wouldn't stay dead. Jesus would bring him back to life for the glory of God and so that Jesus Himself would be glorified.
5. Jesus went to the tomb of Lazarus and spoke three little words, "Lazarus, come forth." see v. 44
6. Now you would think that everyone who saw what had happened would rejoice. Not so.

I. FEAR OF POLITICAL RETRIBUTION. **vv. 45-48**

- A. When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead He was quite aware that He was risking His own life.
- B. He knew that a miracle so public could not be overlooked.
- C. Those who were determined against Jesus perceived that in this respect Jesus would win the multitude to belief in Him as the long-awaited King of the Jews.
- D. But if there were any such popular enthusiasm aroused, and loudly declared, then the Romans would interfere, and, as they said, "come and take away both our place and nation."
- E. They felt themselves between a rock and a hard place, yet they did not know that the Romans would eventually come and take away their place and nation. **Luke 19:41-44** *Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation."*
- F. This was literally fulfilled in 70 AD when Titus and his Roman army conquered Jerusalem.

II. USING JESUS AS A SCAPEGOAT. **vv. 49-52**

- A. Caiaphas takes a more practical view of things, and laughs at their helplessness.
- B. "Why!" he says, "do you not see that this Man, with His popular following, instead of endangering us and bringing suspicion on our loyalty to Rome, is the very person we can use to exhibit our faithfulness to Caesar."
- C. "Sacrifice Jesus, and by His execution you will show Rome that we are on their side."
- D. Caiaphas is the type of the bold, hard politician, who is convinced that he sees more clearly than all others.
- E. He had no idea that in making Jesus a scapegoat he was tampering with God's divine plan. **John 10:17-18** *Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.*

III. PUTTING JESUS ON A HIT LIST. **vv. 53-57**

- A. The raising of Lazarus brought matters to a head so to speak.
- B. The Sanhedrin took the advice of Caiaphas seriously and plotted the death of Jesus.

C. They were of one accord and had fully made up their minds on the subject; and they waited only for a proper opportunity to put Jesus to death.

D. Yet all of this was God's providential plan for the salvation of mankind. **Mark 10:45** *For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.*

Conclusion:

1. Isn't it amazing that some think they can thwart God's plans?
2. Judas thought he could, Pilate thought he could, Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin thought they could, but man is not God.
3. God had it all planned out since before He ever created the world or mankind. **1 Peter 1:20-21** *He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.*
4. Realize the love that Jesus has for you by willfully giving His life on the cross for your sins.
5. Today the choice is yours - life or death?
6. Here we are the week before the week before Passover. Will you choose life by asking Jesus to forgive you of your sins and be your Savior?