

## John 11:45-57

Many of the people who were with Mary believed in Jesus when they saw this happen. <sup>46</sup> But some went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. <sup>47</sup> Then the leading priests and Pharisees called the high council together. “What are we going to do?” they asked each other. “This man certainly performs many miraculous signs. <sup>48</sup> If we allow him to go on like this, soon everyone will believe in him. Then the Roman army will come and destroy both our Temple and our nation.”

<sup>49</sup> Caiaphas, who was high priest at that time, said, “You don’t know what you’re talking about! <sup>50</sup> You don’t realize that it’s better for you that one man should die for the people than for the whole nation to be destroyed.”

<sup>51</sup> He did not say this on his own; as high priest at that time he was led to prophesy that Jesus would die for the entire nation. <sup>52</sup> And not only for that nation, but to bring together and unite all the children of God scattered around the world.

<sup>53</sup> So from that time on, the Jewish leaders began to plot Jesus’ death. <sup>54</sup> As a result, Jesus stopped his public ministry among the people and left Jerusalem. He went to a place near the wilderness, to the village of Ephraim, and stayed there with his disciples.

<sup>55</sup> It was now almost time for the Jewish Passover celebration, and many people from all over the country arrived in Jerusalem several days early so they could go through the purification ceremony before Passover began. <sup>56</sup> They kept looking for Jesus, but as they stood around in the Temple, they said to each other, “What do you think? He won’t come for Passover, will he?” <sup>57</sup> Meanwhile, the leading priests and Pharisees had publicly ordered that anyone seeing Jesus must report it immediately so they could arrest him.

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## Background

The Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling council of 71 members, gathered to discuss Jesus. They acknowledged His miracles but feared that if His influence grew, the Romans would take away their temple and nation. While they admitted Jesus performed many signs, early Jewish writings attribute His power to demonic sources rather than God. Ironically, their rejection of Jesus led to exactly what they feared. The Romans destroyed the Temple and ended Israel’s national independence in 70 AD. After this, Jesus withdrew to Ephraim, which was most likely 10-15 miles north of Jerusalem.

## Teaching Points

### 1. The person of Christ and the work of Christ divide people.

In verses 45-46, some who witnessed Jesus’ miracle believed, but others reported Him to the Pharisees. Even seeing a miracle, such as Lazarus being raised to life, doesn’t guarantee belief. As the rich man in Luke 16 was told, people won’t believe even if someone rises from the dead

unless they first believe Scripture. While the Spirit of God works to draw people to faith, there must be a willing heart to believe.

## **2. The death of Christ was substitutionary.**

In verse 50, Caiaphas said it was better for one man to die than for the whole nation to perish. He meant it politically, but verses 51-52 show us God used it as prophecy predicting Jesus' substitutionary death—not only for Israel, but for all believers worldwide. We see a similar situation in Numbers 24:17, when the false prophet Balaam unknowingly made a true Messianic prophecy. Jesus didn't die for a "good cause" but as our Substitute, taking the penalty for our sins so we wouldn't have to. Have you personally accepted Jesus as your Substitute?

### **Application**

#### **1. Don't make decisions like Caiaphas!**

Caiaphas didn't weigh evidence to find the truth. Rather, he made a wrong decision based solely on political expediency and personal gain. Christians can also make wrong choices when driven by financial, social, or political benefits rather than God's will. Don't assume a lucrative job offer or college scholarship is God's plan just because it seems beneficial. Instead, pray and seek God's guidance in every decision.

#### **2. Don't throw away your common sense!**

After the plot to kill Him was set in motion, Jesus wisely avoided danger by retreating to Ephraim, near the wilderness. Using common sense doesn't mean a lack of faith. It's a God-given gift we shouldn't ignore. We must balance courage with wise, prayerful decisions.