



JOHN 11:47-53 | THE POLITICAL MACHINE AIMS TOWARD KILLING JESUS

- Verse 47 –
 - The word for **a council** is συνέδριον [sunedrion], from which we get the English transliteration *sanhedrin*.
 - The word *Sanhedrin* appears in other sources, but never in the Bible (KJV), where it is always translated.
 - The translations of Josephus most often use *Sanhedrin*, and it is shown to be a council of 71 men, likely with its origin in the 70 Elders of Moses' day, along with Moses.
 - During the time of Jesus, the Sanhedrin was the definitive decision maker for the Jewish nation on religious matters.
 - This “supreme court” knew that they had to do something about Jesus, **for this man doeth many miracles**.
 - They do not deny the miracles of Jesus, they only acknowledged them as problematic.
 - Note for the modern reader: *beware when the evidence doesn't align with your predetermined conclusions*.
- Verse 48 –
 - The verb translated **let him thus alone** is ἀφήμι [apiami], which is often translated *forgive*. This verse can be understood to say, “*if we forgive him...*”
 - Their *voiced* concern was national, for they surmised that the people would recognize Jesus as Messiah, and the Messiah does one major thing: *establish the Kingdom*.
 - This would be insurrection in the eyes of the Romans (and of the Sanhedrin, who wanted insurrection, but under their terms).
 - If Jesus attempted to establish the kingdom, then the Romans would certainly **come and take away both our place and nation**.
 - Note that the word **place** is not a reference to their *position*, as it could be in English, but is the word τόπος [topos], which is a physical place, doubtless a reference to the Temple.
 - A few observations:
 - The council sought to save their **place and nation** by enshrining the *status quo*, and in doing so lost what they were trying to save.
 - What we have is the record of the *spoken* concerns. One wonders whether their true motivation was not their own positions of power.
 - This appears to be a first-hand account of what was said in the council. How was this known? Could it be that Lazarus was such an influential and well-known man that some of his friends were on the council and later recounted the details? Could it be that Nicodemus was in this group and later recounted the details?
 - Since the worry of the council was insurrection, it is obvious that the belief of that day was a *future, physical, fraternal kingdom* that would overthrow the Roman government. Were they simply mistaken (as per the modern theologians) or was this the teaching of the Hebrew scriptures?
- Verses 49-50 –
 - The man Caiaphas had been in office about six-months. However, being the son-in-law of the previous high priest, Annas, he was very familiar with the activities of the council and of the nation.
 - Taking blood on his own hands, he boldly said that for *expediency* **one man should die**, that man, of course, being Jesus.

- Clearly the death sentence had been delivered, even before the trial.
- Verse 51 –
 - We are told that **this spake he not of himself**. Do not misunderstand this to imply that one could understand the statement to be *about himself*, rather it tells us that the statement is not *from himself*. So, literally we must understand that **he prophesied** when he spoke these words.
 - He *declared* that Jesus would die, **he prophesied** that Jesus would **die for that nation**. This prophetic utterance was given in his own ignorance, but was prophetic nonetheless.
 - Note that the word **nation** is ἔθνος [ethnos], and this serves as a reminder that ethnos *can* mean Gentiles but does not inherently mean Gentiles, and *can* refer to Jews.
- Verse 52 –
 - The Word of God (we must take it definitively) is that Caiaphas was giving a prophetic word that, in the death of Christ, God would **gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad**.
 - This stems from Caiaphas' word, the **whole nation** (v. 50), not the partial nation that resulted in the division of Israel and Judah.
 - Letting scripture interpret itself, the **children of God** who have been **scattered abroad** but would someday be **gathered together in one** are none other than the Jewish nation.
 - To read “the church” into this is simply agenda-driven eisegesis.
 - This is the same prophecy as seen many times in scripture (Lev. 26:33, Jer. 23:3, for example).
- Verse 53 –
 - The council **took counsel together** to kill Jesus.
 - The word **took counsel together** is συμβουλευώ [sumbouleo], made of the prefix *sum* (together) and *boulomai* (a wish or desire).
 - They “lumped their desires together” to figure out the pretense under which they would **put him to death**.

JOHN 11:54-57 | EDGING CLOSER TO CRUCIFIXION

- Verse 54 –
 - Jesus had been in hiding as an “open secret” for several months, just outside the jurisdiction of Judea and away from the adoring crowds of Galilee. Now He goes to **a city called Ephraim**.
 - While we are not certain of the location of this city, we know that it is **near to the wilderness** (i.e.: the wilderness of Judea, to the west and south of Jerusalem). It appears to be a small Jewish town but outside of Judea.
 - Because Jesus returns to Bethany from Jericho (see Mark 10:46-11:1), it must be in the vicinity of Jericho, and northeast of Jericho, in order to be **near to the wilderness** but not *in* the wilderness.
- Verse 55 –
 - All faithful Jews would travel to Jerusalem for **the passover**. They would arrive early for ceremonial purification rites (and, doubtless, for fellowship, patriotism, and nostalgia).
 - Note that the Greek word translated **passover** is πάσχα [pascha], from which latin languages derive their word for *Easter*. For example, *pascua* in Spanish.
 - The English word *passover* was coined by William Tyndale for his English translation of Scripture. Prior to that, and often after that, the word *Easter* was used in the English language to refer to *Passover* (there being no such word). See Acts 12:4. See also Bryan Ross' book *Don't Passover Easter: A New Defense of "Easter" in Acts 12:4*.
- Verse 56 –
 - Jesus had always attended the Passover (see Luke 2:41), and so they expected Him. However, they also knew that the people viewed Him as Messiah and that the leaders rejected Him as Messiah, creating an extremely dangerous situation for Jesus.
- Verse 57 –
 - Jesus was “Jerusalem's most wanted.”