

## The chief priests and Pharisees convened a council

*John 11:43-54*

*43 When He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." 44 The man who had died came forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings, and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."*

*45 Therefore many of the Jews who came to Mary, and saw what He had done, believed in Him. 46 But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them the things which Jesus had done.*

*47 Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, "What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs. 48 "If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." 49 But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, 50 nor do you take into account that it is expedient for you that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation not perish."*

*51 Now he did not say this on his own initiative, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation, 52 and not for the nation only, but in order that He might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. 53 So from that day on they planned together to kill Him.*

When the Pharisees received the report that Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead, they did not do a jig. They didn't praise God. They did not rejoice that their Messiah had come. Far from it.

No, they immediately brought in the chief priests and held a council to come up with a plan to put a stop to the whole thing.

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OK so here's the deal: they acknowledged that Jesus was performing many signs.

It would have been impossible to deny this fact by now anyway. Too many people had witnessed or heard about the latest miracle.

/But their first and only concern was for their own personal interests: their power and their authority and their perks.\

The Greek emphasizes the word “our” here. “Our place”. “Our nation”.

/The only authority they lived in fear of was the Roman government.\

Think about it! Not one word about the Lord’s interests! Not the dwelling place of the Lord. “OUR place”. Not the LORD’s people. “Our people”.

/The chief priests and Pharisees should have been less concerned about the Romans and MORE CONCERNED about THE LORD!\

*John 11:48 "If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."*

Here's the irony: the council ultimately did arrest Jesus and condemn Him to die.  
/But the Romans came anyway. \

They demolished Jerusalem. The nation broke apart into a thousand pieces and was scattered around the world. Just as the prophet Daniel predicted:

*Dan 9:26*

*Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.*

But the chief priests and Pharisees paid no heed to the prophet Daniel.

/This came to pass when the Roman armies leveled Jerusalem in 70 AD.\

*Luke 21:20-24*

*20 "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near.*

*21 "Then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those who are in the midst of the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter the city; 22 because these are days of vengeance, so that all things which are written will be fulfilled. 23 "Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days; for there will be great distress upon the land and wrath to this people; 24 and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.*

/And the religious leaders were to blame for all of it.\

In the gospel of Matthew, Jesus cursed the scribes and Pharisees. He said:

*Matt 23:34-36*

*34 "Therefore, behold, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes; some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city, 35 so that upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. 36 "Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.*

What's the explanation? How could the leaders have been so wrong?

Well, Jesus told them, earlier in the gospel of John.

*John 5:36-40*

*36 "But the testimony which I have is greater than the testimony of John; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish — the very works that I do — testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me.*

*37 "And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form. 38 "You do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent.*

*39 "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; 40 and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.*

/They prided themselves on being disciples of Moses, yet ....\

*John 5:46-47*

*46 "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me. 47  
"But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"*

/They rejected all of the witnesses that God sent to attest to the fact that Jesus was His Son!\

You can go through the statements and deliberations of the chief priests and Pharisees, especially John 9:13-34, John 11:47-53, John 12:42-43.

How did they evaluate the claims of Jesus? What was their standard of measure?

/Were their deliberations guided by what the scriptures had to say? \

Or by other considerations they considered more important, more necessary, more expedient, than God's word?

We know the answer.

Another time, Jesus spoke a parable to the chief priests and elders. It was the parable of the landowner and his vineyard.

*Mat 21:33 "Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who PLANTED A VINEYARD AND PUT A WALL AROUND IT AND DUG A WINE PRESS IN IT, AND BUILT A TOWER, and rented it out to vine-growers and went on a journey. 34 "When the harvest time approached, he sent his slaves to the vine-growers to receive his produce. 35 "The vine-growers took his slaves and beat one, and killed another, and stoned a third. 36 "Again he sent another group of slaves larger than the first; and they did the same thing to them. 37 "But afterward he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' 38 "But when the vine-growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.' 39 "They took him, and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. 40 "Therefore when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine-growers?" 41 They said to Him, "He will bring those wretches to a wretched end, and will rent out the vineyard to other vine-growers who will pay him the proceeds at the proper seasons."*

*42 Jesus said to them, "Did you never read in the Scriptures,*



*'THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED,  
THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone;  
THIS CAME ABOUT FROM THE LORD,  
AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES'?*

*43 "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it. 44 "And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust."*

*45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they understood that He was speaking about them.*

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Today we have had the misfortune of focusing on the chief priests and Pharisees.

/You have to wonder about these guys. How could they be so off the mark? \ How could they ignore all of the evidence that Jesus was exactly who He said He was?

/Common, everyday people saw the same evidence and believed in Him\ : fishermen from Galilee; a woman of Samaria (not even a Jew): a man who was blind from birth; Martha and Mary and Lazarus (who were already believers before Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead); a crowd of mourners; simple folk who lived by the Jordan river.

The stone which the builders rejected has become the corner stone. That was right out of the Jewish scriptures. Psalm 118.

/The religious leaders - the builders - should have been looking for the corner stone – Jesus! But they rejected what their own Scriptures had to say about Him.\

*Eph 2:19-22*

*19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.*

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So we have a really simple lesson to take from today's message.

/Keep your eyes on Christ our corner stone!\

How? Do what the chief priests and Pharisees failed to do.

/Treasure the words of God as more necessary than our daily food.\

*Matt 4:4*

*4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'"*

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*John 8:31-32*

*31 So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."*

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/Let's press on to know the truth. Let us come to know Christ better.\

*Phil 3:8-11*

*8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; 11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.*