

John 11:45–57
Responses To The Claim of Christ
“I AM the Resurrection and the Life”

⁴⁵ Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him. ⁴⁶ But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did. ⁴⁷ Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, “What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. ⁴⁸ If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.”

⁴⁹ And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all, ⁵⁰ nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.” ⁵¹ Now this he did not say on his own *authority*; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, ⁵² and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.

⁵³ Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death. ⁵⁴ Therefore Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there into the country near the wilderness, to a city called Ephraim, and there remained with His disciples.

⁵⁵ And the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went from the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves. ⁵⁶ Then they sought Jesus, and spoke among themselves as they stood in the temple, “What do you think—that He will not come to the feast?” ⁵⁷ Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a command, that if anyone knew where He was, he should report *it*, that they might seize Him.

Introduction

The population of self-identified witches has risen dramatically in the United States in recent decades, as interest in astrology and witchcraft practices have become increasingly mainstreamed.

From 1990 to 2008, Trinity College in Connecticut ran three large, detailed religion surveys. Those have shown that Wicca grew tremendously over this period. From an estimated 8,000 Wiccans in 1990, they found there were about 340,000 practitioners in 2008.

They also estimated there were around 340,000 Pagans in 2008."

Pew Research Center studied the issue in 2014, discovering that 0.4 percent of Americans, approximately 1 to 1.5 million people, identify as Wicca or Pagan,

meaning their communities continue to experience significant growth.

The rapid rise is not a surprise to some given philosophical and spiritual trends in culture.

"It makes sense that witchcraft and the occult would rise as society becomes increasingly postmodern. The rejection of Christianity has left a void that people, as inherently spiritual beings, will seek to fill," said author Julie Roys, formerly of Moody Radio, in comments emailed to The Christian Post Tuesday.

"Plus, Wicca has effectively repackaged witchcraft for millennial consumption. No longer is witchcraft and paganism satanic and demonic," she said, "it's a 'pre-Christian tradition' that promotes 'free thought' and 'understanding of earth and nature.'"

Yet such repackaging is deceptive, Roys added, "but one that a generation with little or no biblical understanding is prone to accept."

"It's tragic, and a reminder of how badly we need spiritual revival in this country, and also that 'our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the powers of this dark world,'" she said, referencing Ephesians 6, which explains spiritual warfare.

Similarly, radio host and author Carmen LaBerge noted on [Twitter](#) that the figures are striking in that witches outnumber certain Christian denominations.

"As mainline Protestantism continues its devolution, the U.S. witch population is rising astronomically. There may now be more Americans who identify as practicing

witches, 1.5 mil, than there are members of mainline Presbyterianism (PCUSA) 1.4 mil," she said Tuesday.

In October 2017, Market Watch [reported](#) that the psychic services industry grew 2 percent between the years 2011 and 2016, an industry now worth approximately \$2 billion.

Portrayals of occultism as either fun or morally neutral have been appearing more in culture in recent years and in light of growing interest. Companies like cosmetics giant Sephora have attempted to capitalize on it, marketing a "Starter Witch Kit" to consumers interested in dabbling in witchcraft. However, the company angered a number of actual witches and was ultimately forced to apologize and pull the product.

Perhaps most infamously, months after the presidential inauguration a May 2017 [editorial](#) in the Los Angeles Times written by novelist Diana Wagman openly spoke of putting a curse on the president and encouraged others to cast similar spells in order to #BindTrump.

Half a millennia ago, the world was flooded with darkness. The Word of God was not known by the common people. The Gospel was not known. Words, like "Jesus Christ came to save sinners" was a foreign concept.

The Darkness was deep and far reaching. Very few areas had any light at all. Men and women groped in darkness falling head first into the pit of Hell.

It was in this context that God in His wonder plan and His Sovereign Gracious pleasure Brought LIGHT

On October 31, 1517,

When John Calvin was 8 yrs old, Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses on the door of the church at Wittenberg Germany which became the catalyst for the Protestant Reformation. His primary concern at that time was the selling of indulgences for the forgiveness of sins. It would later become one of the greatest acts of God in Reformation in the the churches history

The Great Solas of the Reformation would become its battle cry, Scripture Alone

Grace Alone,

Faith Alone

Christ Alone

The Glory of God Alone.

Years later John Calvin would rise on the scene in Geneva Switzerland, preaching twice every Sunday and then twice every day every other week. He would preach expositionally verse by verse through books of the Bible

He developed the motto “Post tenebras lux”. In English, that’s “After the darkness, comes the light.” Of all the mottos of the Reformation, this one was the most well known. It is engraved on the Reformation

wall in Geneva, underneath the statues of Calvin, Knox, Farrel and Beza.

It remains to this day the motto of the city of Geneva, and for hundreds of years, it was also engraved on all of Geneva's coins.

And, for those who had sat for so long in the darkness. That was just how they felt, and how they expressed it. Back in the beginning of the sixteenth century, Geneva's city motto was, "Post Tenebras Spero Lucem." After darkness, I hope for light.

After the darkness I hope there'll be light. When the Reformation hit they changed it. And they stamped coins with the new motto, "Post Tenebras Lux." After Darkness Light.

It seems now, some 500 yrs later that the motto may need to be "Post Lux Tenebras" After Light Darkness.

We have entered into a dark time in the world.

False Religion in on the Rise

Islam is the fastest growing Religion in the world

Atheism, and Satanism in on the rise.

The Evangelical Church is full of Professors of Faith who show no commitment to the deep things of God.

And while the church is to be salt and light in the world, we have hidden our light in the fog of contemporary shallow none confrontational sugar coated gospel sermonettes

We as salt have lost of savor and our effectiveness is worth little.

We have allowed the world to squeeze us into its image.

Long before there were, lasers, fog machines, blue hews on stage,

Long before the puny, plexiglass podiums, there were stout, solid, pulpit, fixed and unmovable for the proclamation of the Word of God.

Men and women would come and listen to Men of God exposit the Bible Verse by Verse. It was this kind of preaching and teaching that brought light. That brought reformation and revival to the dead souls of humanity.

This is what God used to produce genuine believers that were willing to teach there children these truths even though they knew that their children may be burned alive for believing these doctrines.

Shallow preaching produces shallow faith

Deep Preaching produces deep genuine faith.

What we need today are more churches unwilling to compromise the truth of Scripture so as to proclaim clearly the gospel. It is this Gospel that separates that distinguishes between the wheat and tare, the true and the false.

The Call that Jesus made is exactly this. There was nothing easy about following Christ.

His words made it clear that you were either with him or against Him. No middle ground.

No such thing as passive discipleship
 No such thing as nominal Christianity with Christ.
 It was committed or Lost
 genuine believer to give his life for Christ
 or Lost

John 12:25–26 (NKJV)

²⁵ He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.

Matthew 10:37–39 (NKJV)

³⁷ He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. ³⁸ And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

³⁹ He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

Luke 9:23–26 (NKJV)

²³ Then He said to *them* all, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. ²⁴ For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My

sake will save it. ²⁵ For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost? ²⁶ For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His *own* glory, and *in His* Father's, and of the holy angels.

Like many other times in the ministry of Christ, His Words and his Works divide. draws lines in the sand.

You have to come to a conclusion

You have to agree with Nicodemus in John 3
John 3:2 (NKJV)

² This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; **for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.**"

The Miracle of the resurrection of Lazarus is the pinnacle of the ministry of Christ. It is the final nail driven in the plot of the Pharisees to kill Jesus.

Review

John 11:23–44

²³ Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”

²⁴ Martha said to Him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

²⁵ Jesus said to her, “**I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. ²⁶ And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?**”

²⁷ She said to Him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”

²⁸ And when she had said these things, she went her way and secretly called Mary her sister, saying, “The Teacher has come and is calling for you.” ²⁹ As soon as she heard *that*, she arose quickly and came to Him.

³⁰ Now Jesus had not yet come into the town, but was in the place where Martha met Him. ³¹ Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and comforting her, when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, followed her, saying, “She is going to the tomb to weep there.”

³² Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.”

³³ Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. ³⁴ And He said, “Where have you laid him?”

They said to Him, “Lord, come and see.”

³⁵ Jesus wept. ³⁶ Then the Jews said, “See how He loved him!”

³⁷ And some of them said, “Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?”

³⁸ Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it.

³⁹ Jesus said, “Take away the stone.”

Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, “Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been *dead* four days.”

⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, “Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?” ⁴¹ Then

they took away the stone *from the place* where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up *His* eyes and said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.

⁴² And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said *this*, that they may believe that You sent Me.” ⁴³ Now when He had

said these things, He cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth!” ⁴⁴ And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was

wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “**Loose him, and let him go.**”

Lesson

I. The New Believers

II. The Natural Haters

III. The Nominal Followers

I. The New Believers

⁴⁵ Then **many** of the Jews who had come to Mary, and **had seen** the things Jesus did, **believed** in Him.

Πολλοὶ οὖν ἐκ τῶν Ἰουδαίων, οἱ ἐλθόντες πρὸς τὴν Μαριάμ καὶ **θεασάμενοι** ὃ ἐποίησεν, **ἐπίστευσαν** εἰς αὐτόν·

45 Then **many** of the Jews who had come to Mary, and **had seen** the things Jesus did, **believed** in Him.

many
Πολλοὶ

4183 polýs – many (high in number); multitudinous, plenteous, "much"; "great" in amount (extent).

4183 /polýs ("much in number") emphasizes the quantity involved. 4183 (polýs) "signifies 'many, numerous'; . . . with the article it is said of a multitude as being numerous" (Vine, Unger, White, NT, 113,114) – i.e. great in amount.

45 Then **many** of the Jews who had come to Mary, and **had seen** the things Jesus did, **believed** in Him.

and **had seen**

καὶ **θεασάμενοι**

theaomai: to behold, look upon

Original Word: θεάομαι

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: theaomai

Phonetic Spelling: (theh-ah'-om-ahee)

Usage: I see, behold, contemplate, look upon, view; I see, visit.

2300 theáomai (from tháomai, "to gaze at a spectacle") – properly, gaze on (contemplate) as a spectator; to observe intently, especially to interpret something (grasp its significance); to see (concentrate on) so as to significantly impact (influence) the viewer.

[2300 (theáomai) is the root of 2302 /théatron ("spectacle in a theatre"), the root of the English term, "theatre."]

and **had seen**

καὶ **θεασάμενοι**

theaomai: to behold, look upon

this verb is a Aorist MIDDLE Participle, stressing that they saw it for themselves.

The verb for “had come” is a “Aorist Active Participle”, The had come but not emphasis on for themselves. they came to mourn for Mary and with Mary to the tomb.

45 Then **many** of the Jews who had come to Mary, and **had seen** the things Jesus did, **believed** in Him.

believed

ἐπίστευσαν εἰς αὐτόν· Aorist Act. Ind 3P

4100 pisteúō (from 4102 /pístis, "faith," derived from 3982 /peíthō, "persuade, be persuaded") – believe (affirm, have confidence); used of persuading oneself

(= human believing) and with the sacred significance of being persuaded by the Lord (= faith-believing). Only the context indicates whether 4100 /pisteúō ("believe") is self-serving (without sacred meaning), or the believing that leads to/proceeds from God's inbirthing of faith.

We are assuming that these are genuine believers, because of the the context ant the contrast.

Context

John 11:25–27 (NKJV)

²⁵ Jesus said to her, “**I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. 26 And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?”**

²⁷ She said to Him, “Yes, Lord, **I believe that You are the Christ**, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”

John 11:40–42 (NKJV)

⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, “**Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?”**

⁴¹ Then they took away the stone *from the place* where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up *His* eyes and said, “**Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.**

⁴² **And I know that You always hear Me, but because of**

the people who are standing by I said *this, that they may believe that You sent Me.*”

Contrast

John 11:46 (NKJV)

46 **But** some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did.

But

δέ

expressing opposition or antithesis, as the words but, yet, however

Adversative: but, on the contrary, on the other hand

John 11:48 (NKJV)

48 If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.”

The Bible talks about 2 kinds of belief

1. The Kind that saves
2. The Kind that does not save

Saving Belief is

John 8:30–32 (NKJV)

³⁰ As He spoke these words, many believed in Him.

³¹ Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.

³² And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

John 15:4–5 (NKJV)

⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

⁵ “I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

James 2:18–20 (NKJV)

¹⁸ But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. ¹⁹ You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! ²⁰ But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

Colossians 1:21–23 (NKJV)

²¹ And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled ²² in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight— ²³ if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and

steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Non Saving Belief

James 2:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!

John 2:23–25 (NKJV)

²³ Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did.

²⁴ But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all *men*, ²⁵ and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.

James 2:20 (NKJV)

²⁰ But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

James 2:26 (NKJV)

²⁶ For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Matthew 7:21–23 (NKJV)

²¹ “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

²² Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’

²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’

The Miracles of Christ always had this intended and obvious effect.

Some believed savingly some did not

John 20:30–31 (NKJV)

³⁰ And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

The Miracle of the Resurrection of Lazarus had a amazing effect on the crowds. Because of the the overwhelming power of God on display of a man being resurrected after 4 days dead. It could not be refuted.

The Liberal Sadducees who did not believe in the resurrection were faced with irrefutable proof that the resurrection is true.

There was no room to squirm out of the obvious truth.

No way to say that he was not really dead.

No way to say he was only asleep

No way to say he was someone else.

No way to say it was a contrived theatrical spectacle intended to deceive

The Pharisees, many who felt their position and authority threatened by the belief in Christ, could not deny the obvious.

A man having been dead 4 days standing in front of them in complete health.

So as a result, there is no great revival among the Leadership of Israel. Rather they vividly illustrate their true natures, and hatred for Christ. They begin the plot to Kill him. After all the evidence is overwhelming. NO way to refute it.

So just get rid of the problem

KILL Jesus

II. The Natural Haters

⁴⁶ But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did. ⁴⁷ Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, “What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. ⁴⁸ If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.”

⁴⁹ And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all, ⁵⁰ nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.” ⁵¹ Now this he did not say on his own *authority*; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, ⁵² and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.

⁵³ Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death.

⁵⁴ Therefore Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there into the country near the wilderness, to a city called Ephraim, and there remained with His disciples.

I use natural Haters because this natural to the lost man. We don't natural like or love God.

John 3:19–20 (NKJV)

¹⁹ **And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.**

John 15:23 (NKJV)

²³ **He who hates Me hates My Father also.**

John 15:25 (NKJV)

²⁵ *But this happened that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, 'They hated Me without a cause.'*

Proverbs 1:28–29 (NKJV)

²⁸ “Then they will call on me, but I will not answer;
They will seek me diligently, but they will not find me.

²⁹ Because they hated knowledge
And did not choose the fear of the Lord,

The first group are supernatural believers
The Second Group are Natural haters

46 But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did.

Jesus' words and actions frequently caused division among those who heard and witnessed them (cf. vv. 36–37; 7:12, 43; 9:16; 10:19–21);

as He Himself said, “Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division” (Luke 12:51).

While many believed in Jesus, having seen the true significance of Lazarus's resurrection (v. 45),

some did not. Instead they **went to the Pharisees** to tell them what **Jesus had done**.

Some commentators argue that these individuals **went to the Pharisees** because they were perplexed, or to try to win the Jewish leaders over. But since they are contrasted with the many who believed (v. 45), and they surely knew of the Pharisees' bitter hatred for Jesus (cf. 7:13), their intent was likely hostile. They had been unbelievers before the miracle and, incredibly, remained so afterward. Homer Kent observes,

This response of unbelief in the face of the clearest proof is confirmation of Christ's teaching in Luke 16:31: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." The chief cause of unbelief is not inadequate information, but a heart in rebellion against the authority of God and his word. (*Light in the Darkness: Studies in the Gospel of John* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977], 152)

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006). [John 1-11](#) (p. 481). Chicago: Moody Press.

That they **told** the Pharisees **the things which Jesus had done** further confirms their hostility to Him, because "those who believed would no doubt want to stay with Jesus, whereas the skeptics would be desirous of letting the religious authorities know what had happened so that they could take the necessary

action” (Merrill C. Tenney, “The Gospel of John,” in Frank E. Gaebelein, ed., *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981], 9:121–22).

It is not surprising that they sought out the Pharisees instead of the Sadducees. As the experts in the law, as teachers and leaders of the synagogue, the Pharisees had more contact with the common people than the aristocratic Sadducees.

Nonetheless, the Sadducees would soon be involved with the Pharisees in finding a way to silence Jesus (vv. 47–52). By informing the Pharisees about Jesus’ actions, these unbelievers evidenced their own stubborn hard-heartedness. Their response demonstrates that no amount of evidence, even something as spectacular as the raising of a dead man, can convince some sinners to abandon their hypocrisy and sin to come to the Savior

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006). *John 1–11* (pp. 481–482). Chicago: Moody Press.

47 Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, “What shall we do?”

Alarmed by the news of the most astonishing miracle yet performed by Christ, and understanding the public

effect of it, the Pharisees were galvanized into action. They did not have the authority to act on their own (since the Sadducees were the majority party and controlled the Sanhedrin), so along with some of **the chief priests** (former high priests and members of important priestly families) **the Pharisees convened** a meeting of the full **council** (the Sanhedrin).

The Sanhedrin was the ruling body of Israel and had wide-ranging authority in civil and criminal, as well as religious, matters (though the Romans withheld the right of capital punishment [18:31]). (For more information on the Sanhedrin, see the exposition of 3:1 in chapter 8 of this volume.)

The Pharisees and Sadducees normally did not get along, as they had little in common. The Pharisees were devoted to the Law (both the inspired Old Testament Scriptures and their human traditions); the Sadducees accepted only the Pentateuch as authoritative. The Pharisees affirmed the resurrection of bodies and the existence of angels, both of which the Sadducees rejected (Matt. 22:23; Acts 23:8). The Pharisees were ultranationalists and chafed under the yoke of Rome; the Sadducees were compromising political opportunists.

The Pharisees were primarily from the middle class of Jewish society; the Sadducees tended to be wealthy aristocrats. (For more information on the Pharisees and Sadducees, see the exposition of 3:1 in chapter 8 of

this volume.) But despite their differences, their mutual hatred for Jesus drove them to take joint action against Him. What brought them together was the threat Jesus posed to their power and influence.

There was only one item on the meeting's agenda: what to do about Him. The question that opened the meeting, **“What are we doing?”** or “What are we accomplishing?” (niv) could also be rendered “What shall we do?” (kjv).

Both meanings are appropriate; if the question is taken in the first sense, the answer was, “Not very much!” in light of the Lord's popularity (cf. 12:19). And as to what they should do, they would soon hear a sinister proposal from their leader (vv. 49–53).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006). [John 1–11](#) (p. 482). Chicago: Moody Press.

47 Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, “What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. **48** If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.”

The Sanhedrin's concern was that Jesus was **performing many signs**, and if they **let Him go on** doing them, **all men** would **believe in Him** (cf. 12:19), **and the Romans** would **come and take away both** their **place** (the temple [cf. Acts 6:13–14; 21:28]; symbolic of their authority, power, and privilege) **and** their **nation** (the Jewish people).

That even Jesus' most bitter enemies did not deny His miracles offers convincing proof of their authenticity. But despite their admission that He was **performing many signs**, they refused to believe in Him as Messiah and Lord, choosing instead to hold to their damning hypocrisy and eliminate Him.

They were masters at deliberately ignoring the evidence, as they had earlier done when Jesus healed a man born blind (9:1–41). The old adage that there are none so blind as those who will not see was certainly true in their case (cf. 9:39–41).

For the Sanhedrin, Jesus threatened the status quo. Its members were not judging the situation based on objective standards of right and wrong, but by how they would be affected. If Jesus' miraculous signs ignited the fervent messianic passions of the Jewish people (cf. 6:15), the Sanhedrin could lose everything.

That danger was especially grave, they knew, since the Passover was approaching and Jerusalem would be packed with huge crowds of zealous pilgrims. If the Roman governor got wind of a potential uprising,

his response would be swift and harsh—Pilate had already demonstrated his capacity for ruthlessness (Luke 13:1).

Rome did not tolerate insurrection (as the Jews would learn a few decades later when the Romans crushed their revolt and sacked Jerusalem); any uprising would be brutally put down. But in this as in everything else, His opponents completely misjudged Jesus; He had not come to incite a revolution (cf. 18:36; Matt. 22:21), but “to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). (It is not until He returns to earth at His second coming that He will vanquish all rulers, set up His earthly kingdom, and rule as King of kings and Lord of lords [Rev. 20:1–6].)

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006). [John 1–11](#) (pp. 482–483). Chicago: Moody Press.

49 And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all,

With the Sanhedrin unsure of its next move, **Caiaphas, who was high priest that year**, proposed a radical direction. Joseph Caiaphas had been appointed high priest in a.d 18 by the Roman prefect Valerius Gratus.

He would continue in office until he was deposed in a.d. 36. He was the son-in-law of Annas, who had served as high priest from a.d. 6–15 and still retained a great deal of power and influence (cf. 18:22; Luke 3:2).

John's note that he **was high priest that year** does not imply that John mistakenly believed that high priests served only for one year. It merely means that Caiaphas was the high priest at that time. Theoretically, a high priest served for life.

By the first century, however, the office had become heavily politicized, with the Romans frequently removing those high priests who displeased them. Caiaphas's tenure as high priest was actually one of the longest in the first century, a tribute to his political acumen and his conniving and opportunistic nature.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006). *John 1-11* (p. 483). Chicago: Moody Press.

⁴⁹ And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, **“You know nothing at all,**

His opening remark, **“You know nothing at all,”** was not designed to win friends or flatter his colleagues. It typified the kind of rude, boorish behavior that, according to the first-century Jewish historian Josephus, characterized the Sadducees.

“The behavior of the Sadducees one toward another is in some degree wild,” he wrote, “and their

conduct with those who are of their own party is as barbarous as if they were strangers to them” (*The Wars of the Jews*, 2.166).

It should be remembered, however, that Josephus was a Pharisee and thus hardly an unbiased observer). Caiaphas was frustrated by the indecision of the rest of the Sanhedrin; in response to their hesitancy he proposed a radical, thoroughly ruthless solution—one in keeping with his character.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006). *John 1–11* (pp. 483–484). Chicago: Moody Press.

50 nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.”

His proposal was death. “**It is expedient,**” he told them, “**that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation not perish.**” He presented them with a false either/or dilemma, giving them two extreme alternatives as if there were no other options. Either Jesus dies, Caiaphas argued, or the nation perishes. His outward veneer of patriotic concern masked his seething hatred and jealousy of Jesus.

Such pious hypocrisy would reach its apex during Jesus’ trial. Caiaphas would tear his robes in feigned shock and sorrow over Jesus’ “blasphemy,” while

secretly being delighted that he had found a way to condemn Him (Matt. 26:64–65).

Ironically, though the Sanhedrin was successful in crucifying Jesus, the nation did not escape. The **whole nation** did **perish** at the hands of the Romans in the massacre of a.d. 70 and the years that followed.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006). *John 1–11* (p. 484). Chicago: Moody Press.

51 Now this he did not say on his own authority; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation,

The startling footnote that Caiaphas **did not say this on his own initiative** does not mean that he was forced to act against his will; he was no puppet, and was responsible for his own wicked words. But God providentially invested those words with a meaning that he did not intend. In his capacity as **high priest** and hence technically by office God's spokesman (cf. Num. 27:21; 2 Sam. 15:27), God ordained an opposite meaning when Caiaphas **prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation.**

He spoke cynical words of political expediency, claiming that Jesus must die to preserve the Sanhedrin's power and the nation's existence.

However, Caiaphas unwittingly spoke prophetically of Christ's sacrificial death (cf. 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24).

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NKJV)

²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

1 Peter 2:24 (NKJV)

²⁴ who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.

Romans 3:25 (NKJV)

²⁵ whom God set forth *as* a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,

God sovereignly turned his wicked, blasphemous words into truth (cf. Gen. 50:20; Ps. 76:10; Prov. 16:9; 19:21; Acts 4:27–28).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006). *John 1–11* (p. 484). Chicago: Moody Press.

Genesis 50:20 (NKJV)

²⁰ But as for you, 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.

Psalms 76:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ Surely the wrath of man shall praise You;
With the remainder of wrath You shall gird Yourself.

Proverbs 16:9 (NKJV)

⁹ A man's heart plans his way,
But the Lord directs his steps.

Proverbs 19:21 (NKJV)

²¹ There are many plans in a man's heart,
Nevertheless the Lord's counsel—that will stand.

Acts 4:27–28 (NKJV)

²⁷ “For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together ²⁸ to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.

52 and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.

While Caiaphas thought only in terms of Israel, Jesus' death was much broader in scope. It was **not** to be **for the nation only, but in order that He might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.** From a purely Jewish

perspective, **the children of God who are scattered abroad** referred to the Jews of the Diaspora, those who lived outside of Palestine.

They, too, would be gathered into the body of Christ's redeemed people (cf. Acts 2:5, 41; 11:19). But in a wider sense, it referred to the salvation of the Gentiles (cf. 10:16; 12:32; Isa. 42:6; 49:6; 56:6–8; Acts 9:15; 10:1–11:18; Rom. 1:16) and their union with the Jews in the church (1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:28; Eph. 2:11–18; 3:6; Col. 3:11).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006). *John 1–11* (p. 484). Chicago: Moody Press.

1 Corinthians 12:13 (NKJV)

¹³ For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

Galatians 3:28 (NKJV)

²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 2:11–18 (NKJV)

¹¹ Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—¹² that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

¹⁴ For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, ¹⁵ having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace, ¹⁶ and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. ¹⁷ And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

53 Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death.

The high priest's malicious proposal to execute Jesus met with the Sanhedrin's approval, **so from that day on they planned together to kill Him.** Their decision, made well before Jesus was even arrested, rendered His later trial a total mockery. It was a mere formality, confirming a sentence that had already been passed.

54 Therefore Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there into the country near the wilderness, to a city called Ephraim, and there remained with His disciples.

In the wake of the Sanhedrin's decision to put Him to death, **Jesus no longer continued to walk publicly among the Jews, but went away from there to the country near the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim; and there He stayed with the disciples.** Whether He exercised His omniscience on this occasion, or was informed of the Sanhedrin's decision by one of its members who was sympathetic to Him (such as Nicodemus [John 7:50] or Joseph of Arimathea [Mark 15:43]), or both, Jesus became aware of the decision and took appropriate action.

The Lord remained in absolute control of the circumstances, and would not allow Himself to be taken before the appointed time in God's plan (7:8, 30, 44; 8:20; 11:9–10).

“To those with eyes to see he was making a theological statement: no human court could force him to the cross” (D. A. Carson, *The*

Gospel According to John, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 423).

The **city called Ephraim** to which Jesus went and **stayed with the disciples** is probably to be identified with the Old Testament city of Ephron (2 Chron. 13:19). It was located about four miles northeast of Bethel on the edge of the **wilderness**, and about a dozen miles from Jerusalem. From there Jesus would make a brief visit to Samaria and Galilee (Luke 17:11–19:28) before returning to Jerusalem for the Passover at the appointed time for His passion (John 12:23).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006). [John 1–11](#) (p. 485). Chicago: Moody Press.

III. The Nominal Followers

⁵⁵ And the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went from the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves. ⁵⁶ Then they sought Jesus, and spoke among themselves as they stood in the temple, “What do you think—that He will not come to the feast?” ⁵⁷ Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a command, that if anyone knew where He was, he should report *it*, that they might seize Him.

55 And the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went from the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves.

This is the third and final **Passover** mentioned in John's gospel (2:13; 6:4). As required by the Law (cf. Num. 9:6), **many went up to Jerusalem out of the country before the Passover to purify themselves.** Jerusalem was crowded well before Passover began; some estimate that more than a million people packed the city during the three major feasts (Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004], 354).

It is bitterly ironic that the people zealously purified themselves “while their leaders had indelibly stained themselves as they ruthlessly plotted the death of the blameless Son of God” (Gerald L. Borchert, *John 1–11*, The New American Commentary [Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2002], 368). MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006). [*John 1–11*](#) (pp. 485–486). Chicago: Moody Press.

56 Then they sought Jesus, and spoke among themselves as they stood in the temple, “What do you think—that He will not come to the feast?”

57 Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a command, that if anyone knew where He was, he should report *it*, that they might seize Him.

They showed intense interest in Jesus, but no commitment. They were, in fact, ultimately indifferent to

Him; many who eagerly anticipated Jesus' arrival and hailed Him as Messiah would soon cry out, "Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him!" (19:15). Their fickle devotion proved that, despite their superficial concern, they were actually just as hard-hearted as their hostile leaders.

The resurrection of Lazarus, like the rest of Christ's life and ministry, forced people to respond to Him. Many responded in faith; others were indifferent; and some were murderously hostile.

As Jesus' final Passover drew near, it would not be long before those who were indifferent and those who were hostile would unite to crucify the Lord of glory (1 Cor. 2:8).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006). [John 1-11](#) (p. 486). Chicago: Moody Press.

John 6:66–68 (NKJV)

⁶⁶ From that *time* many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.

⁶⁷ Then Jesus said to the twelve, "**Do you also want to go away?**"

⁶⁸ But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

John 12:36–37 (NKJV)

³⁶ **While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.**” These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them.

³⁷ But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him,