

**Lighthouse Bible Church**

**December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013**

**John 11: 45 – 57**

*Scripture Reading Luke 20: 9 - 19*

**‘The Reactions to the Resurrection of Lazarus’**

**Stand – Read – Pray**

Just to remind you of where we are at; Jesus came to Bethany and went to the tomb where Mary and Martha’s brother Lazarus had been buried. He had been dead for four days and Jesus stands before the tomb and tells someone to take the stone away.

They take the stone away and Jesus cries out with a loud voice ‘Lazarus, come forth’, and he did, grave cloths and all. This would have solidified in the minds of all who were there, including the Jews who wanted Him dead, that He is the resurrection and the life.

He comes out of the grave and then Jesus tells them to ‘loose him and let him go’ and they did. Then everything that Jesus had said to His disciples in verse 4, when He said ‘this sickness is not unto death’, and Verse 11 where He said ‘Lazarus sleeps but I go that I may wake him up’, and everything that He had said to Martha about her brother rising again in Verse 23 to what He says to Mary and to all that are there in Verse 40 ‘did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?’ became crystal clear at that moment Lazarus, who had been dead for 4 days, walked about of the tomb very much alive.

From a time of mourning, sorry and loud weeping over the death of their beloved brother and Jesus’ friend, to a time of wonder and rejoicing in a miracle that would cause several different reactions. One reaction would be the increase of faith in some, for others they would believe in Jesus for who He says He is, and still others would hate Him all the more.

By the way, the ones who hate Jesus and deny who He is never deny His miracles. All throughout scripture you never see His enemies denying His miraculous powers, they just deny the source of them. It's hard to deny a man who is now living that has been dead for 4 days.

But those haters of Jesus didn't care about the facts, they were blind to the truth and didn't want to believe. So consequently, as Verse 40 said, 'if you believe you would see the glory of God' and 'if you don't believe, then you won't. And it is not different than today when it comes to believing about Jesus, either you do or you don't. So how does everyone react to this miracle? Look at verse 45.

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

First of all we are told how the **Jews**, the religious leaders, reacted to the miracle of Lazarus being raised from the dead. And by the way, as is always the case with Jesus, that John records, there is a division among the people and the dividing line is between believing and not believing.

This division was also present among the Jews: some who wanted Jesus dead and some were more sympathetic to Him and His teaching and His miracles. You see that back in **John 9: 16** where it says **therefore some of the Pharisees said 'this Man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath'** others said **'how can a man who is a sinner do such signs and there was a division among them.** Later in **John 10: 19** it says **therefore there was a division again among the Jews because of these sayings.** Some said He had a demon and others said these are not the words of a demon, can a demon open the eyes of the blind? And here they are again, divided about Jesus.

It says **many of the Jews ... believed in Him.** That is the key. They didn't believe so much in the miracle as they believed in the miracle worker.

Their faith was placed on the right object, not the miracle but the One who had the power to perform that miracle of raising someone from the dead. Their faith was placed in Christ, and that is the only saving kind of faith. Isn't that what **Acts 4: 12** says **neither is their salvation in any other for there is no other name..**

Remember what John said in **John 1: 12** **but as many as received Him, He gave the right to become the children of God, to those who believe in His name.** That narrows down how and in whom to believe for salvation; which goes contrary to many religions of today. But that is the narrow, exclusivity of Christ and the gospel message.

It is believing in the Christ of the Bible as the Son of God, God in human form, that He was sinless, that He was crucified and died on the cross as the punishment for our sins, that He was buried, that He rose from the grave and that He is the resurrection and the life and that He is the way and the truth and the life and the only way to heaven. Then there is a second group of Jews in Verse 46 and these are the ones who want Him dead.

**Verse 46: but some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things that Jesus did.**

These are the unbelieving, hard hearted Jews who hated Jesus and wanted Him dead. They just witnessed a miracle in their unbelief and they still do not believe, because they can't. There is no capacity to believe the truth, and as we have said before, no miracle will convince an unbeliever of the truth.

That is one reason why we spend time in prayer before you get here; in case someone comes who is an unbeliever, that God would do open their heart to the truth to receive the truth and be converted. So they leave and tell the Pharisees what they had just witnessed and look how they respond; verse 47 – 48.

**Verses 47 – 48: then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said ‘what shall we do? For this Man works many signs. 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.**

Once they hear this news about Jesus raising a man from the grave and that some of the Pharisees had believed in Him as the Son of God, the Messiah and the resurrection and the life, they **gathered a council** together.

This council would have been made up of Chief Priests, the Sadducees and the Pharisees. This would have been both a political and religious gathering to discuss what they should do and by the way the Sadducees didn't even believe in a resurrection and yet they are a part of the decision making process.

And they ask the question **what shall we do.** The right answer would be to believe on Jesus as the Son of God because everything He has been teaching and the miracles He has done point to Him as the Messiah. But they don't believe and they are more concerned with themselves. They don't even talk about the miracle because they are too busy worrying about what is going to happen to them so look what they say.

**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.**

If we let Him alone, everyone will believe in Him. Well, that would be a good thing and there were a lot of people, including those who were formally His enemies, believing in Him. This council did not want that and this is the reason why. **The Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.**

They were afraid that if **everyone would believe in Him** that would cause a problem with the Roman government because they might look at this growing group as a group of people bannng together to overthrow the Romans. And if the Romans felt threatened by an insurrection by this group of believers, they would scatter them and these religious leaders would have nothing and would have no following.

Jesus had quite a following and when He comes into Jerusalem for the final time, many of the people will hail Him as ‘the King of Israel’ and added to that, it is the Passover time and hundreds of thousands of people would be in the city as well. So the religious leader feel threatened that they will lose everything. And so they decide the best thing to do is to get rid of Jesus. Look at Verses 49 – 50.

**Verses 49 – 50: and one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them ‘you know nothing at all 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.**

So there decision is; let’s just get rid of this troublemaker so we are not affected by His influence on our nation. They are so concerned about themselves that they don’t even consider whether it is right or wrong to kill Jesus, they want to do what is best for them, at the expense of Jesus just like the parable of Luke 20.

Unfortunately, our world today deals with things the very same way. I don’t care if it is right or wrong as long as it affects me in a good, positive way, what is this situation going to do for me. That is the attitude of today ‘if it feels good, do it’. It may not be the right thing but if you think it benefits you, then do it.

These are the religious and political leaders of the nation of Israel who are acting like this. Kill this one man so the rest of us can keep our place and authority and all the benefits that go along with it.

Sometimes we see that in our religious and political arena's today; not so much the killing of one man but passing laws that benefit some at the expense of what is morally or ethically right or the passing of laws that kill not one, but many through the act of abortion.

And of course, this is the lie of the devil from the beginning, isn't it? God told Adam and Eve and Satan comes along and says you deserve more, take what you want, don't let anyone tell you what is right or wrong, if that fruit looks pleasing to your eyes, then eat it. This kind of situation ethics and relativism flies in the face of God's standard of absolute truth and a standard of right and wrong.

So Caiaphas, who is the spokesman says 'don't you know anything'? All we have to do is kill one Man and save our place and nation and continue to go about doing what we are doing. If He's dead, there's no insurrection, no rebellion and no more problems. And of course, the Jewish leaders already want Jesus dead so this sounds like a pretty good option to them.

And by the way, killing Jesus wouldn't save their nation, it would actually destroy it, right? 40 years after the death of Jesus, Rome came in and destroyed the entire city of Jerusalem and over a million Jews of that nation were killed. Not only that, but what Caiaphas said was really a prophecy concerning Jesus as well. Look at Verse 51.

**Verse 51 - 52: 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. And not for that nation only but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.**

What Caiaphas meant as a statement of hatred, anger and revenge and ultimately blasphemy against Jesus, God uses as a prophecy about the foreordained death of Jesus for His people.

God used the mouth of a blasphemous unbeliever to prophesy about the death of Jesus much like God used the prophet for hire, Balaam, to prophesy what God intended to do. If God can use a donkey to speak the truth, He can use anyone for His glory. Isn't that what **Psalm 76: 10** says **the wrath of man shall praise You**. What he meant for evil **Genesis 50: 20** says **God meant for good**.

Look at **Acts 4: 27 – 28** for truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and all the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatever YOUR hand and YOUR PURPOSE determined before to be done. What they meant in the killing of Jesus for their own good, God had already planned for the good of the nation of Israel and those scattered abroad which included Jews and later Gentiles alike to be one in Christ. **Galatians 3: 28** says **there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus**. So what decision does this council come up with? Look at Verse 53.

**Verse 53: then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death.**

So everything they do from this point on, no matter how legitimate it appears to be, is nothing more than their plan to kill Jesus. They will claim He is a blasphemer, they will claim that He said He can rebuild the temple in 3 days, they will claim that He said He is the king of the Jews, all with the intention of killing Him and trying to make it look legitimate thru several false trials.

**Verse 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.**

Jesus is either told or He knows, because He is omniscient, that they formerly gathered together and decided to kill Him, so He avoids any contact with the Jews until the time is right.

So the plot is hatched to kill Jesus. My question to you is; who killed Jesus? Well according to **1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 2: 14 – 15** it was the Jews. But, according to the passage we read in **Acts 4: 27 – 28** it was the Romans, the Gentiles and the Jews. Everyone, who has ever sinned is responsible for the death of Jesus Christ; even you here today.

Remember that Jesus is in control of when He will be arrested and eventually killed, not the Jews or anyone else. Jesus over and over again said that ‘My time is not yet come’, and it still hasn’t come yet so He goes to the **near the wilderness to the city of Ephraim and stays there with His disciples.**

**Verse 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 sets the time frame for when the council decided to kill Jesus and what was going on around the city of Jerusalem at the time. This is the final Passover where our Lord will be crucified and die as the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.

According to **Numbers 9: 1 -14** if you were unclean, especially being defiled by touching a deceased person, you had to be cleansed and purified before you could partake of the Passover meal. So **many of the people came to Jerusalem to purify themselves** before Passover began.

They would arrive days and weeks before the Passover celebration began to purify themselves and the city of Jerusalem would have upwards of a million people inside the walls wanting to celebrate the Passover.



And the irony of that is, is that the people religiously, ceremonially and traditionally cleansed and purified themselves, while the Jewish religious leaders were defiling themselves with their plot to kill Jesus and they wouldn't believe they were in need of any cleansing or purifying.

**Verse 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?'** They were looking for Jesus and hoping He would be in the temple to teach them some more or maybe even do another miracle.

They were curious about Jesus; much like many people today. They will go to church they will go to a religious events out of curiosity and watch for Jesus. But Jesus is not a spectator sport you just watch yet that is what many come to do; to watch and listen and never participate never experience salvation, never having a genuine faith, no love no commitment, just an observer. 'What do you think, do you think He'll be here?'

Well, many of those curious observers watching for Jesus to entertain them again are going to be many of the same ones who will in just a few days shout 'crucify Him'.

**Verse 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.**

If anyone sees or hears where Jesus is, they were supposed to report it. Think about this; Jesus displayed incredible power in raising Lazarus from the grave and all the religious leaders want to do is kill Him.

That is the depth of how far a depraved heart will go in its sin against Christ and you and I were the same way and some of you still are here this morning.  
Gospel.

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Introduction and Review:

Verse 45:

John 9: 16, 10: 19, Acts 4: 12  
John 1: 12

Verses 46 – 50:

The plot to kill Jesus

Verses 51 – 53:

Psalm 76: 10, Genesis 50: 20  
Acts 4: 27 – 28, Galatians 3: 28

Verse 54:

1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 2: 14 – 15  
Acts 4: 27 – 28

Verses 55 – 57:

Numbers 9: 1 – 14

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