

GOSPEL OF JOHN
WHO IS IN CONTROL HERE?
JOHN 11:53-57

Introduction

In this chapter we have seen Jesus do something that should have answered the question once and for all about Who He is! He raised Lazarus from the dead — a man who had been dead and in the grave for four days!

What was the reaction of the Pharisees when their snitches brought word of what Jesus had done? Did they finally believe on Him? No! In fact, they were more determined than ever that **JESUS HAD TO DIE** in order that they might retain their place of leadership among the Jewish people!

What we see is an issue of **WHO IS IN CONTROL HERE?** And that is what I want us to see in the final verses of John 11.

I. WE SEE THE PHARISEES WHO THOUGHT THEY WERE IN CONTROL! (Vs 53)

A. Let's Understand Who The Pharisees Were!

We know the **Pharisees** were a powerful **Jewish** religious sect in Jesus' day.

The **Pharisees** had taken the **Old Testament Law** and made it into an **unreasonable and unscriptural system of legalism** while **ignoring the true spiritual meaning that God had intended**.

Now, the **Pharisees feigned a zeal** for the **Word of God**, but in reality **they had no such zeal** for it. They only had **a zeal for their own religious system** and **a zeal to rule it over or lord it over the Jewish people** for their own selfish purposes!

In fact, **Jesus rebuked them** in *Matthew 15:1-9* for **supplanting the Word of God with their man-made traditions** and thereby making the Word of God of none effect!

Jesus also rebuked them for their **self-righteousness** which they **prided** themselves in! **Not realizing that their own self-righteousness could never get them into heaven!**

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In fact, in *Luke 18:9* just before where Jesus told the parable of *"The Pharisee and the Publican"*, the Scripture says *"And he spake this parable unto certain which **trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others.**"*

In our series here in John's Gospel, we have seen **Jesus repeatedly rebuke them for their failure to recognize Him and believe that He is the Son of God!**

The **evidence from Jesus' many miracles** was overwhelming! The **evidence from Scripture** was too if they would have just taken time to honestly search the Scriptures!

The Pharisees, in response, refused any such notions that Jesus could possibly be God in the flesh! So, **they constantly found fault with Jesus' miracles instead of seeing that those miracles showed Him to be exactly Who He claimed to be!**

And Jesus also pointed out their **hypocrisies** in *Matthew 23* and even used the phrase *"woe unto, you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites"* eight times as **he lay out the evidence of both their hypocrisies and their pride!**

The Pharisees only became more indignant and more determined in their unbelief and in their desire to see Jesus dead!

They **denied the authority of Jesus** and **chose rather to flaunt their own authority by making it an official counsel decision to plot to put Jesus to death!**

By plotting Jesus' death, this was their *"We'll show Him who is in control!"* moment!

That's who the Pharisees were!

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- B. Understand That The Pharisees' Thought Their Plot Was Controlled By Them, But It Wasn't!**
You would have thought by this point that they might have questioned if God was truly on their side! **They were having such a terrible time getting rid of Jesus!**

They sought to slay Jesus from early on in His ministry!
They accused Jesus of violating the Law and committing blasphemy! But when it came to killing him or even seizing him they couldn't get the job done! Jesus escaped their previous attempts at such!

The reason for that was that **the LORD God prevented them from being able to carry out their plans until He was ready!**

John 5:16, 18—“16 And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and **sought to slay him**, because he had done these things on the sabbath day...18 Therefore the Jews **sought the more to kill him**, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.”

John 7:30—“Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come.”

John 8:20—“...and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come.”

John 8:59—“Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed.”

John 10:31, 39-31 “Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him... 39 Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand.”

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They believed they were doing the will of God by plotting the death of Jesus, but they weren't in control of this situation!

II. WE SEE JESUS CHRIST WHO IS ALWAYS IN CONTROL!
(Vs 54)

- A. The Pharisee's Plot Was Controlled By The Very One They Sought To Kill!**

And get this, Jesus had even told them as much earlier!
“John 10:17-18— “17 ...*I lay down my life that I might take it again. 18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself, I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again...”*

- B. This Jesus Who Is In Control Here Went To A City Called Ephraim To Spend Time With His Disciples!**

Jesus left Bethany which is very close to Jerusalem. He and His disciples went to this small city near the wilderness about 15 miles northeast of Jerusalem (and, by the way, this is the only time it is mentioned in Scripture that He went there)!

He stayed there with His Disciples until the time was right for Him to show Himself again! He used this as a time to be with His disciples before His arrest, trial and crucifixion!

From what I've read it is believed that Jesus was there for a period of about six weeks. I don't know about that but I do know that it was probably at least two weeks prior and I'll show you why when we get to the next verse.

But what I want you to get here is that **JESUS IS THE ONE WHO CONTROLLED THIS WHOLE SITUATION! He CONTROLLED BOTH THE TIME AND THE PLACE** that He would be taken and arrested and crucified!

The Pharisees **DID NOT CONTROL ANY** of that!

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Understand that **JESUS CHRIST IS ETERNAL GOD WHO WAS MANIFESTED IN THE FLESH!** That means He existed before there was ever anything else!

HE is LORD OVER HIS CREATION! HE is LORD OVER MATTER! HE is LORD OVER ENERGY! HE is LORD OVER SPACE! HE is LORD OVER TIME!

He is the **CAUSE** of everything else in this universe including the universe itself! He is the **UNCAUSED CAUSE!**

John 1:1-3, 14; Colossians 1:16-17

So, Jesus knew **EXACTLY THE PLACE TO GO and EXACTLY HOW LONG TO BE THERE** because **HE IS THE SAVIOR WHO IS IN CONTROL!**

That is because HE IS SOVEREIGN GOD!

AND GET THIS, THIS SOVEREIGN LORD KNOWS WHEN YOUR LAST DAY ON THIS EARTH WILL BE!

*WE SEE THE PHARISEES' THOUGHT THEY WERE IN CONTROL!
WE SEE JESUS CHRIST WHO IS ALWAYS IN CONTROL!*

III. WE SEE THE JEWS PASSOVER THAT WAS NIGH! (Vs 55)
Those of us who have been in Church for a while know a little about the Passover that was instituted when Israel was in bondage in Egypt!

(Remember when it was instituted in Exodus 12 when the LORD brought the last plague on Egypt that caused Pharaoh to finally run them out of Egypt!)

The **LAMB** that was slain on that night was a **TYPE** of the coming **MESSIAH!** The blood from that **LAMB** had to be applied to the **door posts of each home for them to escape the death angel!**

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It is only fitting that this was the feast Jesus would share with HIS Disciples prior to going to the **CROSS** to have HIS blood shed for the sins of the world! This would be where the **LORD** institutes **HIS TABLE (THE LORD'S TABLE or THE LORD'S SUPPER!)**

AGAIN, JESUS IS IN CONTROL OF THIS SITUATION!

The later part of this verse gives us an indication of just how nigh the **PASSOVER** was!

There were **three great feasts or festivals** which were preceded by a **season of preparation which lasted fifteen days—PASSOVER, PENTECOST, and TABERNACLES.**

During this time of preparation, each person was expected to meditate on the solemn nature of the feast, and to undergo whatever legal purifications might be necessary.

A purification might be necessary for those who had contracted any ceremonial pollution. They would come to be sprinkled with the water of purification, and to perform the other rites of cleansing according to the law. Otherwise, they could not eat the Passover in their uncleanness! (*Cf. Numbers 9:6*)

A purification might be voluntary! This might be a time of separation to fast and pray, or attend to other religious exercises before the Passover, and they chose to do it at Jerusalem, because of the advantage of the Temple-service.

So, that is what we see going on here! And this was normally about **fifteen days before PASSOVER!**

IV. WE SEE THE TIMING OF THE PHARISEES' PLAN! (Vs 56)
The **PHARISEES** thought that they were so clever here! They knew that **ALL THE MALES** of Israel were expected to attend **PASSOVER!**

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The only exceptions to this were **the aged, the infirm, and infants** who could not walk alone!

So the **PHARISEES** were on the lookout for **JESUS** for about two weeks before **PASSOVER!** They were looking for **HIM** here, but they hadn't seen **HIM** yet!

When they should have been assisting those that came to purify themselves, according to the duty of their place, they were plotting against Christ and needed cleansing themselves!

And so the talk began as some of these **PHARISEES** were questioning whether **JESUS** might be a **NO-SHOW** and duck out of **HIS** responsibility as a **JEWISH MALE** to be at **PASSOVER!**

Oh, **HE WAS** going to be there alright...**BUT IN HIS TIME!**

V. WE SEE THE PHARISEES' PROCLAMATION! (Vs 57)
Here is another instance of the **PHARISEES** thinking that they are in control of this situation!

They issued a **COMMANDMENT** for folks to snitch on **JESUS!** They were castigating our **LORD** before the public and making **JESUS** out to be an **OUTLAW** who was **WANTED!**

If someone knew where **JESUS** was, they were ordered to show the **PHARISEES** where **He** was so that they might take **Him!**

The **PHARISEES** were **INSTILLING FEAR** in people to **OBEY THEM** with it being understood that they could block anyone's access to the **TEMPLE** if they were aiding and abetting **JESUS!**

They were flaunting THEIR AUTHORITY again here as if **THEY WERE IN CONTROL**, but they weren't!

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Conclusion

So, **WHO IS IN CONTROL HERE?** Well, it is clearly the **LORD JESUS CHRIST** Who is in **CONTROL!**

What about in your life? **WHO IS IN CONTROL THERE?**

Sadly, some think **THEY** are in **CONTROL** of their own lives and they live their lives like the **PHARISEES** that we've seen...oblivious to the fact that **THE LORD IS THE ONE WHO IS ULTIMATELY IN CONTROL!**

If you don't know the LORD...Listen to what Jesus said in:
Luke 12:4-5-“4 And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. 5 But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.”

If you DO know the LORD...Listen to what Paul said in:
Romans 14:7-9-“9 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. 8 For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. 9 For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.”

Romans 14:11-12-“11 For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. 12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”

WHO IS IN CONTROL?

You are going to surrender and acknowledge Who is in control one day!
You might as well do it today when it can do you some good!