

Fifth Sunday in Lent – 2023

Saturday, 3/25 at 4:00 & Sunday, 3/26 at 9:00

The Great Miracle-Worker



Must Be Murdered

Text: John 11:45-57 NAS-95

Lenten Wednesdays: Services 11 & 7; Meals 12 & 6

Holy Th: 11 & 7; Good Fr: 11 & 7; Holy Sat: 4; Easter Sun: 9

Introduction: Dear friends: Jesus lived 2,000 years ago, *but He should be SUPER-RELEVANT to everyone today* because:

- + He is the Son of God!
- + He did take away the sin of the world!
- + He did make the one way to heaven for everyone!

This year on [Ash Wednesday \(2/22\)](#) we were in John chapter 11: ▶Lazarus was sick, ▶Lazarus died, and ▶many were sad. Then, *when Lazarus had been dead for four days, Jesus came and raised His body back to life!* Today we return to John 11 to discover how various people reacted to the *GREAT miracle*.

1. **Many Believed, Some Snitched:** ⁴⁵ Therefore many of the Jews who came to Mary, and saw what [Jesus] had done [having raised Lazarus from the dead], believed in Him. ⁴⁶ But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them the

things which Jesus had done. // Prior to Jesus raising Lazarus, He had raised others, *but His raising of Lazarus was greater due to the length of time he had been dead.*
Think of the effects of the GREAT miracle:

- a. Many believed: Jesus ✦ is the Messiah and ✦ taught the truth, so, *by the HS*, they trusted in Jesus for et. life.
- b. Some snitched: They ✦ hardened their hearts, ✦ rejected Jesus, and ✦ told the Jewish leaders about the miracle.

2. **The Jewish Leaders Worried about their Jobs and Nation:**
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 [miracles that identify Him to be the Promised Messiah]. 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.”

- a. Job situation: The Romans were politically wise. Since the Jews despised them, they put the Sanhedrin – a *group of 71 prominent Jewish men*, between themselves and the Jewish people. It was the job of those leaders to control the people, *but more and more of the Jews ✦ ignored the leaders and ✦ believed in Jesus.* The leaders were failing, *so their jobs were in jeopardy!*
- b. Nation situation: Rome permitted the Jews to live and practice their religion – *if they behaved.* However, with more and more believing in Jesus, *the Romans could brutally intervene with military force and destruction!*

3. **The High Priest Sugar-Coated Evil:** **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 [*profitable, advantageous*] for you that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation not perish.” // Caiaphas was the leader of the Sanhedrin – the Jewish Ruling Council. He could have said, “Let’s save ourselves and our nation by capturing and murdering Jesus.” But, instead, *he said something that sounded positive and beneficial for everyone, well, except Jesus!*

4. **God Used the Evil of the Jewish Leaders for Our Good:** ⁵¹ Now [Caiaphas] 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 [Jesus] might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. // Does God cause people to sin? No! James wrote, “God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone” (Jas. 1:13). However, God does use evil to accomplish His will. The evil Jewish leaders wanted to destroy Jesus, so God used their plan – *working through Jesus* – to †crush the head of Satan, †take away the sin of the world, and †gift all repentant ones with eternal life!
5. **The Jewish Leaders Planned to Murder Jesus:** ⁵³ So from that day on they planned together to kill [Jesus]. // The text says “kill” – killing is NOT wrong ▶ in a just war or ▶ with capital punishment. But when an innocent person – *like Jesus* – is put to death on purpose, **that is murder!**
6. **Jesus Went Into Seclusion:** ⁵⁴ Therefore 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. // Jesus’ time to complete His saving work was

drawing near, *but it had not quite arrived*. He had to wait for the Passover, *since He is **THE ULTIMATE PASSOVER LAMB!*** Jesus and His disciples stayed in Ephraim – an undeveloped hill country, 13 miles NE of Jerusalem.

7. **Many Wanted to See Jesus:** ⁵⁵ **Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up to Jerusalem out of the country before the Passover to purify themselves.** ⁵⁶ **So they were seeking for Jesus, and were saying to one another as they stood in the temple, “What do you think; that He will not come to the feast at all?”** // Jesus’ three-and-a-half-year ministry was ramping up to its **horrible** and **wonderful** conclusion. Because Jesus had recently raised Lazarus – *making him even more popular*, **the Jewish leaders decided to murder Him**. Now, *as the multitudes gathered for the Passover*, they wanted to see Jesus, *but wondered if He would come to the feast*.
8. **Jesus Was Wanted – Alive or Dead:** ⁵⁷ **Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where He was, he was to report it, so that they might seize Him.** // Can you imagine signs being posted all over Jerusalem: Wanted: Jesus of Nazareth: Alive or Dead! Under such a threat, *most would flee*, but **Jesus – Our Great Champion** – came and taught many important things during Holy Week; *then He laid down His life!*

Let Us Pray: Dear Jesus, You willingly endured horrible things to pay our eternal penalty and gift us with eternal life. **TYSM!**

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