

Brad Harbaugh, D. Min., National Minister  
2600 Fairview Road, Raleigh, NC 27608  
(919) 649- 5208  
brad.harbaugh@capitolcom.org

## Caiaphas gives us hope in a culture that has lost its' morals and civility.

### BIBLE STUDY TEXT

**Jesus had just raised Lazarus from the dead! Wow! This should have been the best news ever, but not everyone thought this was good news. Read one of the most fascinating passages of Scripture in John 11:45-57 (ESV).**

*"Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, [raising Lazarus from the dead after four days in the tomb] believed in him [Jesus], but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, 'What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. **If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.**' But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, 'You know nothing at all. Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish.' He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. So from that day on they made plans to put him to death. Jesus therefore no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there to the region near the wilderness, to a town called Ephraim, and there he stayed with the disciples. Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves. They were looking for Jesus and saying to one another as they stood in the temple, 'What do you think? That he will not come to the feast at all?' Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where he was, he should let them know, so that they might arrest him."*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Today's political battles can bring anxiety, fear and frustration. This text reveals how God is in control. Specifically, how God is in control when circumstances would lead us to believe He is not!

**The Timing:** Caiaphas spoke this prophecy in March of 33 A.D. It was just days before Jesus' Triumphal entry and the

week of Passover. Jesus would be crucified on April 3, 33 A.D.

**Political Setting:** Judea was a territory ruled by the Roman Empire. The High Priest was an appointed leader of the Sanhedrin ruling council. This is important. Caiaphas had more power than a King.

Noted author H.C. Bond writes, "The high priest was the supreme cultic official in the Jerusalem Temple. He was the mediator between the Jewish people and God: only he could make atonement for the sins of the people, and only he could enter the most innermost sanctum of the temple, the holy of holies, and come into the presence of God. Philo of Alexandria declared that the position of high priest was greater than that of the king, since kingship concerned with the care of human beings, while the high priest was concerned with the service of God."<sup>1</sup>

### 2. THE ACTION

**A Political Blunder** (see text highlighted in blue): This political leader, Caiaphas, a Sadducee who was responsible as High Priest for the operations of the Temple in Jerusalem put maintaining peace with Rome above the person who demonstrated a miraculous power only God could possess, raising a person from the grave.

His decision to crucify Jesus stands as one of the most horrific blunders in history. Just think of what he decided to do. He made a decision to crucify (the death penalty method of that day) Jesus, the man who demonstrated by His word and works that He was the Messiah. He made a decision to crucify Holy God who became man.

This was insanity! Today our fear is that our leaders will make really bad decisions. This decision by Caiaphas stands as the worst. **Let's create civility by killing Jesus.** Pure insanity!

**Why? From the Side of Man (Fear):** The text brings out two statements of fear. The first states the fear of losing

<sup>1</sup> Helen Catherine Bond, *Caiaphas: friend of Rome and judge of Jesus?* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993) 34

### About Capitol Commission

Capitol Commission state ministers are pastor who in session teach weekly verse-by-verse Bible studies for legislators, lobbyists, and staff members. Furthermore, they provide one on one Biblical guidance and soul care. Dr. Brad Harbaugh has served as North Carolina State Minister the past 3 years. He currently serves as President and National Minister for Capitol Commission. He has spoken at Universities and churches across America and overseas. Bible studies are hand-distributed to each legislative office, emailed, and made available throughout the legislative offices. Capitol Commission is a ministry of the church seeking to proclaim the good news and to help believers mature through verse-by-verse Bible teaching. In the Bible, we see God’s love for the world, especially those who have been placed in authority. This is the foundation for our ministry. Our mission: Make Jesus known to our legislative leaders and staff. Dr. Bert Jones will be the North Carolina State Minister beginning January, 2019. Each State Minister raises their own support. This ministry is supported solely by individuals and churches.

power to a growing group of Jesus followers. The second states the fear of Rome overtaking Judea because of the Sanhedrin’s loss of control.

Fear is a powerful force. Logic would say that if Jesus had the power to raise a person from the dead then He had the power to address these two fears. *But Caiaphas feared man to the point he could not fear God.*

**Alleviate your fears:** There is much fear presented in the politics of today. Do you want to alleviate those fears?

*Develop your fear of God by reading the Minor Prophets, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Chronicles and 1 and 2 Kings. Then rejoice in a God who is the same yesterday, today and forever. Do a study on the fear of God in Proverbs. Read Revelation and see the ascended Christ speak to the churches. See his return in Revelation 19. This is not an exhaustive list but is a good start.*

When our vision of God is small,  
Our problems are great in size;  
Then we must believe the Lord with our all  
And on Him fix our eyes.

As we place our faith in the Lord,  
Our worry will decrease;  
And when we delight ourselves in His Word,  
We sense His perfect peace.

Our God is in control,  
Though pressures burden the soul;  
He allows both major and minor  
In His perfect harmony.  
His Sovereign plan is a symphony  
Which will ring for eternity.<sup>2</sup>

### 3. FINAL ANALYSIS

**God planned it (Caiaphas was God’s Prophet):** The underlined text brings out a hard to fathom reality. God put these words in Caiaphas’ mind and mouth. Caiaphas’ prophesy and actions were God directed. *Think this through for a moment, ponder this!*

<sup>2</sup> Don Wyrzten, *Our God is in Control*, Zondervan, 1976

*All the world is in confusion, “Peace on Earth” is but illusion and the phrase seems only a cliché. But in trying times so fearful I can still be calm and cheerful, and with glad assurance I can say: “God knows all about tomorrow. He can see beyond today. Be it filled with joy or sorrow. He has planned it that way. So I do not fear the future. On His promises I stand. God knows all about tomorrow for He holds it in His hand.” John W. Peterson, 1970. Verse 2 and chorus.*

The text declares two things:

- 1) God controls the political discussions. **Proverbs 21:1** says, *“The Kings heart is in the hand of the Lord; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases.”*
- 2) Even when a decision is made out of non-belief in God and the outcome action is evil, God has allowed it or specifically directed it to accomplish His decreed will and plan.

Clearly the people who followed Jesus could not understand this at the time it happened. It is hard to understand even now with supernatural revelation. But think about how this decision would have appeared to them to have nothing to do with God and everything to do with evil.

You and I scratch our heads at what decisions occur in our nation. In today’s culture where truth is known but not submitted to, our energy can be totally spent by anxiety. *“Anxiety does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow, but only empties today of its strength.” – C.H. Spurgeon*

The Holy Spirit writing the Word of God has pulled back the curtain to show God’s sovereign control. The conclusion? God is always in control. Even when decisions and outcomes seem to reveal otherwise.

If the worst political decision in the history of the world was made under the direction and plan of God, that of killing God the Son, then what can derail the plan of God today? **NOTHING!**

For today, do what is right, in this case vote! Share the good news and battle for truth. But do not carry the burden of the outcome. In that matter - **rest in the Lord!**