

The Plot to Kill Jesus

John 11:45-57

The Gospel of John is the gospel of belief. The apostle John's stated purpose is to convince people to believe that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:31).

To convince people to believe, John records seven miracles performed by Jesus.

- Jesus changed water into wine in Cana (2:1-11).
- Jesus healed an official's son in Capernaum (4:46-54).
- Jesus healed an invalid at the Pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem (5:1-18).
- Jesus fed the 5,000 near the Sea of Galilee (6:5-14).
- Jesus walked on the water of the Sea of Galilee (6:16-21).
- Jesus healed a blind man in Jerusalem (9:1-7).
- Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead in Bethany (11:1-45).

John also recorded seven "I am" statements made by Jesus.

- "I am the Bread of Life" (6:35).
- "I am the Light of the World" (8:12).
- "I am the Door of the Sheep" (10:7, 9).
- "I am the Good Shepherd" (10:11, 14).
- "I am the Resurrection and the Life" (11:25).
- "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (14:6).
- "I am the true Vine" (15:1, 5).

Rather than uniting everyone under one banner, Jesus' words and works divide people into two camps. People either believe he is who he says he is or they choose not to believe. The Jewish leaders not only rejected belief in Jesus, but they felt it necessary to remove him permanently and plot his death.

In the midst of this discussion, Caiaphas, the high priest, functioned as an unlikely prophet when he spoke of substitutionary atonement and said that Jesus would die so that people would not perish. *The hope of salvation is available to all who put their trust in Jesus and believe his promise.*

The popular response (45-46)

After the resurrection of Lazarus, people were divided in their opinion about Jesus. Many believed in him (45) but others did not and wanted the religious leaders to do something about Jesus (46).

The official response (47-53)

The religious leaders call for an emergency session of the Sanhedrin, the ruling body in Israel (47). The council was composed of the chief priests (mostly Sadducees) and the Pharisees.

Pharisees	Sadducees
Middle class	Aristocratic
Laymen	Priestly
Devoted to the Old Testament	Accepted only the Pentateuch
Affirmed angels, miracles, resurrection	Denied supernatural
Ultrationalists; Chafed against Rome	Political opportunists; Collaborated with Rome

The religious leaders’ previous approach—official disapproval, excommunication, counterteaching—had no effect on stopping Jesus’ influence. If they didn’t do something quickly (47), more people would be convinced by his miracles (48). They were afraid they would lose their position and power (48).

Caiaphas’ remarks reflect the tenor and frenzy of the meeting. He also reveals his rude, boorish personality (49). His solution is to get rid of Jesus permanently (50).

What Caiaphas thought he said (50)	What Caiaphas really said (51)
High priest	Prophet
Personal statement	Prophecy from God
Jesus should die to save the leaders’ position	Jesus would die for the sins of the world
Jesus was a scapegoat to guarantee the life of the leaders	Jesus is the lamb who guarantees life for believers

The Sanhedrin makes the official decision to kill Jesus (53). Jesus’ later trials before the high priests and Sanhedrin were formalities designed to give the appearance of justice. They had already determined the outcome. The only question was when.

Jesus’ reaction (54-57)

Jesus withdrew from public ministry (54) and went to a private place.

As the Passover approached, many wondered if Jesus would attend (55-56)

The religious leaders put out a warrant for Jesus’ arrest (57). They had deliberately rejected the Messiah.

Seek the truth and obey it.