

John 11:45-57, “The Plot to Kill Jesus”

12.11.22

What have we seen this morning over there...baptisms. Baptisms signify that people have believed in Jesus, right? That they have believed and chosen to follow Him and surrender their lives to Him. They have believed. **Belief in Jesus is the key to being saved.** And it's a belief (listen) that goes from just the intellectual...from believing just facts about Jesus...to a belief that makes it all the way to the heart...because it's the heart or what we would call the soul that drives who we are... it's from our heart that actions flow. Therefore, it can be said: *Belief must translate to action to be true belief.*

Remember, the entire Gospel of John is all about belief. John's Gospel is a treatise on belief in Christ. Yet, belief can be hard to discern in a person. **What is genuine belief in Jesus?** Well, it's about whether or not a person is following Jesus. Much like following someone on a highway. Have you been following someone on a four-lane highway and kind of lost them between some trucks or other vehicles? So, you know you need to find them...so you look...you might speed up a few mph and you search and scan until you find them. That's what it means to follow Jesus. You go after Him. You seek Him. You follow Him.

I want to show you the Greek word for Belief to illustrate a point. And the point is this: not all belief leads to saving faith. Watch this: According to Blue Letter Bible.org the Greek word for belief is:

Pisteuō...

1. **used in the NT of the conviction and trust to which a man is impelled by a certain inner and higher prerogative and law of soul**
 2. **to trust in Jesus or God as able to aid either in obtaining or in doing something: saving faith**
 3. **mere acknowledgment of some fact or event: intellectual faith** (Source: www.blueletterbible.org)
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#3 “intellectual faith” **is not** saving faith. Intellectual faith is believing facts in your head, but never translating to your heart. That would describe Judas. This would also describe the people in John chapter 6. Remember them:

John 6:66

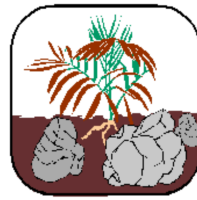
⁶⁶ After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.

What Jesus was teaching them became too hard...and they walked away, even though they were called “disciples.” They walked away. They weren't truly followers of Jesus. It reminds me of Jesus' “Parable of the Sower,” sometimes called the “Parable of the Four Soils.”

A Sower Went Out to Sow



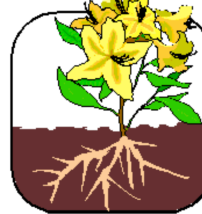
packed soil



stony ground



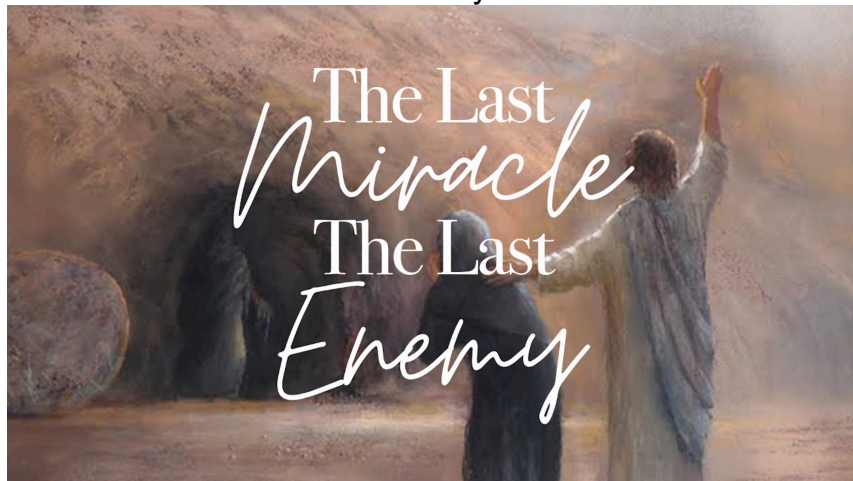
thorny ground



good soil

Watch this. In the parable: the seed of the Gospel was spread and some (top-left) fell on the packed soil and the birds snatched it away...that seed produced no fruit. (Top-right) some seed fell on stony ground and it popped up...looking good...nope...it was scorched by the sun before it produced any fruit. Again, no fruit. (Bottom-left), some seed fell among thorny soil...it popped up too...but, again, produced no fruit. (Bottom-right) some seed fell among good soil and popped up...but, this time it produced fruit...indicating salvation.

Many, many people say they believe in Jesus...but, they're not following Him...they're not producing the fruit of salvation. We've seen this to be the case throughout the Gospel of John. Think about what we've seen over the last few weeks of our study of John 11. We've seen Jesus perform...



The Last Miracle over the Last Enemy, death... He showed this by raising Lazarus from the dead...He robbed the grave...and that miracle was used to generate what? Belief. That's what all the miracles were for...BELIEF. To authenticate the fact that Jesus was God in the flesh. Yet, some believed and some didn't and we'll see this play out yet again this morning, as we will see: "The Plot to Kill Jesus." Follow along with me:

John 11:45-57

⁴⁵ Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him, ⁴⁶ but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. ⁴⁷ So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, "What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. ⁴⁸ 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." ⁴⁹ But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest

that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all. ⁵⁰ 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.” ⁵¹ He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, ⁵² and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. ⁵³ So from that day on they made plans to put him to death. ⁵⁴ 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. ⁵⁵ Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves. ⁵⁶ They were looking for^l 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?” ⁵⁷ 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.

Remember what we **said** a few moments ago: Jesus’ miracles were performed to generate **belief**. And it did for some...but rejection for others. Let’s see the “belief” in more detail. Look at verse 45.

John 11:45

⁴⁵ Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him,

Now, who are these “many”? Well, they’re obviously the people who came with Mary to the tomb of her brother. Back in verse 19 we saw that many of the Jews had come to Mary and Martha to console and comfort them at the death of their brother Lazarus. How many were there? It’s hard to say. They were a very prominent and wealthy family...perhaps dozens of people...maybe a couple hundred? We’re not told. But after watching Lazarus come out of the grave, after having been dead for four days, “many believed in him/Jesus.” Was that saving belief...we don’t know. Again, it’s possible...but, that would have to be shown over time. But we know some **didn’t** believe.

John 11:46

⁴⁶ but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.

Isn’t that crazy...people saw the same miracle...(a dead man rise)...some believed...but some scurried off like rats to “tell on Jesus” to the Pharisees. You say, “Why?” Why would they do that? Church, it’s simple. They’re afraid of the Pharisees. Truly, they’re dominated by them. They can’t even think for themselves without the Pharisees telling them what they can and can’t believe. Remember, the Pharisees have already said, “Anyone who believes and follows Jesus, will be thrown out of the synagogue.” That means they’ll be cut off from all social contact, from business, from commerce...totally ostracized in the community. In our vernacular, it means you’ll be banned, de-platformed, cancelled.

You know, it's so sad to see these people take all of this abuse from the Pharisees. But fear will do that to folks, won't it. We've talked about this several times. To keep their jobs...to keep their status...their position...people will do a lot of things. Folks get wrapped up in all of their stuff. They become more concerned about their lives on earth right now...than on the one to come. And they sacrifice their principles out of fear. Church, Jesus said: set our hearts on things above, not the things of this earth. Sadly, many people will simply sell their souls to the Devil if they feel they're going to suffer in any way. Sad!

This is another example of the hardness of the human heart. These people had witnessed Lazarus rising from the dead, and many still wouldn't believe. Instead, they rat on Jesus and now the Elites go into action. It's time to convene the council. Verse 47.

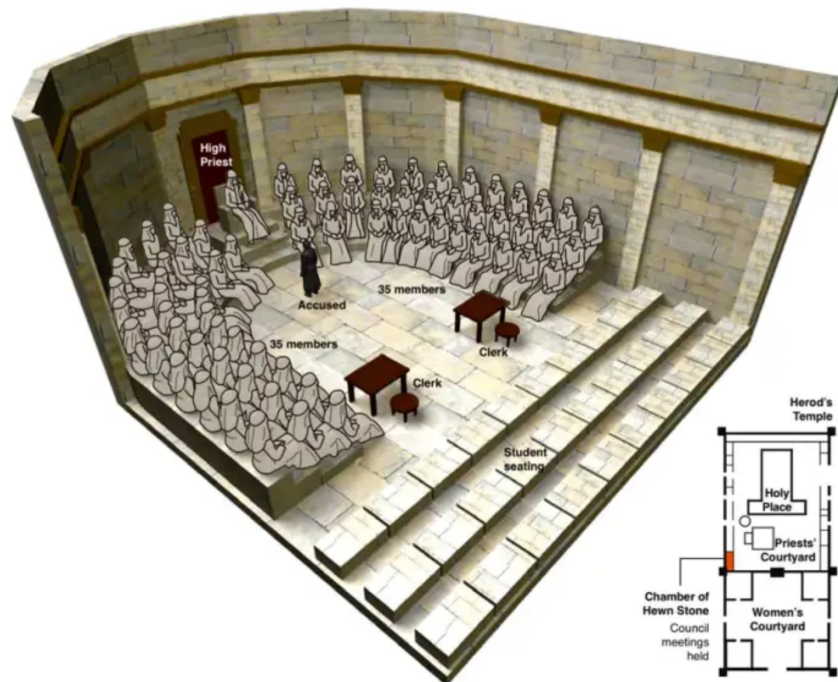
John 11:47

⁴⁷ So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, “What are we to do? For this man performs many signs.

You say, “What is the council?” It’s known as the Sanhedrin. See the image.

THE SANHEDRIN

The Jewish high court consisted of 71 men and was led by the high priest. The Sanhedrin council could decide almost any fate of its people—except the death penalty, which was decided by the Romans. The courtroom of the Sanhedrin was located within the Chamber of Hewn Stone inside the Temple.



The Sanhedrin is considered the Supreme Court of the Jews. It consisted of 71 men, (Pharisees and Sadducees), and was led by the High Priest. They met in the Temple in a place called: “The Chamber of Hewn Stone.” They could decide the fate of any person, except for the death penalty, which was left to the Romans. Now were all 71 men there or was it just a quorum? We don’t know.

But I will tell you this...as far as the nation of Israel was concerned...these men are the Elites. They are the shakers and movers of the nation. Today they would consist of the leaders of Google, Apple, Facebook, the Swamp in DC...Ivy-league academia and the like. The Sanhedrin has all the power and all the money—all the influence, and they know they’ve got to stop Jesus. Verse 48.

John 11:48

48 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.”

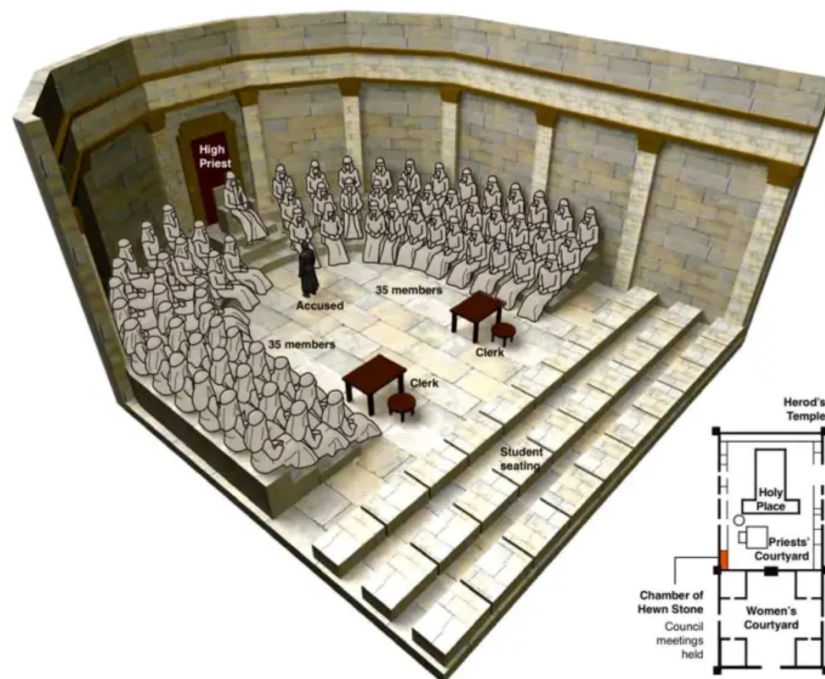
What is “our place?” It’s this...



The Temple... They were afraid the Romans would take the Temple away from them and not only the Temple but also their autonomy, which had been granted by the Romans to them to govern and have authority over their own people. So, these elites of the Sanhedrin are petrified that they're going to lose their position, power and prosperity if they don't stop Jesus from teaching. Now, the High Priest is listening to all of this...see where he's seated...

THE SANHEDRIN

The Jewish high court consisted of 71 men and was led by the high priest. The Sanhedrin council could decide almost any fate of its people—except the death penalty, which was decided by the Romans. The courtroom of the Sanhedrin was located within the Chamber of Hewn Stone inside the Temple.



Right in the middle of them on his little throne and he now speaks:

John 11:49

49 But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all.

Church, Caiaphas is a first-class jerk! “You know nothing at all!” He’s pompous and arrogant and BTW, he was High Priest in Israel for 18 years, (longer than any other High Priest in the first century). He continues to pontificate...

John 11:50

⁵⁰ 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.”

Do you understand what he’s doing? He’s developing a narrative for how to get rid of Jesus, this very popular man, who is known by all the people as an amazing miracle-worker...a man who can raise the dead, and his narrative goes in the same vein as the “we’ll lose our nation” narrative...but Caiaphas doesn’t want to stop Jesus from teaching...like banning Him from the Temple...He wants to kill Him!

Church, this is all political hyperbole. It’s an exaggeration used to create a doomsday, emergency scenario to save the nation. What Caiaphas didn’t realize...was that he was playing into the hand of God Almighty. This self-exalting, vile man just described the doctrine that we know as the: “Doctrine of Substitutionary Atonement,” where Jesus’ death, as our substitution and payment, provides salvation for all who will believe/follow Him. Caiaphas didn’t say this with full understanding.

John 11:51-54

⁵¹ He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation,⁵² and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. ⁵³ So from that day on they made plans to put him to death. ⁵⁴ 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.

Jesus is now an outlaw...and He heads about 12 miles north to a town called Ephraim. It’s here that He would make His final preparations to make His way back to Bethany and then Jerusalem for His execution, in a matter of days. This would all happen at Passover, which they’re getting ready for.

John 11:55-57

⁵⁵ Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves. ⁵⁶ 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?” ⁵⁷ 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.

So, we can see it: the chief priests and Pharisees are slowly pulling the dragnet in...they’re slowly but surely gaining back control, by way of fear and intimidation of the people. By this time, the majority of the people feared them and within a matter of days, they would stir the crowds to shout: “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!”

THE CROWDS: some believed, most didn’t. You know what I thought of? Luke 16 and the account of the Rich Man and the Beggar. Jesus shared the account of where both of these men died. The beggar going to Paradise, the rich man to Hades. In Hades the rich man was in anguish and he pleaded with Abraham for the lives of his brothers. The rich man had become a soul winner in Hades. He knew it was too late for him, but maybe not for his brothers. Dr. Luke records the scene:

Luke 16:30-31

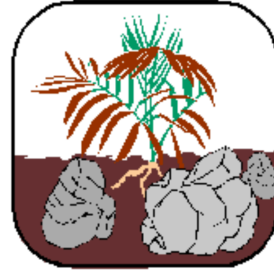
³⁰“And he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ ³¹ He said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.’”

That was Lazarus and ultimately Jesus and they still wouldn't believe. We started our time together this morning talking about baptisms and belief. Do you believe? Are you following Jesus...are you going after Him...like tracking someone down on the highway? Are you bearing the fruit of being a follower of Christ?

A Sower Went Out to Sow



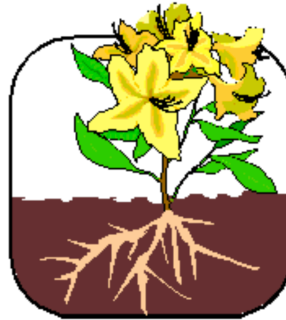
packed soil



stony ground



thorny ground



good soil

The question for us today is the same question Jesus asked Martha:

John 11:25-26

²⁵ Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life.^[d] Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”

Your answer to that question determines where you will spend eternity. There are only two options when it comes to Jesus. You either believe or you reject Him in disbelief. Heaven and hell hang in the balance. I pray you will believe unto salvation.