

Sermon Notes & References

“Kill the Miracle-Worker!”

John 11:45-57

September 18, 2016

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^C John 20:30-31, 2:1-11, 4:46-54, 5:1-18, 6:1-15, 6:16-21, 9:1-42, 11:144

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^E John 10:16; Psalm 76:10; John 1:29

^F John 5:18, 7:32, 8:59, 11:47-53, chapter 18

^G Numbers 9:6-14

A. Introduction

1. There Is a Battle Going On

a. Between the Almighty Creator God and the arch-enemy of our souls, Satan, also called ‘the Devil, the Accuser, that old Serpent.’

(A) and every moral being in the physical & spiritual universes is in that battle, either on one side or the other

(B) the book of Revelation, to the degree that I understand it, describes that battle: that which is past, that which is present, that which is yet to come

(C) we read from the Ephesians chapter six the weapons the Christian needs to engage in that battle

(D) we have sung hymns encouraging us to stand firm in that battle, written by men earnestly engaged in that battle

b. but there is a complacency in much of the Christian church today

(A) as though that battle did not exist; that there was spiritual peace

(1) but legislators pass laws, and judges make rulings, that contradict the declared moral will of God, claiming it is no longer relevant

(2) the media turns immorality into a joke, and treats things that are abominable to God as if they were normal

(3) educators are slipping things into what is taught our children, the focus being on avoiding the outcomes of doing wrong rather than the wrong itself: there is a group, Parents as First Educators (PAFE), who are battling even now against the sex education program recently installed in Ontario’s schools

(B) there is, of course, nothing really new, because Satan has been denying God’s words since the garden of Eden

(C) but God’s word still declares

(1) **“The wicked will return to Sheol, Even all the nations who forget God.”** (Psalms 9:17)

(2) **“Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin is a disgrace to any people.”** (Proverbs 14:34)

(3) so we need to pray and to speak against these things

2. Jesus Knew of This Battle

a. He understood it

(A) at the beginning of His ministry when he spent 40 days in the wilderness being tempted by Satan, **“And when the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.”** (Luke 4:13)

- (B) at the culmination of His ministry in the garden of Gethsemane, "And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground." (Luke 22:44)
- (C) and throughout, as in times of trials He knew that His time was not yet come, but told His disciples that it was coming: `saying, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death, and will deliver Him to the Gentiles.'" (Mark 10:33)
- b. and He foretold that the battle would continue, involving those who followed him: "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

3. The Seven Signs in John

- a. the purpose of John's gospel is stated in John 20:30-31 as, "Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name."
- b. while Jesus did many miracles, and these are recorded in the other three gospels, in John only seven signs are selected & recorded to achieve the purpose of bringing people to faith; these are
 - (A) 1. The wine at the marriage at Cana (2:1-11)
 - (B) 2. Healing the nobleman's son (4:46-54)
 - (C) 3. Healing of the lame man (5:1-18)
 - (D) 4. Feeding the multitude (6:1-15)
 - (E) 5. Walking on water (6:16-21)
 - (F) 6. Healing the man born blind (9:1-42)
 - (G) 7. The raising of Lazarus (11:1-44)
- c. the first effect of the raising of Lazarus was accomplishment of God's purpose, stated in verse 15, that the faith of the disciples – as well as that of Mary & Martha – would be strengthened

B. The People Respond to the Seventh Sign 11:45-46

1. Coming to Faith

- a. verse 45 – Many therefore of the Jews, who had come to Mary and beheld what He had done, believed in Him.
- b. the second effect of the raising of Lazarus was new believers in Christ
- c. why Mary was singled out as the one for whom those came to give consolation and comfort we are not told
 - (A) it could be that Mary was of a more sensitive nature – without the natural energy characterising her sister

Martha – and in greater need of such comfort

- (B) whatever the reason, it is no reflection against Mary, or for that matter, Martha, for it has pleased God to form each and every one of us with different natures and personalities
- (C) and regardless of the motives of those spoken of in this verse in coming to Mary, it had a great benefit for them: for they beheld – saw, considered and
- d. now while coming to faith because of signs and miracles is not the highest form of faith
 - (A) `Jesus *said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.'" (John 20:29)
 - (B) yet it is not a faith to disparage, not made light of, not put down
 - (C) especially when you consider the alternative, that of those there in response to the resurrection of Lazarus, we find ...

2. Going to Pharisees

- a. verse 46 – **But some of them went away to the Pharisees, and told them the things which Jesus had done.**
- b. but others were bent upon mischief – they had no good purpose in going to the Pharisees for their opposition to Jesus was long-standing and widely known
- c. so these ones, though part of the Jews coming to see Mary, were of a much different spirit, whose only thought was to make trouble for ths Jesus, the miracle-worker

C. The Fateful Council 11:47-53

1. Their Perceived Problem

- a. verses 47-48 – **Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, "What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs. 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."**
- b. whether this was a formal or informal convening of Sanhedrin has been debated, but the participants made up the members of that body
- c. their problem was not that the signs were false, but that they were true
- d. the voices raising the question were distressed that Jesus was becoming more and more established, and they were doing nothing about it
- e. their conclusion was
 - (A) Jesus was going to be accepted as Messiah
 - (1) their only thought of that office was that it was a political one

- (2) they failed to see that His was a spiritual mission
- (3) even feeble Pilate accepted Jesus statement: "my kingdom is not of this world" – but the Jewish rulers did not comprehend
- (B) in that case Rome would come with her mighty forces and
 - (1) take away Jerusalem and the temple – "our place"
 - (2) scatter the nation of Jews abroad – "our nation"
 - (3) and, their position as rulers would be lost – which despite their protests of patriotism was probably their main concern

2. Caiaphas' Proposal

- a. verses 49-50 – **But a certain one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, nor do you take into account that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish."**
- b. This fateful year in which Jesus was tried by Jewish & Roman courts and put to death, was in one of the years when Caiaphas was high priest (18AD-36AD) having succeeded his father-in-law, Annas
 - (A) history reveals him to have been a rude & sly manipulator, unjust, an opportunist, bent on having his own way, insanely ambitions
 - (B) he now breaks rudely into the discussion and set his own agenda
 - (C) it is obvious what is personally profitable and politically expedient to this group of men, and to himself
 - (D) let this one man die and then the nation (and the Sanhedrin as their rulers) will cease to be troubled
- c. In actual fact, Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin were totally wrong
 - (A) after the death of Jesus, Judea was given 40 years (40 in the Bible is often the length of time of testing & judgement)
 - (B) and 40 years after this the Romans under Titus came and took away the nation, destroying Jerusalem and its temple
 - (C) but Caiaphas said it was good for one man to die for this people

3. Caiaphas' Unconscious Prophecy

- a. verses 51-52 – **Now this he did not say on his own initiative; but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but that He might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.**
- b. Caiaphas did not realise just how true his words were

- c. for Jesus did die for his people
 - (A) not for them as a political unit, to spare them from Rome
 - (B) but for them as a spiritual family – the “children of God”
 - (C) by His death on the cross, these He will “gather together into one”
 - (1) “And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they shall hear My voice; and they shall become one flock with one shepherd.” (John 10:16)
 - (2) the word ‘nation’ twice used in these verses is not the one that Caiaphas used, but rather “peoples” in the plural and including the Gentiles
- d. so the high priest’s words are another case of God’s using “the wrath of men to praise Him” (Psalm 76:10) – Jesus will fulfill the mission s expressed concerning Him by John the Baptist: ‘The next day he *saw Jesus coming to him, and *said, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”’ (John 1:29)

4. Their Purpose Set

- a. verse 53 – So from that day on they planned together to kill Him.
- b. development of the plan to put Jesus to death
 - (A) 5:18 – healing man at Bethesda; calling God His Father
 - (B) 7:32 – failed attempt to arrest Him
 - (C) 8:59 – pick up stones to hurl at him
 - (D) 11:47-53 – this meeting concluded in agreement between two opposite parties, that Jesus should be executed
 - (E) ch 18 – the actual (mock) trial
- c. the purpose of the Jewish rulers was now set: kill the miracle-worker

D. Subsequent Events 11:54-57

1. Jesus Retires to Ephraim

- a. verse 54 – Jesus therefore 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.
- b. Jesus’ time had not come but was nearing – a month or two away
- c. but Jesus lived according to God’s timetable, and left the danger zone with his disciples until it was time to give up His life for our salvation

2. Peoples’ Expectations at Passover

- a. verses 55-56 – Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and many went up to Jerusalem out of the country before the Passover, to purify themselves. Therefore 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?”
- b. In Numbers 9 we read concerning some people who could not take part in the Passover because they were ceremonial unclean
 - (A) they had touched a dead body
 - (B) in this case they were not allowed to celebrate the Passover until a month later
 - (C) to be ceremonially cleansed could take a full week
- c. so these people were come early to become ceremonially clean
- d. but curiosity also brought them early
 - (A) the raising of Lazarus had become known
 - (B) and there was a desire to see the miracle-worker, Jesus
 - (C) but also a doubt that he would show, because of ...

3. The Sanhedrin's Orders

- a. verse 57 – Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where He was, he should report it, that they might seize Him.
- b. The orders for Jesus arrest have been proclaimed
 - (A) what He has done, how He is to be punished is not broadcast
 - (B) these men were out to save their own skins
 - (1) Jesus' many and undeniable miracles did not matter
 - (2) Jesus' unquestionable teaching of the truth is ignored
- c. “let no one harbour this man Jesus whom we declare to be a criminal”

E. Conclusion

1. Tribulation in This World

- a. I can remember when preaching the gospel in Quebec as a criminal offence and some of our Baptist pastors were in jail
- b. some of you may live to see Christians persecuted in similar manner in this country for standing firm for their Lord, Jesus Christ
- c. earlier we sang, “Am I a Soldier of the Cross”, and I trust that with a renewed realisation of the battle going on that each of us answer, “yes”

d. with that being the case, let us encourage each other to Stand Up for Jesus, "... and having done everything, to stand firm." (Ephesians 6:13b)

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ASV American Standard Version of 1901
AV Authorized (King James) Version of 1769
NAS New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation (usually the 1995 edition)
NIV New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NLT New Living Translation © 1996 Tyndale Charitable Trust
NKJV New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
NRSV New Revised Standard Version © 1989 National Council of Churches of Christ

Some of the commentaries and resources used in the preparation of this message are identified as follow:

Bruce – *The Gospel & Epistles of John*, by F. F. Bruce, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI; 1983
NICNT – *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*
The Gospel according to John, by Leon Morris
NTC – *New Testament Commentary*, by William Hendriksen; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI; 1954
RWP – *Robertson’s Word Pictures of the New Testament*, by Dr. A. T. Robertson
TEC -- *The Gospel according to John*, by George Allen Turner & Julius R. Mantey, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI; ca 1965