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# JOHN: THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE

## *DECLARING WAR ON THE MESSIAH*

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A message presented by Pastor Marc Minter  
to First Baptist Church of Diana, TX on April 8, 2017

## INTRODUCTION

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Like the Assyrian king who marveled at his own power (Is. 10:5-11), God used the religious leaders of Jerusalem to bring about His purposes of judgment in the world. Only this time, God's judgment fell upon His own Son. What a profound display we see in the Gospel of Christ! In this message, we shall look to John 11:45-57 and consider the amazing heart of the Gospel message. In and through Jesus' suffering, God exhausted His own wrath against sinners and gathered into one the Children of God from all peoples.

## MESSAGE MADE SIMPLE

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*"[Caiaphas] 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 [Jewish] nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad" (Jn. 11:51-52).*

The religious leaders in Jerusalem were not happy with the effect Jesus was having on the status quo. Jesus was really becoming a nuisance, and their patience with Him was running out. Not able or willing to deny His miracles, the religious leaders simply decided that Jesus had to be stopped... no matter who He claims to be.

Their opposition was violent and resolute, but these events were the climax of a much bigger and older story. God had been at work since before the foundations of the world, and God intended that Jesus would bear the full weight of His wrath against sinners. Like the Assyrian king who marveled at his own power (Is. 10:5-11), God used the religious leaders of Jerusalem to bring about His purposes of judgment in the world.

Only this time, God's judgment fell upon His own Son. What a profound display we see in the Gospel of Christ! In and through Jesus' suffering, God exhausted His own wrath against sinners and gathered into one the Children of God from all peoples.

## **JOHN 11:45-57 (ESV)**

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 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.***

### THE POINT I’M AIMING AT TODAY

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**Through Christ’s suffering, God exhausted His own wrath against sinners and gathered into one the Children of God from all peoples.**

## MESSAGE OUTLINE

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### (1) THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS DECLARED WAR

### (2) GOD DECLARED WAR LONG AGO

### (3) THROUGH JUDGMENT UPON CHRIST, GOD GATHERED HIS CHILDREN

### (4) APPLICATION: 3 IMPLICATIONS FROM THIS TEXT

## MESSAGE

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### (1) THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS DECLARED WAR

- There was no dispute about what Jesus had done
  - “Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and ***had seen what he did, believed in him...***” (v45) “but ***some of them went to the Pharisees*** and told them ***what Jesus had done...***” (v46)
  - “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...”*** (v47-48)
    - No one said Jesus didn’t raise Lazarus from the dead! No one claimed Jesus didn’t do MANY signs!
  
- Rather than believe, the religious leaders declared war
  - Caiaphas (high priest) said, ***“it is better for you that one man should die for the people...”*** (v50) and ***“from that day on they made plans to put him to death...”*** (v53)
  - “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*” (v57)
    - They had corporately decided to stand against Christ!

Summary: The religious leaders declared war on Jesus...

(Segue) ***But, their actions were exactly according to God’s greater plan.***

## (2) GOD DECLARED WAR LONG AGO

- God's declaration of war: *death, scattering, and final judgment*
  - **The curse of death** (Gen. 2:17)
    - *"You are dust, and to dust you shall return"* (Gen. 3:19).
  - **The curse of scattering**
    - God *"drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden [God] placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life"* (Gen. 3:24)
    - Of all humanity, God said, *"they are one people, and they have all one language"* and the LORD *"confused their language"* and the LORD *"dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth"* (Gen. 11:6–8).
  - **The curse of final judgment**
    - The Psalmist prayed to God, *"You return man to dust and say, 'Return, O children of man!' For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night. You sweep them away as with a flood; they are like a dream, like grass that is renewed in the morning: in the morning it flourishes and is renewed; in the evening it fades and withers. For we are brought to an end by your anger; by your wrath we are dismayed. You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence. For all our days pass away under your wrath; we bring our years to an end like a sigh"* (Ps. 90:3–9)
    - And again lamenting, the Psalmist cries, *"If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?"* (Ps. 130:3).

Summary: God declared war on humanity long ago!

(Segue) And these two declarations of war (God's and the Religious Leaders') merged in the mouth of the high priest that year!

### (3) THROUGH JUDGMENT UPON CHRIST, GOD GATHERED HIS CHILDREN

- ***The high priest spoke more than he knew, but not less***
  - Caiaphas said, “***it is better for you that one man should die for the people***, not that the whole nation should perish.” (v50)
    - Caiaphas was interested in political expedience, not the divine plan of redemption
  
- ***But, the high priest did speak truly of God’s own plan***
  - John explained, “***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 [Jewish] nation only, but ***also to gather into one the children of God*** who are scattered abroad.” (v51-52)
    - John drops a bomb on the reader right here!
      - There is incredible ***literary irony***
        - The very people who want to thwart Christ’s plan are those who play a major role in accomplishing it!
  
      - There is mention of an ***ancient family line***
        - The children of God are scattered and not just Jewish!
  
      - There is profound ***theological truth***
        - The concept of substitutionary atonement is sharply presented here!

- **This unintentional prophecy points to how God gathered His children.**
  - **Turn with me to Read:** Isaiah 53
  - Peter, reflecting on Isaiah 53, wrote, “*He [Jesus] **committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.***” (1 Peter 2:22–25).
  
- **Note, finally, the ethnic inclusion so clearly articulated here**
  - “he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and **not for the [Jewish] nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.**” (v51-52)
  - This most certainly is what Paul is getting at in [Ephesians 2:11-22](#).
    - **Let’s look at that passage quickly.**
  - And this is also the idea presented in Colossians 3:11 – “*Here there is not **Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.***”

**Summary:** Through judgment upon Christ, God gathered His children from among all peoples!

**(Segue)** There are some big implications for what we have studied today, but allow me to point out 3 implications from this text.

#### **(4) APPLICATION: 3 IMPLICATIONS FROM THIS TEXT**

##### ***1. It is in us to fight against God.***

- a. Are you better than these religious leaders? Why? How do you know?
- b. Have you never known what God would have you do and still acted out in the opposite direction?
- c. Is there nothing in your life that you try to protect from God?
- d. Is there anything you sometimes cherish so much that you would say “no” if Christ Himself told you to let go of it?
- e. How will you escape the desires of your own sinful and self-reliant heart?
- f. Oh, may God, by His Spirit, cause us to put down our weapons of opposition against Him; and may we come to know the rest and peace available to those who are in Christ?

##### ***2. God has made peace with sinners through Christ.***

- a. Do you think that God is not serious about your sin, your disobedience?
- b. Why do you think Christ died, if it was not for the very fact that God is dead serious about sin?
- c. If you are not loving, following, embracing Christ today, why aren't you terrified of the God who crushed His own Son in order to satisfy His justice?
- d. If you do love, follow, and embrace Christ today, then what have you to fear at all?
- e. Hasn't God made peace with you through the death of Christ?
- f. Hasn't God put His decisive love on display in Christ?
- g. If Christ's death has made peace between God and you, then does Christ's ongoing intercession on your behalf not guarantee eternal peace and blessing for you?

### **3. The Children of God are marked only by their union in Christ**

- a. Do you presume upon God's kindness, thinking that all people are children of God simply because they are humans?
- b. What does it mean to be united in Christ?
- c. Are there divisions in Christ?
- d. Is Christ divided by social status? Economic ability? How about ethnicity?
- e. Does the Gospel transcend these worldly and superficial barriers – is the Gospel bigger than culture, skin color, or bank accounts?
- f. How are you united to your fellow church members? Is your union with one another based upon Christ, or some other commonality?
- g. How are you resisting the common urge we all have to unite over lesser things?
- h. How are you looking to build unity in the Gospel of Christ and in love for Him?

**Major Point:** Through Christ's suffering, God exhausted His own wrath against sinners and gathered into one the Children of God from all peoples.

#### SUGGESTED RESOURCES

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*Conspiracy to Murder* by Scott Harris

<http://gracebible.org/conspiracy-to-murder-john-1145-57>

*I Am the Resurrection and the Life (Pt 3)* by John MacArthur

<https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/43-60/i-am-the-resurrection-and-the-life-part-3>

*Jesus Died to Gather the Children of God* by John Piper

<https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/jesus-died-to-gather-the-children-of-god--2>

*Commentary on John 11* by Matthew Henry

<https://www.christianity.com/bible/commentary.php?com=mhc&b=43&c=11>