June 18

Scriptures: Read John 11

Key Verse: "⋯ it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people⋯" (John 11:50)

Overview

The raising of Lazarus from deal was the final straw. The religious authorities were running scared. "If we let him go on like this⋯ the Romans will come and take away our place (temple) and our nation", they cried (v.48). Especially threatened was the high priestly clique. As long as there was no messianic movement attracting the attention of Rome, the high priest and his "court" were virtually in charge of Jerusalem and the rich temple income, but any hint of political insurrection would end this comfortable situation. Jesus was now a political threat. He was a people mover and, indeed, a People Movement—a threat to the status quo. So Caiaphas, the high priest, decided the time to act had come. What he said was incitement to murder, but it seemed the only alternative. Jesus had to die.

"You do not realize", Caiaphas said to the Sanhedrin, "that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish." John, the writer of this book, makes an editorial comment, "He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one" (vv.51, 52). Caiaphas was making an unconscious prophecy that Jesus would die for both Jew and Gentile. His incitement to murder was unknowingly a bold declaration of the purpose of God.

John would put it another way in another place, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Prayer

Lord God, our Father, thank You for using even Caiaphas to declare Your purpose. Now Lord, we ask that You'll use us today to declare Your purpose to others. We're willing and Your Word shows You're willing too. Therefore we expect it to happen today.