

Jesus and the Pharisees: (part eleven of a twelve part series)

Thus far, the interactions between Jesus and the Pharisees have been intense and dramatic; comprising a significant portion of the various Gospel accounts. However, they pale in comparison to what takes place in John 11:38-44, as Christ raises Lazarus from the dead. We are told in v45 that many Jews “believed in Him,” as a result. On the other hand, some of them went to the Pharisees and informed them of what had taken place (11:46). Ironically, this most significant interaction between our Lord and these religious leaders occurs indirectly. There is no indication from this passage that the Pharisees confronted Jesus about this greatest of all His miracles. Instead, they reach a point of no return in dealing with Him, as indicated by John 11:53 –

“So from that day on they planned together to kill Him.”

This homicidal desire is motivated by fear of losing their privileged position within the Jewish nation (11:47-48). Caiaphas alleviates that concern with a simple and expedient “solution” (11:49-50). There are times when persecution escalates to the extreme of murder. The Pharisees’ attempts at undermining Christ’s credibility by means of trolling Him had ended in failure. So as a last resort, in a desperate attempt to preserve their place of authority among the people, they plotted to kill Him. This final and ultimate rejection of the promised Messiah came as no surprise to God, which in turn would become the fulfilment of His redemptive plan and purpose for the entire world (John 11:51-52; cf. Romans 11:11-12).

It has been no different throughout the history of the Church. The greatest advances for the cause of Christ always take place through the efforts of Christians who exercise an uncompromising faith in their Savior, regardless of the potentially negative consequences which may occur. Cowardice or courage? Compromise or commitment? Expedience or engagement? This is the ongoing choice and challenge facing every Christian, in every generation. May every one of us as His followers, be willing to make that right and difficult choice. Only then, can we hope to fulfill the formidable task of promoting our Christian faith to a lost and fallen world, in desperate need of experiencing God’s plan of salvation, in these last days. We can be thankful that Jesus Christ is not only our Savior, Redeemer and Lord; but the perfect example of the kind of people we must be in meeting that challenge.

The final segment of this topical study will not be posted in favor of a statement I will be making in regard to the events which occurred on January 6, 2021.