



Tried in Absentia | John 11:45-57

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At the close of John 11, we see what some of the leading religious minds in Jesus' day did with one of His greatest miracles, and why they responded as they did.

In the process, we are being reminded about our ultimate responsibility in proclaiming the gospel, and about trusting God for the results.

John 11:45-57 offers an eye-opening look into the mind of an unbeliever who rejects the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The raising of Lazarus forced the Jewish Sanhedrin to convene to address the question of what to do with Jesus. This hearing likely became the venue in which Jesus was tried in absentia.

The High Priest's rebuke of the Sanhedrin

1. The Religious Leaders Rejected the Indisputable Evidence of God in Jesus Christ (11:45-53)

2. The Religious Leaders Reckoned Themselves as More Valuable Than Jesus (11:50)

The High Priest was unwittingly declaring the truth of the substitutionary death of the Messiah for His people. Jesus died to redeem the children of God (11:49-52).

Jesus came to give His life “to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad” (11:52).

Questions to Consider

1. Consider this statement from a popular Christian book of 20+ years ago: “It is my deep conviction that anybody can be won to Christ if you discover the key to his or her heart.” We don’t want to dismiss the value of building relationships with unbelievers, but what’s wrong with this statement? Defend your answer from the Bible.
2. How might this meeting of the Jewish Sanhedrin have figured into the arrest, conviction, and execution of Jesus Christ?
3. What did the Jewish religious leaders who opposed Jesus do with the signs He performed? How might this help inform the response of unbelievers to our efforts at evangelism?
4. Why did the religious leaders reject Jesus? How might this help us think about unbelievers who reject the Gospel of Jesus Christ?
5. From D.A. Carson: Both Caiaphas and John understand Jesus’ death to be substitutionary.” However, what was dramatically different about their perspectives?
6. What does John 11:52 indicate when it speaks of “children of God who are scattered abroad” in describing people who had not yet been saved?