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John 11:45 - 12:19



Gospel of John - Steve Gregg

In John 11:45-12:19, the speaker discusses the lack of faith exhibited by the Jews towards Jesus despite Mary's witness of his miracles. Caiaphas' prophecy of Jesus' death and its significance as a prediction from an unlikely source is also explored. The speaker notes that Jesus' inclusion of Lazarus in his message was a primary reason for his targeting by those who sought to eliminate him. Finally, the speaker touches on Jesus' stance as a non-revolutionary figure who did not oppose paying tribute to Caesar.

Transcript

Okay, we're picking up in the midst of chapter 11 of John. We took the story of Jesus going to Bethany and raising Lazarus, and now of course he's in the vicinity of Jerusalem, and he will not leave that vicinity again alive, at least not before his resurrection. So he is in the area, and he has done something notable.

He's not keeping a low profile. What he did was not secret. It could have been if Mary had managed to sneak out of the house unaccompanied, and that's really what Martha tried to do, try to get Mary to be able to leave the house alone, but the people thought she was going to the grave and decided to go with her to console herself.

So when Jesus met Mary and when they went to the tomb and raised Lazarus, there were people there. How many people? I don't know. Of course, probably not a very large number, but enough to carry the report of the miracle.

And in verses 45 and 46, we see there are two different reactions to this miracle. It says in verse 45, You would think a very natural reaction for them to believe in him. Seeing a miracle of raising someone from the dead like this, you'd think everybody would believe in him, but we seem to have that contrasted with others who went and told the Pharisees.

Now telling the Pharisees might not have been a hostile action or maliciously done, but the impression is they didn't have good intentions because they are contrasted with the ones who believe. Some believe, many believe, but some, apparently some who did not believe, went and reported it to the Pharisees. How they could not believe defies

explanation after seeing Lazarus come forth.

It is possible that those who went and reported it to the Pharisees were doing so innocently, maybe hoping to convince the Pharisees of who Jesus was. If so, they were very naive because they thought they would be convinced. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, What shall we do? For this man works many signs.

If we let him alone like this, everyone will believe in him. Everybody but them apparently. There doesn't seem to be anything that will convince them.

And the Romans will come and take away both our place and the nation. Now apparently their concern is that Jesus will present himself in the way that other false messiahs had done as a potential deliverer of the Jews from the Roman oppression. And that the people would rally behind him.

They are starting to believe in him in a big way and he says everyone is going to believe in him and then he will seize his opportunity to try to throw out the Romans. Now neither the Pharisees nor the chief priests really wanted to overthrow the Romans. The Pharisees didn't like the Romans, but the teaching of the Pharisees was that this was a discipline that God had brought upon the nation and they should patiently endure it.

The chief priests were Sadducees by party and they were collaborators with the Romans. They actually found the Romans helpful to them because the Romans kept them in power. After all Caiaphas, the chief priest, had been put in power by the Romans.

His father-in-law Annas had been the chief priest earlier and the Romans put Annas into power. The Romans were actually working together with the Sadducees to a certain extent. At least there was a cooperative relationship between them.

The average zealous Jew did not like the Romans at all. But like I said, the Pharisees believed that they should endure the Roman oppression and the Sadducees didn't have any problems with it at all. So they didn't really want to see a popular uprising.

They didn't want to see the Romans provoked to a retaliatory strike because they knew that the Romans had more power than all the Jews put together. And that if the Jews would rise up and proclaim a Messiah figure like Jesus, that the Romans would come down and destroy them. They said they'll take away both our place and our nation.

Our place would be our position of authority that we have. And we won't have that anymore if our nation is obliterated by the Romans. So they see Jesus as a threat in this respect.

Or at least that's what they claim they are seeing. We know that Pilate recognized that they delivered Jesus to him out of jealousy. But here they have a slightly different

concern they express.

Most people don't want to say we want to kill him because we're jealous of him. We can think of a better reason to give for killing him. And that is he's a danger to our national security.

And he'll provoke our enemies to come and wipe us out. This would be a bad thing. And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, You know nothing at all.

Nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people and not that the whole nation should perish. You're not getting it. You're afraid that Jesus will cause this uprising and we're going to lose the nation.

You're not putting two and two together. We have to kill him. That's what we have to do.

Then the nation will be spared. It's better for one man to die for the people. Now the statement for one man to die for the people has the language of a substitutionary death.

Such as we know Jesus did die. He died for the world. He died for the sins of the world.

A vicarious death in place of the people. However the words were probably not meant that way by the high priest. But his words had a double possible meaning.

That is, if we put Jesus to death, it will be good for the people. Good for the nation. It will prevent there being an abortive uprising against Rome that Rome would then crush and wipe us out.

So it's for the good of the people and the nation that he be put to death, Caiaphas says. Nonetheless, the way he worded it caused John, the writer, to think, You know this is actually quite true. Jesus did die for the people.

And so he says in verse 51, Now this Caiaphas did not say on his own authority, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation. And not for that nation only, but also that he would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad. So in these words of Caiaphas, John sees an accidental or an inadvertent prophecy.

And yet Caiaphas is not credited with knowing that he was prophesying. You know, the high priests often did answer for God. They had the Urim and the Thummim in earlier times.

But at this time they didn't. And yet many thought that the high priest had a prophetic gift. And some of the priests did.

A number of the Old Testament prophets were priests. Jeremiah was a priest. Ezekiel was a priest.

The son of Jehoiada. Zechariah the son of Jehoiada was a priest. Zechariah the son of Berechiah was a priest.

They were all prophets as well. And so recognizing that God would sometimes speak prophetically through a high priest, maybe even if the high priest didn't know it. This is what John is assuming to be the case.

That Jesus is going to die for the people in a sense the high priest had no idea that it would be. So John sees this prophecy from the high priest as predicting that Jesus would die for the nation. But John goes further and says that's not really all that Jesus would die for.

He would die for the whole world. For the children of God that are scattered abroad. Now this reference to gathering together in one the children of God who are scattered abroad is language such as you might find in many of the Old Testament prophets.

About what God would eventually do for his people. That is that Israel was scattered in the Babylonian exile. And there were many prophecies about God gathering them again all back together.

This partially was fulfilled when the Jews came back from Babylon in the days of Zerubbabel. But most of them did not. And therefore in the time of Jesus the Jews had believed for a very long time that the Babylonian exile was not yet over.

They believed that they were still living in the exile. Even though many hundreds of thousands if not millions of them were living in Israel. The majority of Jews were still living in the diaspora.

They were still living somewhere else and had not come back. So the Jews believed that the Babylonian captivity had not ended yet. And that God would still be gathering his people together again someday through the Messiah.

Well John says that's actually true. But not in the sense they think. The gathering of the children of God together who were scattered abroad is really the gathering of people into the church.

People becoming Christians. Jesus died so that he could save the nation and gather together those who are not of that nation. Notice John is assuming that the others are not Jews.

Because they are contrasted with the Jews. Yes he would die for that nation. But not for that nation only.

Not the Jews only. Also the Gentiles. And yet he used the language such as is found in the prophets.

The average reader would assume that it's talking about gathering the Jews together back to Israel. But John's interpreting those kinds of predictions in terms of gathering Gentiles. So there is sort of a hint here of the Gentile mission that the church would have.

And in the next chapter we find that John tells about some Greeks who are coming and inquiring about Jesus. Which may be seen as perhaps the beginning of the gathering in of the children of God who were scattered abroad. These Gentile Greeks who will come to Jesus in chapter 12.

Anyway this is an interpretive note that John gives. He's telling the story and then he kind of goes off and explains things. And he does that from time to time of course.

And so Caiaphas has predicted that Jesus must die. And it says verse 53 from that day on they plotted to put him to death. Therefore Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews but went from there into the country near the wilderness to a city called Ephraim.

And there he remained with his disciples. This was still in Judea. Near enough to have access to Jerusalem when he wanted to go there.

But it was not an open, he didn't make his whereabouts known openly to the Jews. It was too dangerous. And the Passover of the Jews was near.

And many went from the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves. Then they sought Jesus and spoke among themselves as they stood in the temple. What do you think? That he will not come to the feast? Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a command that if anyone knew where he was they should report it and that they might seize him.

So when he was at Ephraim they didn't know where he was. He was hiding there. They had put out a search notice for him.

If anyone can find him report him so they could seize him. So Jesus really had to be pretty secretive. Although he still would come out and teach openly in the temple during this week.

But apparently only when he was surrounded by crowds which would make it inconvenient or impossible for his enemies to seize him without the crowds reacting. And we know that those who wanted to arrest Jesus wanted to do so privately. They didn't want to stir up the crowds.

That's why they needed Judas at a later time to inform them of where Jesus' private activities were usually held. Judas as an insider would know the secret places that Jesus would go and could tell them how to find him when the people were not around. Because they wanted to get him condemned and crucified before the crowds could even know

what had happened.

That's why they held a trial for him all night long and condemned him before dawn. And then at dawn took him to Pilate to get him crucified. They wanted to get this done quickly before the crowds could be apprised of what was going on and could have any kind of reaction.

Just get him out of the way. So they were actively seeking information about his whereabouts so they could seize him and so he couldn't walk openly it says among the Jews. Then six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany where Lazarus was who had been dead whom he had raised from the dead.

So now he's back in the vicinity of Jerusalem just two miles away in Bethany. And there they made him a supper and Martha served but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with him. Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair.

And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil. Now here we have again Mary and Martha at home with Jesus and the disciples. And very much the same roles that we see them in when they're mentioned together in their home in Luke chapter 10.

Just to draw attention to this because it's a consistency between the synoptic record and John. It's not like two different writers writing independently made up stories about these people. They're consistently the same in the different stories.

In Luke chapter 10 verse 38 it says now it happened as they went that he entered a certain village and a certain woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary who also sat at Jesus feet and heard his word. But Martha was distracted with much serving.

And she approached him and said Lord do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone. Therefore tell her to help me. And Jesus answered and said to her Martha Martha you are worried and troubled about many things.

But one thing is needed and Mary has chosen that good part which will not be taken away from her. Now here we see the women living together hosting Jesus and the disciples in their home just as we do in John chapter 12. It's a different occasion of course but it's the same kind of setting.

And what do we find? Mary is at Jesus feet and Martha is serving. So also here in chapter 12 it says in verse 2 Martha served. And of course Mary in verse 3 is at Jesus feet anointing them in this case and wiping them with her hair.

This story of the anointing of Jesus at Bethany is also found in Mark chapter 14 though it's recorded in a different position in the Passion Week. John places this six days before

the Passover. When Jesus was crucified on the Passover so this would be like apparently Sunday or Monday depending on how the days are being counted.

It's early in the Passion Week. It's almost a week before his crucifixion. However in Mark this story is told considerably later.

In fact apparently on the very day before Jesus was betrayed. Maybe two days before. We have the story but not any note of its chronology in Mark chapter 14 verses 3 through 9. It might do well to read it along with this.

It's obviously the same story. A few details are different but the interesting thing is that John and Mark both give it. It's very unusual for John to overlap in his material with anything in the Synoptic Gospels.

It's not unheard of but it's rare. In Mark 14 verse 3 it says in being in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper. As he sat at the table a woman came having an alabaster flask of very costly oil of spikenard.

She broke the flask and poured it on his head. Also on his feet according to John. Apparently on his head and his feet.

But there were some who were indignant among themselves and said. Why was this fragrant oil wasted? For it might have been sold for more than 300 denarii and given to the poor. They criticized her sharply.

Jesus said let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for me. For you have the poor with you always and whenever you wish you may do them good.

But me you do not have always. She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint my body for burial.

Assuredly I say to you wherever this gospel is preached throughout the whole world. What this woman did will also be spoken of as a memorial to her. Now in Mark it doesn't mention who the woman was.

It doesn't mention Mary and Martha. It mentions an unnamed woman. But of course we know from John that it is Mary.

And it's in Mary and Martha's house. And yet Mark says it's in the house of Simon the leper. Now nobody is going to be in the house of a leper.

Because a leper would not be allowed to be associating with other people who are not lepers. So Simon the leper must have been one who was so called because he had once been a leper. No doubt he was one of the lepers that Jesus had healed.

And therefore he was restored to his home. And could have guests and so forth. He

couldn't be presently a leper or else no one would be at the table with him.

So who is this Simon the leper? Well we don't know. He is only mentioned here. But we are told it's his house.

It's also Mary and Martha's house. So maybe he was another brother. Or maybe he was the father of Mary and Martha and Lazarus.

Or maybe he was the husband of one of those women. Some scholars think he was Martha's husband. But that's only a way of trying to harmonize the fact that it's Martha and Mary's house and also Simon the leper's house.

It's apparently Lazarus' house too. But Mary, Martha and Lazarus might have been all the children of this man Simon the leper. And it was his house they lived in.

If they were maids. If they were not married women. So we really don't know.

Simon the leper was somehow connected to the family and it was his house. And although Mark tells us that this story will be repeated wherever the gospel is preached. He doesn't mention who the woman is.

It may be because of this prediction of Jesus that wherever the gospel is preached what this woman did will be also told of her. That might be why John included it. When he included so little that overlaps with the other gospels.

It might have been that he thought well Jesus is the one who said this should be included whenever the gospel is preached. And here I'm writing the gospel so I'll include the story. And I'll include some details that aren't in the other accounts as well.

Like who it was. It was Mary who did this. Now in Mark's gospel it said that some present were indignant.

And said this should have been sold and given to the poor. In John's gospel he gives again more identity of the players. In verse 4 John 12.4. Then one of his disciples Judas Iscariot Simon's son who would betray him said.

Why was this fragrant oil not sold for 300 denarii and given to the poor. Now both accounts agree that the oil was worth about 300 denarii. In the story about the workers who were called to work in the vineyard in Matthew chapter 20.

Each one was given a denarius for a day's work or for a portion of a day's work. But a denarius was essentially a laborer's daily wage. It was just enough to live a subsistence life of a peasant.

It wasn't a lot of money but it was a lot of money to a laboring man. It was enough to get him by. It was what he needed.

Now 300 denarii would thus be a year's wages essentially. If you take out the 52 sabbaths and a few other holy days during the year that people wouldn't be working. There would be about 300 work days in the year.

Basically Judas is saying and Mark's gospel agrees that this was worth about a year's wages. That's a lot of money to pour out and lose. She's just pouring it out on Jesus.

And it was lost for any resale purposes. Judas was of course the treasurer and he cared about the money. He liked to see money go into the money box because he then would have access to it.

But his complaint was registered as if he was concerned about the poor. And that this should have been sold and given to the poor. Of course in the interim while it was not yet given away it would be put in the box where he could get to it.

And John tells us this he said not that he cared for the poor but because he was a thief and had the money box. And he used to take what was put in it. This is the only other negative thing said about Judas in the Bible.

The thing that's always said about him is that he betrayed Jesus. Which of course is the thing that he's most notorious for. But this is another thing we're told about him and that is that he was a thief.

He stole from the church. It's like stealing from the offering plate. You know that's kind of a really low kind of thievery.

Then Jesus said let her alone she has kept this for the day of my burial. For the poor you have with you always but me you do not always have. Now we don't have the entire statement of Jesus in verse 8. Some people take what Jesus said here and basically say well there's no sense trying to end poverty.

Because Jesus said the poor you'll have with you always. In other words it's as if Jesus is saying don't even bother trying to help the poor because you just can't do it. You just can't end poverty so party on.

Spend your money on whatever you want because you're not going to end poverty. Of course you can end poverty for one person for one day and that makes a difference to him. Jesus obviously was not saying we shouldn't care about the poor.

In fact in Mark's gospel where his statement is given it's longer. He said the poor you have with you always and you can do them good anytime. So he's not saying that you shouldn't try to help the poor.

He's saying you should help the poor anytime. But today she's done something else. Today she's anointed me for burial.

Most people would not think it too extravagant to spend a lot of money on a funeral. I mean after all you can't have a cheap funeral anymore. A coffin itself is going to cost ten grand probably.

I mean it's a costly business burying people. And Jesus said well that's what she's doing. She's burying me.

She's anointing me for my burial. That's a legitimate expense. Now whether she understood that she was anointing him for his burial or not we don't know.

She might have been really taken aback by his statement. I was anointing you for your burial. But I think she may well have known.

He doesn't say that she realized that's what she was doing. He might have been just giving it that interpretation. But she might even have intended to anoint him for his burial.

She may well have understood. Because remember when other people were clueless she was sitting at his feet paying attention. And he had on many occasions predicted that he would die.

Sometimes in plain words and sometimes in veiled words. But she was a listener. And she was paying attention to his teaching.

And she understood things probably that the disciples didn't understand. She also knew because she lived in Bethany that there's a lot of talk around about how the chief priests and Pharisees are looking for him to kill him. And that they put out a warrant for his arrest.

And so she knew that he was in danger. And the heat was rising. And he was probably going to die.

And he had predicted that he would die. She probably did know that he was going to die and was honoring him with an anointing before his burial. Anyway that's what Jesus said she was doing.

She may have been aware of it or not. Verse 9. Then a great many of the Jews knew that he was there. So he wasn't hiding very well anymore.

He had gone into hiding before. But now a lot of people knew he was there. He couldn't hide anymore.

And they came not for Jesus' sake only. But that they might also see Lazarus whom he had raised from the dead. Now Jesus was a phenomenon but now Lazarus was a phenomenon too.

So it was hard to keep the crowds away. And if Jesus was trying to remain obscure, hanging out with Lazarus wasn't working out well because Lazarus was now a celebrity too. And people wanted to see him.

Now why would they want to see him? I mean he's not dead anymore he just looks normal. Well if you knew someone had been dead for a while and came back wouldn't you want to interview them? Aren't there things you'd like to find out about their experience? I'm sure there's a lot of people who wanted to find out what it's like being dead. Where do you go? What do you know? And a man who has died and come back is going to draw a lot of interest from curiosity seekers.

But the chief priest took counsel that they might also put Lazarus to death because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus. So these people are showing their colors more and more. They could profess to be unconvinced by the evidence only so long.

Like when Jesus healed the man born blind. They could say well no Jesus can't be from God because he broke the Sabbath. Well that was a pretty thin excuse in view of the miracle that had been done.

But now Jesus didn't raise Lazarus on the Sabbath. I mean they can't find any fault with this miracle. They just have to deal with it.

And the way they want to deal with it is kill it. Suppress the truth. Destroy the evidence.

And this they did knowing full well that Lazarus had risen from the dead and that made him a threat. Because that gave credentials to Jesus that they were hoping to avoid Jesus having. It's making Jesus more credible.

So they thought well maybe we need to get rid of Lazarus also. We don't read of any actual attempt that was made on Lazarus live. Even Jesus wasn't immediately killed after this.

I mean it was within days. They were targeting Jesus primarily but they must have at least discussed among themselves maybe we need to get rid of Lazarus also. Whether they ever made a move toward that we don't know.

Probably after Jesus was dead it was a moot point. Because Jesus wasn't there to be a problem anymore. So they wouldn't have to be concerned about Lazarus influencing people to believe in him.

The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him. And cried out, Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. The King of Israel.

Then Jesus when he had found a young donkey sat on it. As it is written, Fear not daughter of Zion, behold your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt. His disciples did not understand these things at first.

But when Jesus was glorified then they remembered that these things were written about him and that they had done these things to him. Therefore the people who were with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead bore witness. For this reason the people also met him because they heard that he had done this sign.

The Pharisees therefore said among themselves you see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look the world has gone after him. Now this obviously is the triumphal entry that's also recorded in the synoptic gospels.

One thing this tells us that the synoptics do not tell us is what gathered the crowd. In the synoptics we simply read that a crowd gathered to welcome Jesus into Jerusalem but we are not told what gathered them. But here we read it was the reports of Lazarus being raised.

It was because those who had seen Lazarus had told people and said because of this sign for this reason the people also met him on this occasion because they had heard that he had done this sign. So the raising of Lazarus was continuing to be a report that was gathering attention and increasing the excitement of the people. Now he was riding into Jerusalem on the donkey and the people were hailing him as essentially the Messiah.

The words that they are using here in verse 13 are the words of Psalm 118 verses 25 and 26 Hosanna blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord the King of Israel. In Mark 11 here is how it is rendered. It is a lot longer.

Verse 9 they said Hosanna blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that comes in the name of the Lord. They said blessed is the kingdom of our father David that comes or that is coming in the name of the Lord.

So they saw Jesus as coming to inaugurate the kingdom of David. And this is of course in their minds no doubt a revolutionary thing to overthrow the Romans to restore the Davidic throne in Jerusalem and the Davidic kingdom. Now were they wrong? Well in one sense they were wrong because they didn't understand what the kingdom was.

But they were right that he was coming to establish the kingdom. He wasn't going to postpone it as some would say he did. He was going to establish it.

But in fact when they said this in one of the gospels it tells us that the scribes and Pharisees rebuked him and said tell your disciples not to say those words. And Jesus said if they don't say it the stones themselves will say it. In other words these words are true and this is the time to say them.

If people don't say them someone will say them. The kingdom of David was in fact coming at that time. Jesus was establishing the kingdom and himself as the son of David.

So we can see that those words were spoken by these people. The different accounts and the different gospels rendered the saying somewhat different. No doubt because in the crowd some people were saying one thing some were saying another thing.

Yet they were all quoting Psalm 118 verses 25-26 Hosanna blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord the king of Israel. And so they were proclaiming him king. Now this was a revolutionary thing and you'd think the Romans would notice this.

I mean the Romans had sentries all over town. They're always looking out for uprisings among the Jews. Anything that might look like they need to stomp on something before it becomes a problem.

It seems like this triumphal entry would be just the kind of thing that would alarm the Romans. They were not far away. The Antonia fortress was right there in Jerusalem and there was a garrison of Romans right there.

It didn't take them long to get down the stairs. When Paul for example was being pulled apart by a mob before they could kill him the Roman soldiers were upon them. They didn't like mobs.

They didn't like mass gatherings of the Jews doing things that were unpredictable. To have a man riding into Jerusalem and everyone hailing him the king was just the kind of thing that the Romans didn't like about the Jews. They're always trying to start their own monarchy.

So you'd think that the Romans would come pouring in like gangbusters here to knock this down and they didn't. They didn't. Jesus just came into town and things went normally.

What's even more interesting is that later on when Jesus was before Pilate and the people said that Jesus said he was the king of the Jews and Pilate was interviewing him he became satisfied that Jesus was not a threat. He said, I don't see anything wrong with him. Now Pilate certainly must have gotten intelligence from his soldiers that Jesus had ridden a donkey into Jerusalem a few days earlier and people had proclaimed him the king.

And Pilate says, I think I'll just let him go. I don't see any fault with this man. Obviously Pilate realized that Jesus was not the kind of Messiah that would be a threat to him.

And Jesus apparently was not trying to be. Pilate must have been always gathering information about any kind of messianic movement that was cropping up to be a threat to Rome. And certainly Jesus had been around a lot.

There were people saying, isn't this the Messiah? A year earlier when he was at the Passover and probably much earlier than that. So Jesus' name was probably a well-known name in the halls of Pilate's court. He probably had a file on him.

He probably had spies watching Jesus. In fact, when they came and said, is it lawful to pay tribute to Caesar or not? There were probably eyes and ears of Roman officials paying attention to what Jesus might answer. Because if he was a true revolutionary, they'd say, no, it's unlawful to pay tribute to Caesar.

But Jesus said, well, whose face is on the coin? It looks like Caesar's face. That must be his. Give him back his coin.

Jesus didn't forbid them to pay tribute to Caesar. In fact, he encouraged them to do it. Pilate would have, as I said, had a complete dossier on Jesus.

And so when Jesus was brought to him, he thought, you're telling me this guy's a threat to me? I don't see anything wrong with him. And even here at this point where Jesus is riding in, it looks like a revolutionary uprising with a new messianic leader to stir up the Jews into trouble-making mobs. The Romans just kind of ignored it, apparently.

It's a strange thing. We have no explanation in the Gospels for why the Romans paid no attention. But my assumption is they had already done their research.

They knew who Jesus was. The Jews had their own hopes and dreams about Jesus, but the Romans had already observed what Jesus was about. He was a rabbi.

He wasn't a revolutionary. He wasn't a militaristic type. And so it's not the Romans that worry about him.

It's the Jews, the Jewish leaders. Verse 19, The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, You see that you are accomplishing nothing. That is, you, we, all of us together, we're not stopping him.

All of our plots to kill him have failed, and the whole world now has gone after him. It's too late. Now there's going to be this movement, this revolutionary movement.

Then the Romans are going to react. And the Pharisees are frightened. But that Roman reaction never happens.

The one that they thought would happen, the one that Caiaphas predicted would happen. The Romans are going to come in here. If everyone goes after Jesus, the Romans are going to move in and destroy our nation.

Well, here's everyone going after Jesus. The Romans weren't coming in. So we have sort of a mystery that's behind the narrative that is ignored by the narrative, and that is, where were the Romans? And we don't have an answer given.

It's my assumption that the Romans were not alarmed by Jesus because they realized he was not really a threat to them in the way that the Jews hoped he would be. Because he had no such intentions of being.