

**Easter Teaching No. 1**  
**Why would the Religious leaders conspire against Jesus?**

We know that Jesus came to die, we know that all he did during his ministry was to authenticate his claim to be the Christ sent from God.

So why with all the miracles, signs and wonders, proving himself to be their Messiah, did the religious leaders want to cut his ministry short and do away with him?

Well the Pharisees and Sadducees had pre-conceived ideas about the Messiah, what he would do when he came and especially that he would be like them, very religious and would follow their laws and regulations.

Jesus never did break the Mosaic law as this was put in place by his Heavenly Father, but Jesus did not keep the Pharisaic law or the tradition of the elders, because these were man-made rules and regulations and very typically put the ordinary citizens under unnecessary burdens. Jesus also associated with those on the margins of society, those that the religious leaders would never associate with or have any compassion or mercy on. This is basically summed up in a nutshell in

**Matthew 11:16 & 17 - Jesus said**

'To what can I compare this generation? They are like children sitting in the market-places and calling out to others;

"We played the pipe for you, and you did not dance, we sang a dirge and you did not mourn".

Simply put, Jesus did not dance to their tune, he associated with what the religious leaders considered to be the wrong people and he didn't live up to their expectations as the Messiah. He didn't do things their way and they even rejected his miracles on the basis that he himself was demon possessed, that his power was from the devil and not from God.

They were afraid of the crowd being sucked into believing this was the Messiah, because if this was the Messiah they feared that this Jesus would oust the Romans, that the Romans would fight back and destroy everything their current religious position gave them, the status, the power, the riches and the life-style they enjoyed.

Even if Jesus did set up his Messianic kingdom, they feared that it would not be the sort of kingdom they were hoping for. They wanted to maintain their status and as this Jesus was always at odds with them, they were sure their position as religious leaders was at stake.

After Jesus resurrected Lazarus, many people believed in Jesus and came flocking into the area to see for themselves that Lazarus was alive and well. This was the final straw for the religious leaders

## **John 11:45 - 53 -**

<sup>45</sup> Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary the Sister of Martha, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him. <sup>46</sup> But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. <sup>47</sup> Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin.

"What are we accomplishing?" they asked. "Here is this man performing many signs. <sup>48</sup> If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our temple and our nation."

<sup>49</sup> Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, spoke up, "You know nothing at all! <sup>50</sup> You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish."

<sup>51</sup> He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, <sup>52</sup> and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one. <sup>53</sup> So from that day on they plotted to take his life.

It is ironical indeed that Caiaphas in his role as High Priest should have prophesied, in his fear, that the Romans would destroy their nation and of Jesus causing an uprising: that it would be better to have one man, Jesus, die in the place of the whole nation.

Jesus indeed was a substitute and died not just for the nation of Israel but he died a substitutionary death for all humankind.

## **Matthew 26:1-5**

When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, "As you know, the Passover is two days away—and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified."

Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, and they schemed to arrest Jesus secretly and kill him. "But not during the festival," they said, "or there may be a riot among the people"

The die was cast - the plot was made, they just needed an opportunity to arrest Jesus away from the crowds.