***John 11:49-53 And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all, 50nor 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.” 51Now this he did not say on his own authority; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, 52and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad. 53Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death.***

According to theologians, 1989 years ago today, Jesus was crucified. Let that sink in just a minute. On this very date, 1989 years ago, nails were being driven, blood was being spilled, Salvation was arriving. Praise be to the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost for this day all those years ago.

This week, we begin our approach through messages to the season of celebrating the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. We’ve been in the season of Lent since March 2nd, starting on Ash Wednesday and ending on April 16th. This is a time to prepare our minds and hearts, giving focus to the work that Jesus completed on the Cross, giving us the opportunity for everlasting life. During this time, we consider His life, the suffering, the sacrifice, death and resurrection. We bring it to personal through self-examination, reflection – what Jesus did for me… what Jesus did for you. If we never bring it to personal, we only know of Jesus and do not know Him. Matthew 7:22-23 *Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ 23 And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!*

Preceding our scripture this morning, we see a gathering. Lazarus has been raised, the people have learned of the miracle, belief is growing, excitement is building and the people are stirred up. The Passover celebration is a few days away. People from all nations are filling the streets. The tombs have been whitewashed, the temple prepared, and the High Priest will soon enter the Holy of Holies to make the yearly sacrifice on behalf of the nation. The resurrection of Lazarus and the excitement of the people is a problem for Caiaphas. As a Sadducee, he didn’t accept resurrection. As High Priest, he wanted nothing to stir the people up. Rome needed to be appeased.

Realize that the High Priest at this time has become a political office. The Romans appointed the High priest. There’d been five appointed in a short period of time. Caiaphas was shrewd politically, a collaborator with the Roman authorities. Priest in name only. He loved position and power, but not the people. So hear his fear and frustration in verse 49 - *And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all”.* Some of those gathered were focused on the wonderful miracles of Jesus. Could He be the Messiah? Caiaphas is not interested in a Messiah… He is interested in self. This man ruled the treasury, ruled the Sanhedrin, held sway over a nation. He doesn’t hear the scriptural truth some are speaking, but fears the worldly fallout. He looks at what he has to lose.

Before we condemn Caiaphas, many hold Jesus at bay in life due to the sin we enjoy. People shut their eyes to the scriptural evidence, the miracles around because, when Jesus takes over, self must cease. We must decrease that Jesus increase.

Verse 50 *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.* Though I have every suspicion that he means it’s in the best interest of we in power this man die to keep the peace among the people outside our doors at this moment, this is a prophetic statement. Jews and Gentiles.

Verse 51 & 52 *Now this he did not say on his own authority; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, 52and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.* John explains. God placed this prophecy upon the heart of the very man that would lead the effort to crucify His Son. Caiaphas was High Priest. This must not be lost on us this morning. As High Priest, he offered the great sacrifice of atonement for sin in the Holy of Holies, only he went behind the veil that would be torn open when Jesus died. Part of his duty is to approve the sacrifice! By his words in verse 50, he approves, accepts, chooses Jesus as the sacrifice, as the very Lamb that would be sacrificed for not only the Jewish people but all nations of the world.

Verse 53 *Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death.* From that day, they plotted to put Jesus to death. The Lamb of God, spotless, was marked for sacrifice, an ultimate sacrifice that would conquer death and open the gates of heaven for all who believe.

This week, let us reflect on the sacrifice of Jesus and upon the place He occupies in our lives. Is He stirring things up, belief growing, excitement all around? He died for us, that we might be grafted in, and receive the Salvation through His blood. Let us be excited to welcome our Savior and Lord, laying not just palm branches and clothing before Him, but all we have, all we are, all we will ever be. Welcome Him in Triumphal entry to take His place as High Priest and King of our souls.