

John 11:50

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

Analysis

Caiaphas articulates expedient politics: one man's death saves the nation. His calculation is coldly pragmatic—better Jesus die than risk Roman retaliation. He speaks 'not of himself' but prophetically (v. 51), unknowingly declaring substitutionary atonement's core truth: one dies for many. His evil intent can't prevent his words from carrying divine truth. This demonstrates the doctrine of verbal inspiration—God can communicate truth even through unwilling or unknowing agents. The statement foreshadows the cross's purpose.

Historical Context

Political expediency often guided Sanhedrin decisions under Roman occupation. Caiaphas' cynical calculation reflects realpolitik common in vassal states. Ironically, his formula matches Isaiah 53's suffering servant prophecy.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does Caiaphas' evil intent not negate the truth of his prophetic words?
2. What does this teach about God's ability to speak truth through any source?
3. In what ways does this statement reveal the heart of substitutionary atonement?

Interlinear Text

οὐδὲ διαλογίζεσθε ὅτι συμφέρει ἡμῖν ἵνα εἷς ἄνθρωπος
Nor **consider** **that** **it is expedient** **for us** **that** **one** **man**
G3761 G1260 G3754 G4851 G2254 G2443 G1520 G444

ἀποθάνη ὑπὲρ τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ μὴ ὅλον τὸ ἔθνος
should die **for** **the people** **and** **not** **that the whole** **nation**
G599 G5228 G3588 G2992 G2532 G3361 G3650 G3588 G1484

ἀπόληται
perish
G622

Additional Cross-References

John 18:14 (Parallel theme): Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

Luke 24:46 (Parallel theme): And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

Romans 3:8 (Parallel theme): And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just.