

JESUS AS THREAT

There are several things Jesus says and does that place him squarely in the center of the Temple/Roman bulls-eye.

1. from John's Gospel, is the story of Lazarus raised from the dead. Jesus waits several days before visiting Bethany, to leave no doubt that Lazarus was truly deceased. Lazarus' resurrection caused such a stir that the Jewish leaders sought to kill him as well as Jesus.

“⁹When the great crowd of the Jews learned that he was there, they came not only because of Jesus but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. ¹⁰So the chief priests planned to put Lazarus to death as well, ¹¹since it was on account of him that many of the Jews were deserting and were believing in Jesus.”

2. Jesus' planned anti-Roman entry into Jerusalem (Palm) Sunday
3. Jesus' planned cleansing of the temple and (John 2:18-19) Jesus' subsequent remark: “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.”
4. All the “Woe to you, Pharisees and Scribes” during his last week in Jerusalem.
5. Jesus' direct confession “I Am” and “Son of Man” to the temple leadership.
6. Jesus' non-response, (or in John, his authority-ridden response concerning his kingdom) to Pilate. Imagine Jesus, beaten, swollen, bleeding, tattered, standing before a highly decorated, highly ranking Roman governor. Jesus' response reflects courage and contempt.
7. Barabbas: “Both Barabbas and Jesus are revolutionaries. Both defied imperial authority. But the first advocated violent revolution and the second advocated nonviolence. By the year 66CE, the Jerusalem crowd (and many others in the Jewish homeland) had chosen the way of Barabbas, not the way of Jesus. The events of 66-70CE make [Mark's use of] this story intelligible.” ^[1]
8. Caesar was considered the son of God, therefore, when Temple leaders exclaimed, “...he [Jesus] has claimed to be the Son of God,” Pilate knew this was dangerous anti-empire speech.

^[1]THE LAST WEEK: What the gospels Really Teach About Jesus' Final Days in Jerusalem. (c) 2006 by Marcus J. Borg and John Dominic Crossan. P.144