

Jesus the Resurrection and Life

“Jesus said unto her, **I am the resurrection, and the life**: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?”

John 11:25-26

Preparatory Reading: Luke 10:38-42; John 12:1-11; John 11:1-57.

Introduction:

1. Different to studying John 10 last Sunday, there is no parable here, but rather two important historical events.
2. Due to the length of this chapter and my desire to cover it in two sermons on one Lord’s Day, we must hurry.
3. We had one member depart recently, and we shall have another depart shortly. Believest thou this (11:25-26)?
4. There are numerous lessons we can learn from this historical chapter of events in the life of our Lord Jesus.
 - a. Differences may exist between sisters, for variations in walking with God are uniquely personal (11:1).
 - b. Mary’s affection for Jesus that motivated an anointing of His feet in public is perpetually noticed (11:2).
 - c. Yet others when deep affection is being shown can carnally and profanely criticize the spiritual (11:2).
 - d. When trouble arises in life, and it will many times, the first and best response is to inform Jesus (11:3).
 - e. It is wisdom to supplicate a prince with reminders of personal affection or established friendships (11:3).
 - f. One of the reasons that bad events happen to Christians is for the greater glory of God and Christ (11:4).
 - g. Note the connection of God’s glory with that of Christ, and similarly Christ’s glory with our own (11:4).
 - h. Sometimes it is wisdom to allow a situation to deteriorate for providing means for a greater lesson (11:6).
 - i. Though things go from bad to worse after you start praying, keep praying for the greater blessing (11:6).
 - j. Are you a favorite and loved by the Lord Jesus Christ, as these three siblings of Bethany were (11:5)
 - k. Faith and wisdom are not moved by delays in answers to prayer, for you do not know the reason (11:6).
 - l. While you have ability and conviction to do the will of God, do it while you can without fear (11:9-10).
 - m. We look for the spiritual sense of words by comparing the Spirit’s use of words in scripture (11:14).
 - n. Prayers may go unanswered or circumstances may worsen in order for a greater lesson for you (11:15).
 - o. Sincerity and zeal are not shown by patiently waiting for a good thing – go seek what you need (11:20).
 - p. Anything is possible with God and our Lord Jesus Christ, so do not fail to believe and to ask (11:22).
 - q. If supplicating a prince, rather than a bold, open request, a subtle praise of ability might be better (11:22).
 - r. When answering a question, more information is better than less, if it closely relates to the topic (11:27).
 - s. Though sacrificing external suasion, the best time to supplicate a prince for help is in private (11:28).
 - t. Even with close friends there is a time to show extreme respect or to acknowledge a higher office (11:32).
 - u. Our Lord is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, including human passions, yet without sin (11:33).
 - v. Crying tears is not a foolishness or weakness; it is meaningful empathetic emotion and sympathy (11:35).
 - w. Burial in a cave usually involves more dirt or ground overhead than the six feet of a cemetery (11:38).
 - x. Though usually arrogant and provocative, there are times “I told you so” is useful for instruction (11:40).
 - y. Humility and public reservation are ordinarily right, but there are times a public lesson is better (11:42).
 - z. Never let the obvious escape notice and consideration, so use a multitude of counselors and listen (11:47).
 - a. If you rebel against God, He will bring your worst fears and evil plans down on your own head (11:48).
 - b. Situations occur where a sacrificial lamb, though it must be done righteously, can appease anger (11:50).
 - c. There is no virtue or valor in taking unnecessary risks until you must expose yourself out of duty (11:54).

1 Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

- A. As in identifying Jesus by His hometown of Nazareth, so Lazarus was identified as from Bethany.
- B. This is not metaphor or parable of imaginary characters to convey a moral lesson of truth by Jesus.
- C. Bethany was a village on the Mount of Olives two miles from Jerusalem on the road to Jericho.

2 (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)

- A. The account of this event is found in the next chapter, where Mary anointed His feet (John 12:3).
- B. This appears by many factors to be the same event as described in Mathew 26:6-13 and Mark 14:3-9.
- C. By varying circumstances, this is not the event of the sinful woman anointing Him (Luke 7:36-50).
- D. There is further value in seeing the difference between the sisters on an occasion (Luke 10:38-42).
- E. You should ask and answer what causes a person to do such a thing and whether you are like them.

3 Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.

- A. Our Lord's affection for these three siblings is mentioned shortly but understood by them already.
- B. When trouble arises in life, and it will many times, the best solution is always to go to the Lord.
- C. It is wisdom with God and men to appeal to the relationship you have with them for their mercy.

4 When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

- A. Here is an example of rightly dividing scripture (II Tim 2:15), for Lazarus most surely died (11:14).
- B. One of the reasons that bad events happen to Christians is for the greater glory of God (John 9:3).
- C. Jesus will refer later to this statement to Martha about the glory of God, so remember it (11:40), for He spoke it in the presence of those messengers sent by Mary and her, who would have relayed it.
- D. Notice here that the glory of God and our Lord being glorified by it are closely connected (Jn 17:1).
- E. We have a similar close and reciprocal connection to the glory of Jesus Christ (II Thess 1:12).
- F. For more about bad events for God's glory ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/why-bad-things-happen.pdf>.

5 Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

- A. Here is a personal aspect of our Lord: He had a preference for these three siblings that followed him.
- B. David declared that God *liked* him above all Israel, all Judah, and His many brothers (I Chron 28:4).
- C. There is nothing wrong with having favorites, and we know our Lord did so in perfect holiness.
- D. What of Peter, James, and John frequently distinguished from the other apostles for privileges.

6 When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

- A. Faith and wisdom are not moved by delays in answers to prayers, for you do not see the good reason.
- B. If Jesus had rushed to Bethany sooner, God's glory and many lessons would have been reduced.
- C. Jesus will shortly explain that He was glad to make the delay to build His apostles' faith (11:14).

7 Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judaea again.

- A. Jesus and His apostles were at Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John at first baptized (John 10:40).
- B. In His last visit to Jerusalem, they had tried to take or kill Him several times (John 8:59; 10:31,39).

8 His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?

- A. The disciples, usually thinking like natural men, react to information with a purely worldly outlook.
- B. In His recent, *of late*, trip to Jerusalem, they tried to kill Him several times (John 8:59; 10:31,39).
- C. But Jesus, knowing all things that would come to pass there, had no problem facing the Jews again.

9 Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.

- A. This and the next verse are metaphorical statements about the role of sunshine helping men work.
1. *Are there not twelve hours in the day?* No, there are 24 in the entire day, but 12 of sunshine.
 2. *If any walk in the day, he stumbleth not.* He does not stumble, for he has daylight to guide him.
 3. *Because he seeth the light of this world.* Jesus is the light of the world, but not here (II Tim 2:15), for God created the greater light to rule the day and provide the light for *any man* to work.
 4. While daylight exists, a man can work diligently without fear of stumbling, for he can see well.
 5. Of course, Jesus taught this before the invention of artificial light and the greed of capitalism that demands working 24 hours a day and often 7 days a week to increase production more and more.
- B. Our Lord's statement was made in response to the apostles' fear of the murderous Jews in Judea.
1. The apostles feared Judea for the near-stoning on their recent visit there (John 8:59; 10:31,39).
 2. Jesus only avoided danger before it was His time (John 8:20,59; 7:8,30,44; 10:39; Lu 13:31-33).
 3. He was now ready to go to Jerusalem and fulfill all that was written of Him (Luke 9:51; 12:50).
 4. His metaphor explained His confidence of being in no danger during the daytime given Him to do His work, though He knew soon at Jerusalem the metaphorical sun would set and His Father would expose Him to the darkness and stumbling of His trial and crucifixion.
 5. He could be harmed no sooner than God's counsel had called for, and He intended to work until the last minute of metaphorical daylight. What a Saviour! Read His own account of His commitment to work while it was daytime (John 9:4).
 6. While we have ability and conviction and an open door to any good work, we should pursue it with appropriate diligence and zeal, for God will enable and protect us as long as we are useful.

10 But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

- A. This and the previous verse are metaphorical statements of the role of sunshine helping men work.
1. *Are there not twelve hours in the day?* No, there are 24 in the entire day, but 12 of sunshine.
 2. *If any walk in the day, he stumbleth not.* He does not stumble, for he has daylight to guide him.
 3. *Because he seeth the light of this world.* Jesus is the light of the world, but not here (II Tim 2:15), for God created the greater light to rule the day and provide the light for *any man* to work.
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 6. While we have ability and conviction and an open door to any good work, we should pursue it with appropriate diligence and zeal, for God will enable and protect us as long as we are useful.
- C. *Because there is no light in him.* These words continue the metaphor about sunlight and working.
1. Jesus is not in the middle of a doctrinal discourse of Himself as light of the world (Jn 8:12; 9:5).
 2. They are a Biblical form of expression to describe the condition of darkness that keeps a man from seeing where he is going and what he is doing (Matt 6:22-23; Luke 11:34-36; I Jn 2:10-11).

11 *These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.*

- A. Why did Jesus say this, when He knew that it would confound His yet ignorant, faithless apostles?
 1. They would think He was only speaking of taking rest in sleep, as John will describe (11:13).
 2. They would think that raising a man from sleep did not justify the great danger in Judea.
 3. Why these words? Because the Holy Spirit needs to teach us to think spiritual words (I Co 2:13)!
- B. There is not a wasted sentence from the mouth of Jesus Christ or found written in your Bibles.
 1. Our Lord by these words taught them and us that death to Him is only *sleep* for a physical body.
 2. It is words like this that express His faith and should build our faith to trust God no matter what!
 3. Do not ever question or resent any choice of words in scripture. They are there for your learning.
 4. It is our solemn duty and pleasure to compare spiritual words with spiritual for truth (I Cor 2:13).
 5. If scorners and skeptics think it a contradiction, great! Love a book that gets rid of reprobates.
 6. For an example of apparent contradiction ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/ahaziah-contradiction.pdf>.

12 *Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.*

- A. The apostles, like us much more than we want to admit, focus on the literal meaning of the word.
- B. They saw no reason to have to travel to Bethany for such an event or face the danger likely there.

13 *Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.*

- A. There is a difference in how we may commonly and naturally use words and how the Spirit does.
- B. It is our wisdom, and a rule of hermeneutics, to compare spiritual uses of words (I Cor 2:13).

14 *Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.*

- A. Observe the inspired explanation by John that referring to death as sleep is not *plain* speech.
- B. In just a matter of a few verses our Lord used a proverb and the spiritual intent of a natural word.
- C. The Bible is not written as plainly as it could be, and we thank God for concealing His truth from others to reveal it to us, for it seemed good in His sight (Matthew 11:25-27; 13:10-17).
- D. For more about obscuring the truth ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/why-all-the-confusion.pdf>.

15 *And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.*

- A. Remember, Jesus had stayed in the same place where He was for two extra days for a reason (11:6).
- B. Here is that reason – that the apostles’ might have greater faith by witnessing a greater miracle.
- C. He will refer in prayer to His Father about those standing by needing an increase in faith (11:42).
- D. God may delay answering your prayers, not for evil reasons, but to build and increase your faith.
- E. With the delay, circumstances may get even worse; but it is not time for despair, but rather for hope!

16 *Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellowdisciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.*

- A. Whether dying with Lazarus (already dead) or Jesus (presumed to die on His next visit), Thomas makes a rash statement based on circumstances of the Jews’ hatred for Jesus and disciples in Judea.
- B. Words easily uttered in the absence of a threat are not easily kept when the threat is in your face, for the gospel record tells us that Thomas, Peter, and the rest of the apostles forsook Jesus (Matt 26:56).
- C. Thomas was an apostle that also had weak faith after our Lord’s resurrection (John 20:24-25).

17 Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already.

- A. If Jesus was beyond Jordan (10:40), then the distance to Bethany was twenty-five miles or more.
- B. What is a believer to do when circumstances deteriorate (death) with a further delay of 96-hours?
 1. The arrangement of circumstances and their timing is of the Lord, so we fully submit to them.
 2. We never lose faith or hope, because we trust in the living God, Who can do anything, anytime.

18 Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off:

- A. The distance between these two places was about two miles as we measure distances.
- B. This proximity worried the apostles, and this proximity allowed friends in Jerusalem to visit easily.

19 And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.

- A. By this verse's contextual location, we understand that many of these Jews came from Jerusalem.
- B. These were likely believers, because a close friendship with Jesus of Nazareth would alter friends.

20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house.

- A. Martha showed zeal to go to the Lord, which we should do when we have a need as great as this.
- B. We do not know Mary's thinking, so we shall not judge her as lacking in any grace of the Spirit.

21 Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

- A. This had been their original intent in sending for the Lord, so do not be too hard on either sister.
- B. This is precisely the language and words Mary used when she met the Lord Jesus shortly (11:32).
- C. Jesus had delayed intentionally; since they would have known the distance, they were disappointed.
- D. They, like us, did not fully appreciate God's will for a greater work and thus the disappointing delay.

22 But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.

- A. We criticize Martha for Luke 10:38-42, but let us remember Jesus loved her *and* what she says here.
- B. Though not saying such an audacious thing as resurrection out loud, she was certainly thinking it!
 1. Jesus had raised the dead, and close friends like Martha knew of it (Mark 5:41-42; Luk 7:11-18).
 2. Jesus had already taught that the Father had given Him power of life and death (John 5:21-30).
- C. Yet, did Martha fully understand that Jesus was God Himself, and He Himself had power of life?
- D. Are you able to pray with this degree of confidence when things in your life deteriorate further?

23 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

- A. Jesus did not expressly say that He would raise Lazarus now, but He rather made a general statement about resurrection, for Martha did not understand Him in the present sense, as it follows.
- B. A partial solution for all grief and mourning for earthly relations is confidence in the resurrection!
- C. A foundation for believing God is able to do anything you need is the certainty of this future event!

24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

- A. Amen! Martha is not inferior to Job, David, or others who spoke of the resurrection of the body, for this great mystery of the gospel was not unknown (Job 19:25-27; Psalm 49:15; 73:24; etc.).
- B. The last day is the great reckoning and reversal of things as we presently know them for our faith.
- C. Reader, do you believe such things? With daily certainty? And do you have strong evidence for it?

25 *Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:*

- A. What a glorious statement of our Lord's power over death, the body, and the grave. Praise Him!
 1. He had power over death to resurrect dead bodies, and He had the power to bestow life to bodies.
 2. This divine power had been given to Him by God, and He had declared it so (John 5:21-29).
 3. He had already raised at least two from the dead, which had to be known (Luke 7:1-18; 8:49-56).
 4. He had the power over His own physical life to lay it down and to take it up again (John 10:18).
 5. He would fully prove this first with Himself for our comfort (Col 1:18; I Cor 15:23; John 4:19).
 6. He made a related glorious description when John saw Him after His resurrection (Rev 1:18).
- B. There is no necessity or reason to see vital salvation or regeneration in this passage (II Tim 2:15).
 1. The man presently believing would live in the future; this is speaking of bodily resurrection.
 2. *Though he were dead* does not refer to his past death in trespasses and sins, but it is a subjunctive mood verb description of what must happen to everyone of us – we are appointed once to die.

26 *And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?*

- A. There are two different and powerfully true applications of these words spoken by our Lord Christ.
 1. *Those who believe in Him and are alive at His Second Coming shall never die (I Thess 4:13-18).*
 2. The great Day of Resurrection has already been introduced into the conversation here (11:24).
 3. Without a great change in sense of *die*, other applications are a repetition of the previous verse.
 4. *Those who believe in Christ by virtue of regeneration shall never die a penal or second death.*
 5. It is this sense we understand Paul declaring that Jesus came and abolished death (II Tim 1:10).
 6. In this sense Jesus spoke to the Jews, and their misunderstanding caused anger (John 6:50; 8:51).
- B. Believest thou this? When faced with Jesus Christ and His gospel, we must make a choice by faith.
 1. The gospel confronts us with truth, and we must humbly submit to it as truth and believe it.
 2. The value of the gospel is only as good as your faith and memory, as at Corinth (I Cor 15:2,19).

27 *She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.*

- A. Praise God for Martha and her declaration of faith! Grace makes this great difference among men.
- B. She first affirmed what Jesus had declared to her regarding Him being the resurrection and the life.
- C. She then confessed the gospel summary that Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God (Matt 16:13-17).

28 *And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee.*

- A. Do not say, "I wish Jesus would call me to come," for He has already done so (Matt 11:28-30). Go!
- B. We believe Jesus called for Mary by these words. Recording every such statement twice would have been redundant and had made the Bible much larger than it already is.

29 *As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him.*

- A. When the Lord calls by word, by Spirit, or by conscience, do you quickly go to Him (Psalm 119:60).
- B. It is wisdom and zeal to go to Jesus at the first urgings of conscience and conviction, lest they stop.

30 *Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him.*

31 *The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there.*

32 Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

- A. These are the same words Martha spoke to the Lord upon first meeting Him at His arrival (11:21).
- B. We may rejoice at her humility and love to fall at the feet of her Saviour and worship Him, which is entirely consistent with sitting at His feet (Luke 10:38-42) and anointing His feet (John 12:3).
- C. Is your life consistent with Mary? You ignore others and other things to listen, worship, and anoint?

33 When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled,

- A. Jesus was touched with our feelings, even human emotions like grief, without sin (Heb 4:15; 2:18).
 - 1. We must never forget that He was made of our nature to endure our temptations in every respect.
 - 2. The Spirit tells us that His groaning and trouble were a result of seeing Mary and others weeping.
 - 3. Gethsemane shows our Lord's emotional side that we should grasp (Luke 22:39-44; Heb 5:7-9).
 - 4. He set His face to go to Jerusalem and saw the joy before Him, but He still agonized (Heb 12:2).
 - 5. Any Catholic or Stoic doctrine that denies our Lord and/or us a place for such passions is heresy.
 - 6. Jesus loved Lazarus; He loved Mary; He loved Martha; He commiserated with their heavy grief.
 - 7. The greatest saints in and out of scripture weep at such events (II Samuel 1:11-27; Acts 9:39).
 - 8. Jesus also wept over the city of Jerusalem, which He would soon destroy for sin (Lu 19:41-44).
 - 9. We are to weep with them that weep, and our Lord gave us a perfect example (Romans 12:15).
 - 10. When Jesus sees grief and loss, He has compassion, as He did in the city of Nain (Luke 7:11-18).
- B. We do not have any evidence in the context that Jesus groaned and was trouble for their unbelief.
 - 1. Though we could imagine that He might have expected more faith from such close friends.
 - 2. If it were only groaning and trouble, we might think for a lack of faith, but He also wept (11:35).
 - 3. If there were more in context, like a reprimand for lack of faith, we might think it for their faults.
 - 4. When the Jews ascribed it to His love for Lazarus (11:36), Jesus did not correct or rebuke them.

34 And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.

35 Jesus wept.

- A. Our Lord was tempted like we are, even human emotions like grief, yet without sin (Heb 4:15; 2:18).
 - 1. We must never forget that He was made of our nature to endure our temptations in every respect.
 - 2. The Spirit tells us that His groaning and trouble were a result of seeing Mary and others weeping.
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- B. We do not have any evidence in the context that Jesus groaned and was trouble for their unbelief.
 - 1. Though we can surely believe that He might have expected more faith from such close friends.
 - 2. He wept, which is more than groaning and trouble (1:33), and better evidence of His own grief.
 - 3. If there were more in context, like a reprimand for lack of faith, we might think it for their faults.
 - 4. When the Jews ascribed it to His love for Lazarus (11:36), Jesus did not correct or rebuke them.

36 Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!

- A. For this we can be thankful: when our Lord loves a man, He loves Him passionately and strongly.
- B. His grief was visible and/or audible, which condemns any monastic or stoic thinking as heresy.

37 And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?

- A. The event of John 9 was well known and it was relatively recent in comparison to all other miracles.
- B. Men had some measure of confidence in *this man*, but they did not recall or believe about the dead.

38 Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

- A. See the comments at 33 and 35 to recognize the empathetic and compassionate nature of our Lord.
- B. The next time you take your groans and tears to the Lord, remember His sympathy from John 11.

39 Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.

- A. Many sermons have been preached from this text and the few verses following about regeneration.
 - 1. It is true that proper gospel preaching exposes the stinking deadness of men still dead in sins.
 - 2. It is true that regeneration occurs by the voice of the Son of God calling a passive person to life.
 - 3. It is true they wander about until a minister of the gospel removes their grave clothes for action.
 - 4. But though these things are true, and we believe them well, they are not taught by this passage!
- B. What happened to Martha? She had stated confidence and belief in our Lord's power (11:22,27).
 - 1. It is one thing to pray for a matter but a different thing to actually and fully believe it possible.
 - 2. It is one thing to assent to doctrine when presented directly to you but a different to fully apply it.

40 Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

- A. How and when did Jesus say such words to Martha? Should we stumble and miss them altogether?
 - 1. He had declared the intended glory of God to a messenger, who would have told Martha (11:4).
 - 2. He had declared to Martha directly that Lazarus would rise again, though she diverted (11:23).
 - 3. He had declared belief was important and had solicited her own confession about it (11:25-26).
 - 4. If this is too convoluted or difficult for you, then you are stumbling without faith over His word.
- B. We must learn to believe everything God has declared in His word and every combination of them!

41 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.

- A. We assume prayer must be made with eyes closed; but it is not required nor always necessary; we generally do so to reduce distraction and lift our hearts toward God in heaven, Whom we cannot see.
- B. The prayer of Jesus mentioned here is not this prayer, but one uttered verbally before this situation.
- C. Jesus thanked the Father for hearing Him in an earlier prayer for an object lesson for the audience.
- D. We trust the verb tenses of this prayer, which indicate that an earlier prayer is under consideration.

42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.

- A. We trust the verb tenses of this prayer, which indicate that an earlier prayer is under consideration.
 - 1. Jesus thanked the Father in 11:41 that He had heard Him in an earlier prayer, not this prayer.
 - 2. *I knew* means that when Jesus made the earlier prayer He believed that God heard Him then.

3. *I said it* must refer grammatically to an earlier prayer, which those now present had heard then.
 4. This prayer could have been made at 11:4, and it was apostles and messengers now standing by.
 5. For He explained to His apostles the reason for the delay was their increase in faith (11:15).
 6. There are three past tense verbs indicating a past prayer or request – *hast heard, knew, said*.
- B. The Jews were prone to accuse that miracles were done by the power of the devil, but our Lord made it clear to any honest observer that His unity and power were from the God of heaven – Jehovah.
- C. Jesus our Lord, always desiring His Father’s glory, declared His will and power in sending Him.

43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

- A. We love Jesus’ powerful voice! “Peace, be still,” to waves! “Lazarus, come forth,” to a dead man!
- B. Those in Capernaum said, “What a word is this!” when they heard Him cast out a devil (Lu 4:31-37).
- C. Hopefully He has already called you (John 5:25), and He will assuredly yet call you (John 5:28-29)!
- D. Our blessed Lord of life shall soon come from heaven and shout to all dead bodies to come forth!
- E. We love the call of God to Israel in Ezekiel 16, “Live!” May we never profane our lives as they did.

44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

- A. Note here the Jewish custom of two burial cloths, further damning the Shroud of Turn (John 20:6-7).
- B. While it may be the work of gospel ministers to loose regenerated elect from past habits, bondage, and heresies, this is not the lesson taught here. The lesson is that Jesus wanted Lazarus freed!

45 Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.

- A. We have another division among the Jews, with those in this verse believing on Jesus by the miracle.
 1. Division will often or always be caused by exalting the Lord Jesus Christ. Are you ready for it?
 2. If not for God’s grace, there would be no division; all men without exception would hate Christ.
 3. The more you truly live for Jesus Christ, the more you will be persecuted for it (II Tim 3:12).
 4. No man can or will believe on the Lord Jesus Christ without God drawing him (John 6:44,63).
- B. It was not unbelief or sin to believe on Him due to His miracles, for He had commended it (10:38).
- C. Though you did not see the miracle, you have read and heard of it. Do you believe (John 20:29)?

46 But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.

- A. These little tattletales were fawning puppets of the religious hierarchy with no fear of God, except for some few ignorant elect like Saul of Tarsus, who was eventually converted to be an apostle.
- B. News of a miracle like this with so many witnesses close to Jerusalem was not good for business.

47 Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles.

- A. What shall we do because this man doeth many miracles? Repent of your sins, and believe on Him!
- B. They were more foolish and wicked than Pharaoh, for evidence for Christ was greater than Moses.
- C. The Jews rejected Jesus and miracles by ignorance (John 12:34), blindness (John 12:37-41), envy (Mark 15:10), and error (Ex 7:10-13; Deut 13:1-5; John 9:16).

48 *If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.*

- A. *If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him.* The Jews were envious of our Lord's success.
 - 1. Of course, they were not going to believe on Him, so their use of *all men* was severely limited.
 - 2. It is important when reading scripture to see the many universal expressions with narrow limits.
 - 3. They thought they could stop Him. They were chagrined for leaving Him alone. What fools!
- B. They feared upheaval in Israel could provoke Caesar to send an army to destroy temple and nation.
 - 1. This is subterfuge to cover their ambitious envy and tyranny over the people for their own ends.
 - 2. The Jews called the temple their holy place (Acts 6:13) and place (Acts 6:14); see also Acts 21:28; John 4:20; and the uninspired record in II Maccabees 1:14; 2:18; 3:18; 5:16,17; 10:7.
 - 3. We believe this the intent, for chief priests and Pharisees did not have the same station in Israel.
 - 4. We believe this the intent, for their words are noble and national, not honest and condemning.
 - 5. When men devise against God, He will bring their plans down on their head. Remember Haman!
 - 6. In their wisdom they planned to kill the Son of God to save temple and nation from the Romans.
 - 7. In God's wisdom, the Romans came and destroyed temple and nation for killing the Son of God!
 - 8. Note our Lord's precise explanation of why armies came to destroy Jerusalem (Luke 19:41-44), just as Daniel had prophesied for the overspreading of abominations (Daniel 9:26-27).
 - 9. Note our Lord's parabolic explanation that nailed the Pharisees directly (Matthew 21:33-46).

49 *And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all,*

- A. The arrogance of this man has no bound here or at the trial of our Lord Jesus (Matthew 26:57-66).
- B. He used his office and arrogance to reduce them to mere buffoons when the solution was so obvious.
- C. Caiaphas was a Sadducee hardened by his gross heresy and God's blindness (Acts 5:17; 23:8-9).
- D. He and his father-in-law were high priests when John began his ministry (Luke 3:1-3).
- E. He personally solidified the Jewish leadership against Jesus as we shall read (11:53,57; Matt 26:1-5).
 - 1. He and his father-in-law personally managed our Lord's "trial" (John 18:12-28).
 - 2. He interviewed Jesus and heard a glorious testimony (Mat 26:57-68). He lived long enough to see a dark crucifixion, an earthquake, the veil torn from top to bottom, a partial resurrection, Christ's resurrection with scared soldiers, Pentecost, bold and gifted apostles, and likely the destruction of Jerusalem.
 - 3. Jesus told Pilate His judgment of the role that Caiaphas had played (John 19:11).
 - 4. Judas had delivered Him to the Jews, but Caiaphas delivered Him to Romans.
- F. He and Annas were privileged to hear of Jesus again (Acts 4:5-10; 5:17-33; 7:1; 9:1-2).

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

- A. In effect, you stupid fools should be able to see that killing this one man can save the whole nation, for if it is but one man that threatens our temple and nation, then get rid of him and calm Rome.
- B. Such a choice is nearly an axiom in military and political history of sacrificing one to save many.
 - 1. He sought to justify plans against Jesus for the people and their consciences.
 - 2. He reasons that the Romans will have no cause for alarm if Jesus is killed and consequently His influence among the people is brought to nothing.
 - 3. He reasons that the Romans will be satisfied with the Jews if Jesus can be given the blame for a seditious movement against Caesar and then killed.
 - 4. They later accused Jesus to Pilate of being guilty of sedition against Rome (Lu 23:1-2; Jn 19:12).
 - 5. The wisdom of Caiaphas was to kill Jesus as their own Messiah (Isaiah 53:8-9; Daniel 9:26).

6. The wisdom of Caiaphas was to justify the blood of one man for the nation – yet he would very shortly try to avoid guilt for this blood (Matt 23:34-36 cp Matt 27:25 cp Acts 5:27-28).
 7. The wisdom of Caiaphas did not defeat God's plan, but confirmed it (Proverbs 19:21; 21:30).
 8. The wisdom of Caiaphas turned the wicked Jews' greatest fear upon their own heads and pates (Ps 7:14-16; 9:15-17).
- C. Expedience! We never want expediency; we want truth, righteousness, and wisdom. Beware of it!
- D. The one Man they needed the most – the Messiah of God promised perpetually to Israel in writing – the representative of God on earth chose to murder. Never underestimate how low sin will go!

51 And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation;

- A. John interjected two verses of commentary into his history of Jesus Christ's life (John 11:51-52).
1. Caiaphas's evil design and words were important to the crucifixion (John 18:13-14; 19:11).
 2. John informs his readers the statement did not originate with Caiaphas himself.
 3. John also explains the second sense of the words as a prophecy of Christ's death.
 4. Jesus truly did die as a Substitute and as a Scapegoat, just as Caiaphas declared.
- B. Caiaphas did not intend to prophesy at all – he was simply and only calling for the murder of Jesus.
- C. God chose him for this prophecy due to his God-given office of preeminence and revelation.
- D. But God overruled His purpose in such a way that He glorified Jesus Christ by the very same words.
- E. God used a dumb ass to stop Balaam's madness (II Peter 2:16), and He so used Caiaphas. Glory!
- F. And God overruled Balaam just like He had overruled his ass to bless Israel instead of curse them!
- G. God also used Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar to deliver prophecies that were recorded in scripture.
- H. God once supplied Peter with divine understanding to declare the identity of Jesus (Matt 16:15-17).
- I. Do you understand the extent of the mysteries of the gospel (hidden truth revealed to you by God)?
- J. The wicked Jews would make a prophecy about themselves that was fulfilled (Matt 27:25; Ac 5:28).
- K. Our Lord's death as the ultimate sacrifice for the people would end the need for any more priests!

52 And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

- A. John explained that Jesus Christ's death would reconcile God's elect children among the Gentiles.
1. It was God's wisdom that the one man Jesus should die for the people (Heb 2:9-17).
 2. John knew that the death of Jesus was for more than the Jews (John 10:16; I John 2:2).
 3. John would know even better later in life of Christ's death for Gentiles (Rev 5:9; 7:9).
 4. Paul taught Hosea's prophecy as fulfilling in the election of Gentiles (Rom 9:23-26).
 5. A council took place in Jerusalem where Gentiles were called God's children (Acts 15).
 6. Paul taught Christ's death united Jews and Gentiles in one (Eph 1:7-12; 2:11-22; 3:1-7).
 7. Christ's death "for the people" was in place of the people rather than because of them.
 - a. Jesus died not to confirm His ministry or be an example but in place of sinners.
 - b. Jesus died as a substitute for His sinful people (Exodus 12:12-13; Isaiah 53:4-6; Romans 4:25; 5:6-10; II Cor 5:21; I Timothy 2:5-6; I Peter 2:24; 3:18).
 - c. Jesus personally experienced the wrath of God, guilt, pain, loneliness, darkness, rejection, separation, agony, broken heart, shame, abuse, torment, insecurity, fear, and so forth that we each personally deserved.
 8. Gentiles not of the Jewish fold were seeking out Jesus in the very next chapter (12:20-24).
- B. This is the same we had communicated to us by Jesus Himself in the previous chapter (John 10:16).

53 Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.

54 *Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.*

55 *And the Jews' Passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves.*

56 *Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?*

57 *Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he were, he should shew it, that they might take him.*

Conclusion:

1. We should tremble and glory at the judgment of Caiaphas (Psalm 7:14-16; 9:15-17; Matthew 23:34-36).
2. We should believe and know that any who love not our Lord Jesus Christ are cursed (I Corinthians 16:22).
3. We should reason that if He died for us then we should surely live for Him (Romans 12:1; I Cor 6:20; II Cor 5:13-15; Gal 2:20; Col 3:1; Titus 2:14; I John 4:9).
4. It was expedient in the will and counsel of God for you and me that Jesus died for us. Glory! Hallelujah!
5. The hope of the resurrection of our bodies and eternal life in heaven is a main component of the true gospel.
 - a. The gospel is news of Jesus Christ's death, burial, and resurrection and hope of our own (I Cor 15:1-6).
 - b. Baptism is a figure of Christ's death and resurrection to all who understand (Romans 6:3-5; I Peter 3:21).
 - c. The Lord's Supper to remember Jesus Christ's death must include His resurrection as well (I Cor 15:17).
 - d. If we preach or live with hope in Christ for this life only, we are of all men most miserable (I Cor 15:19).
6. Confidence of being in the resurrection with Lazarus depends on living a resurrected life (Colossians 3:1-4).
 - a. Suffering was chosen by martyrs in order to have evidence of a better resurrection (Hebrews 11:35).
 - b. Paul counted all religious and worldly gain but loss in order to attain to the resurrection (Phil 3:8-11).
 - c. Keeping Christ's commandments brings the right to eat of the tree of life in heaven (Rev 2:7; 22:14).
 - d. Endurance under temptation will bring a crown (reward) of life (James 1:12 compared to I Thess 2:19).
 - e. Godliness, not bodily exercise, has promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come (I Ti 4:8).

For Further Study:

1. "Why Bad Things Happen to Christians," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/why-bad-things-happen.pdf>.
2. The sermon, "Two Parables Explained," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/two-parables-explained.pdf>.
3. The Destruction of Jerusalem ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/witness-of-70ad.pdf>.