

The Gospel of John

Chapter 11

Outline:

- 1-19 Background for resurrection of Lazarus
- 20-28 Jesus comforted and taught Martha
- 29-32 Jesus comforted Mary
- 33-38 Jesus affected by the crowd
- 39-42 Jesus prayed to His Father
- 43-46 Jesus raised Lazarus from dead
- 47-53 The Jews conspire to kill Jesus
- 54-57 Jesus hid Himself until Passover

Preparatory Reading: Luke 10:38-42; John 12:1-11; John 11:1-57; I Corinthians 15.

Introduction:

1. Where did John 11 come from? Why does it exist? Why was it written? How should it affect those reading it?
 - a. It is the middle chapter of the gospel, and it brings us to a short time before our Lord's death in Jerusalem.
 - b. Let 11:25-26 be the glorious, transcendent focal point and purpose of the chapter and the details around it.
 - c. This glorious gospel declaration of power and hope against death is only for believers with changed lives.
2. Different to studying John 10, there are no metaphorical parables here, but two important historical events.
 - a. Some words will be used in a secondary, or spiritual, sense, but we may enjoy the straightforward history.
 - b. While unlike chapter ten, this chapter is very similar to chapter nine and its details of the man born blind.
 - c. We can be energized by our Lord's loving care for friends and His great power to resurrect dead bodies.
 - d. We can rejoice knowing the future for our lives and bodies and His use of an enemy to declare the gospel.
3. There are lessons large and small to be seen in this chapter pertaining to several aspects of life and religion.
 - a. A certain man, not a concept or a crowd, with his sisters were special friends of the great Lord of glory.
 - b. Prayer delays and answers, like the man born blind, can be for God's glory, if we could only see the end.
 - c. Situations you pray for can easily go from bad to worse, like with Jacob, before God's mercy overflows.
 - d. Our Lord's humanity allows Him to be touched, and deeply so, with the feeling of our natural infirmities.
 - e. Political expedience can cause men to compromise or sacrifice justice and judgment for their own benefit.
4. There are lessons in nearly every verse for us to learn from this historical chapter of events in the life of Jesus.
 - a. A certain man, distinct and different from all others, is what we are, and we can win the Lord's favor (1).
 - b. Real differences may exist between sisters, for variations in walking with God are uniquely personal (1).
 - b. Mary's great affection for Jesus motivated an anointing of His feet in public for perpetual memory (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 upon your own head (48).
- b. Caiaphas, as religious and spiritual head of Israel, strongly rejected their fear by a political solution (49).
- c. Here is political expediency at its worst; here is situational ethics and pragmatism of the basest sort (50).
- d. One man’s death or many to save a nation is practiced by all nations, but this was the Son of man (50).
- e. Caiaphas did not know God used his profane words for another purpose – substitutionary atonement (50).
- f. God can use any person (here), animal (ass), or other vehicle for declaring His truth for His purposes (51).
- g. Caiaphas, unbeknownst to him, prophesied of our Lord’s substitutionary death for all elect Israelites (51).
- h. Caiaphas, unbeknownst to him, prophesied of the Lord’s substitutionary death for elect Gentiles also (52).
- i. Once reprobates have a plan and justifiable defense, they will dedicate themselves against the godly (53).
- j. There is no virtue or valor in taking unnecessary risks until you must expose yourself out of duty (54).
- k. It was the common people, the country folk, who were proportionately greater seekers of our Jesus (55).
- l. Men generally only think naturally, missing the divine decree in our Lord’s life to die for His people (56).
- m. Like persecution at other times and places, friends, neighbors, and family would rat out Christians (57).

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

- A. Let us start with the words *a certain man*, for they make scripture very personal, for him and for us.
 - 1. John chapter 3 records Jesus teaching a certain man Nicodemus precious truth not known.
 - 2. John chapter 4 records Jesus visiting Samaria to convert a certain sinful woman of that city.
 - 3. John chapter 5 records that Jesus ignored a great crowd to heal just one impossible case.
 - 4. John chapter 9 records in great detail the healing and conversion of the certain man born blind.
 - 5. You miss the greatest opportunity of existence, if you do not seek this relationship yourself.
 - 6. Most (99%) do not get it; they do not care; they forfeit the privilege ... even among Christians!
- B. You are a certain man, woman, or child today; you should trust our personal God that knows us.
 - 1. You should not allow your sinful flesh or the devil’s darts to cause you to doubt God’s care.
 - 2. It is true that you do often get lost in the crowd ... but only considering other men and women.
 - 3. God has chosen to deal individually with each man, and this gospel of John gives us examples.
 - 4. David understood and claimed that out of Israel and Judah and Jesse God liked him (I Chr 28:4).
 - 5. The Hall of Faith lists individuals and specific personal deeds done by each of the individuals.
 - 6. Consider the Gadarene (Mark 5:19-20), the Canaanite woman (Matt 15:21-28), the thief (Luke 23:39-43), a blind man (John 9:1-38), Lazarus and sisters (Jn 11:1-5), the eunuch (Acts 8:26-40), Saul (Acts 9:1-6), Cornelius (Acts 10:1-6), Lydia (Acts 16:13-15), the jailor (Acts 16:25-34), etc.
 - 7. Why can’t you be God’s favorite with His favor? It is the goal (I Sam 2:26; Prov 3:4; Luke 2:52).
- C. Every individual person, man or woman or child, is uniquely known by God and can related to Him.
 - 1. This is one of the most hope-filled facts of our existence to excite our souls, to walk with Him.
 - 2. You are not alone; believers know they cannot be forsaken or left like with others (Heb 13:5-6).
- D. Whatever conviction or opportunity you have toward the Lord Jesus Christ, run with it, now! Today!
 - 1. You can come to Jesus Christ today in humble submission as Saul of Tarsus and be His favorite.
 - 2. Do not turn away from Him that is present today and speaking by His word to individual souls.

- E. As in identifying Jesus by His hometown of Nazareth, so Lazarus was identified as from Bethany.
- F. This is not metaphor or parable of imaginary characters to convey a moral lesson of truth by Jesus.
- G. Bethany was a village on the Mount of Olives two miles from Jerusalem on the road to Jericho.
- H. There is precious value to see the big difference between the sisters on an occasion (Luke 10:38-42).

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 Jesus' feet (Jn 12:1-8).
 - 1. This appears by many factors to be the same event described in Matt 26:6-13 and Mark 14:3-9.
 - 2. John wrote us about it here to more specifically identify this special Mary by her loving deed.
 - 3. This Mary is to be perpetually remembered for this good event, as she has been for 2000 years.
 - 4. If John wrote this gospel a year or ten years or fifty years later, then most readers knew of her.
 - 5. Even with sisters there can be a big difference of their true affection for Christ (Luke 10:38-42).
 - 6. Even after the Lord's lesson for Martha and Mary, they followed their inclinations (John 12:2-3).
- B. By varying circumstances, this is not the event of a sinful woman that anointed Him (Luke 7:36-50).
- C. 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).
 - 1. Jesus played a word game with them for spiritual truth, and we should learn the lesson well.
 - 2. We are to compare spiritual things with spiritual to understand Holy Spirit usage (I Cor 2:13).
 - 3. We will use this distinction of Jesus later in this chapter when He speaks of ending death (11:26).
 - 4. The Bible often speaks of death as sleep, because that is how mildly we should view it (I Kgs 1:21; 2:10; Matt 27:52; Acts 7:60; 13:36; I Cor 16:6,18; I Thes 4:13-15; II Peter 3:4).
- 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.letgodbetrue.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. Here is the greatest goal for siblings in a family – do they love Jesus Christ? Are they loved by Him?
- C. David declared that God *liked* him above all Israel, all Judah, and His many brothers (I Chron 28:4).
- D. There is nothing wrong with having favorites, and we know our Lord did so in perfect holiness.
- E. Peter, James, and John were often distinguished from the other apostles for privileges with Jesus.

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. Before working out the sense of these words, there is value to pull together other similar statements.
 - 1. Jesus had stated in John 9:4-5 that He had to do God's work while it was daylight before night.
 - 2. He had compared the daylight time for Him to work with His yet being in the world among men.
 - 3. Jesus said here there are twelve hours in a day; there He said that He must work while it is day.
 - 4. See John 9:4-5 notes for Jesus working during daylight ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/pdf/john-nine.pdf>.
- B. This and the next verse are metaphorical statements about the role of sunshine helping men work.
 - 1. The context is our Lord's response about travels back into Judea, so travel risk is a key concern.
 - 2. *Are there not twelve hours in the day?* There are 24 in the entire day, but 12 hours of sunshine.
 - 3. *If any walk in the day, he stumbleth not.* He does not stumble, for he has daylight to guide him.
 - 4. *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 safely.
 - 5. While daylight exists, a man can work diligently without fear of stumbling, for he can see well.
 - 6. While daylight exists, a man should work the last hour as diligently as He worked the first hour.
 - 7. 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.
- C. 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 safety during the daytime given Him to do His work.
 - 5. He knew that soon the metaphorical sun would set to end His day and His Father would expose Him to darkness and stumbling of a trial and crucifixion – *their hour of darkness* (Luke 22:53).
 - 6. He was safe in God's timing, and He intended to work until the last minute of metaphorical day.
 - 7. Read His chosen commitment to work while yet daytime and He was still in the world (Jn 9:4).
 - 8. 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 while useful in His plan.

- D. If Jesus was so certain of God's protection now, why had He withdrawn to Bethabara (Jn 10:39-42)?
1. First, we understand that prudence directs us to make plans based on safety (Prov 22:3; 27:12).
 2. Second, we see considerable success He had at Bethabara and understand His choice (Jn 10:42).
 3. Third, there is a two-fold reason to return to Judea – His friends needed Him, and God's glory.
 4. Fourth, with His mission completed – the two goals achieved – He withdrew to Ephraim (11:54).

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 about the role of sunlight helping men work.
1. The context is our Lord's response about travels back into Judea, so travel risk is a key concern.
 2. *Are there not twelve hours in the day?* There are 24 in the entire day, but 12 hours of sunshine.
 3. *If any walk in the day, he stumbleth not.* He does not stumble, for he has daylight to guide him.
 4. *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 safely.
 5. While daylight exists, a man can work diligently without fear of stumbling, for he can see well.
 6. While daylight exists, a man should work the last hour as diligently as He worked the first hour.
 7. 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 safety during the daytime given Him to do His work.
 5. He knew that soon the metaphorical sun would set to end His day and His Father would expose Him to darkness and stumbling of a trial and crucifixion – *their hour of darkness* (Luke 22:53).
 6. He was safe in God's timing, and He intended to work until the last minute of metaphorical day.
 7. Read His chosen commitment to work while yet daytime and He was still in the world (Jn 9:4).
 8. 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 while useful in His plan.
- 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).
- D. Jesus was fully safe while in the will of God before His day ended and their hour of darkness began.
1. If we are out of the will of God, then we are not under His providential care, and danger is great.
 2. It is wisdom and godliness to humbly submit our lives and business plans to Him (Jas 4:13-16).
 3. There is a time and place for everything, and a wise man understands and knows both (Ec 8:1,5).

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. Here is an example of rightly dividing scripture (II Tim 2:15), for Lazarus most surely died (11:14).
1. Jesus played a word game with them for spiritual truth, and we should learn the lesson well.
 2. We are to compare spiritual things with spiritual to understand Holy Spirit usage (I Cor 2:13).
 3. We will use this distinction of Jesus later in this chapter when He speaks of ending death (11:26).

4. The Bible often speaks of death as sleep, because that is how mildly we should view it (I Kgs 1:21; 2:10; Matt 27:52; Acts 7:60; 13:36; I Cor 16:6,18; I Thes 4:13-15; II Peter 3:4).
- C. 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.letgodbetrue.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.letgodbetrue.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. Thomas was his name in Hebrew; in Greek it was Didymus; both names mean the same – a twin.
- B. 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.
- C. 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).
- D. Thomas was the apostle that also had weak faith after our Lord’s resurrection (John 20:24-29).

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. Jesus knew the circumstances of this event before He arrived, but they were communicated to Him.

- C. 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. A furlong is 1/8 of a mile or 220 yards. It is still used in horse racing for unique distances of races.
B. The distance between these two cities was about two miles as we commonly measure distances.
C. This proximity worried apostles, yet it allowed friends in Jerusalem to visit easily as the next verse.

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.
C. There is some reason she trusted Jesus more and waited for Him, yet she did question Him the same.

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. They were confident in faith that Jesus could have prevented what was obviously a fatal sickness.
C. This is precisely the language and words Mary used when she met the Lord Jesus shortly (11:32).
D. Jesus had delayed intentionally; since they would have known the distance, they were disappointed.
E. 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 (Luke 7:11-18; 8:49-56).
 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?

 1. While she knew He had raised the dead, she missed that He raised them without prayer to God.
 2. Both the nobleman's daughter and the son of the widow of Nain were raised by Jesus speaking.
 3. He will shortly correct Martha by claiming the power of resurrection and life in and of Himself.

D. Are you able to pray with this degree of confidence when things in your life deteriorate further?

 1. God has given you three outstanding reasons to trust God in prayer for unprecedented situations.
 2. First, He gave you scripture that contains a record of His mighty works for His people in history.
 3. Second, He rescued you from other serious situations with faithfulness and power for experience.
 4. Third, He placed you among brethren that have their own experiences of deliverances to share.
 5. *Three Witnesses* for God reversing fortunes ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/reversal-of-fortune.pdf>.

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 can do anything you need is the certainty of this great 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 17:14-15; 49:15; 73:24).
- B. Remember the Jewish controversy of resurrection – Pharisees affirming it, and Sadducees denying it.
- C. The last day is the great reckoning and reversal of things as we presently know them for our faith.
- D. Reader, do you believe such things? With daily certainty? And do you have strong evidence for it?
- E. Jesus then took her faith one step further by identifying Himself as the One with resurrection power.

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. This verse and the next are the most precious and weighty of the chapter, with us as His dear friends.
 - 1. By identifying the objects of resurrection power as believers, we can lay hold of these promises.
 - 2. Yet, we must recall, as John wrote elsewhere, only discipleship counts (John 2:23-25; 8:30-37).
 - 3. Everything else in this chapter serves this gospel declaration; sees 11:25-26 as its epicenter!
- B. Martha had told Jesus the truth that in the last day of the world God would raise her brother again.
 - 1. When Jesus vaguely referred to Lazarus rising again (23), Martha declared her general faith (24).
 - 2. But now Jesus declared Himself the One! He Himself had resurrection power to give eternal life!
 - 3. There is no other founder or leader of a religion anything like the Lord Jesus of Bible Christians.
 - 4. Mohamed, Buddha, Joe Smith, Ellen White, and others said ... *I am ... dying*. And they did!
 - 5. Do you understand this powerful statement by Jesus? Do you delight in Him for it? Obey Him?
 - 6. For more such statements by Jesus in John ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/john-i-am-verses.pdf>.
- C. 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. Compare glorious statements by the LORD Jehovah about life (Ex 3:14; De 32:40; Num 14:21).
 - 3. This divine power had been given to Him by God, and He had declared it clearly (John 5:21-29).
 - 4. He had already raised at least two from the dead, which had to be known (Lu 7:11-18; 8:49-56).
 - 5. He had the power over His own physical life to lay it down and to take it up again (John 10:18).
 - 6. He would fully prove this first with Himself for our comfort (Col 1:18; I Cor 15:23; John 4:19).
 - 7. He made a related glorious description when John saw Him after His resurrection (Rev 1:18).
 - 8. By our Lord's victory – death, the grave, and sin are mocked (I Co 15:53-57; Is 25:8; Ho 13:14).
- D. The Christian religion – the Bible, apostolic variety only – is filled with fabulous hope for believers.
 - 1. The hope of the wicked shall be extinguished, but it shall expand for the righteous into reality beyond imagination (Pr 10:28; 11:7; 14:32; Job 11:20; Ps 112:10; Luke 16:23-26; I Cor 2:9).
 - 2. Christian maturity is largely the patience to cheerfully endure negative events due to this hope.
 - 3. If this doctrinal fact and truth is neglected, our religion becomes onerously painful (I Cor 15:19).
 - 4. It is this doctrinal fact that causes us to despise and hate cremation (I Cor 6:13-20; 15:1-57).
 - 5. For much more against the heresy of cremation ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/today/cremation.php>.

- E. There is no necessity or reason to see vital salvation or regeneration in this passage (II Tim 2:15).
 1. The context before and after – the case with Lazarus – is of physical, not spiritual, resurrection.
 2. The man presently believing would live in the future; this is speaking of bodily resurrection.
 3. *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.
 4. Many want to complicate the word of God, and they lose the powerful lesson of resurrection.
 5. Cross-references are meaningless unless they have the same context, design, scope, lesson, etc.
- F. For much more about His resurrection power ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/resurrection-power.pdf>.

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

- A. Jesus lifted the gospel of hope and power to a level of glory and truth that transcends all religions.
 1. He had in the previous verse stated that believers dying physically would live again physically.
 2. He now takes the doctrine of the resurrection further – living believers in Him will never die.
 3. This is not the first time Jesus had taught this doctrine, but He is now plain (John 6:50-51; 8:51).
 4. Did Jesus speak the truth? Have we found the cure for death? May we take hope and celebrate?
 5. After His declaration of this glorious promise and prophecy, He asked if Martha believed it.
 6. We must believe it, and we must retain our belief in it, and we must comfort one another with it.
- B. How did Jesus say living believers in Him will never die, unless talking of those alive at His return?
 1. But there is no necessity to go to Paul’s reasoning with living Thessalonians (I Thess 4:13-18).
 2. Jesus used death and sleep in ways that confounded apostles (4,11-14). Let us learn His ways.
 3. Any living persons that believe in Jesus never truly die, because their spirits go straight to God.
 4. Any living persons that believe in Jesus never truly die, because their bodies only sleep in Jesus.
 5. Any living persons that believe in Jesus never die permanently, because the bodies are raised up.
 6. Any living persons that believe in Jesus never die penally, for there is no condemnation for them.
 7. Any living persons that believe in Jesus never die the second death, for they are saved from it.
- C. Those who live and believe in Christ by regeneration shall never die a penal death or second death.
 1. It is this sense we understand Paul saying Jesus came and abolished death (II Tim 1:10; He 2:14).
 2. In this sense Jesus spoke to the Jews, and their ignorance caused anger (Jn 6:50-51; 8:21,24,51).
- D. Those who believe in Him and are alive at His Second Coming shall also never die (I Thes 4:13-18).
 1. The great Day of Resurrection has already been introduced into the conversation here (11:24).
 2. Without a modest change in sense of *die*, other applications are a repetition of the previous verse.
- E. 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).
- F. There is no necessity or reason to see vital salvation or regeneration in this passage (II Tim 2:15).
 1. The context before and after – the case with Lazarus – is of physical, not spiritual, resurrection.
 2. The man presently living and believing would never die; this is speaking of bodily resurrection.
 3. The man presently living is living a physical, bodily life and it is that death that is not permanent.
 4. Many want to complicate the word of God, and they lose the powerful lesson of resurrection.
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- G. For much more about His resurrection power ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/resurrection-power.pdf>.
- H. For much more about importance of resurrection ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/first-corinthians-15.pdf>.

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.
 1. Jesus had asked Martha if she believed His claim to resurrection power and giving eternal life.
 2. The Sadducees, a denomination of the Jews, denied angels, a human spirit, or any resurrection.

3. The Pharisees, a conservative group, accused Jesus of being devil possessed and a Samaritan.
 4. The scribes and lawyers were professionals in the word of God, yet they rejected Jesus as Christ.
 5. The priests, leaders of God's public worship in Jerusalem, would not recognize Him as Christ.
 6. Modern preterists, like the heretics Hymenaeus and Philetus, say the resurrection is past already.
 7. Then we have the evolutionists, atheists, agnostics, pagans, and other religions denying our hope.
 8. Saying the words is not enough. Baptism is not enough. Has your faith fully changed your life?
- B. Peter gave this same confession or profession of faith, and Jesus acknowledged it as a gift of grace.
1. Jesus asked His disciples about the varying opinions of Him among the Jews (Matt 16:13-14).
 2. He then asked them their own personal opinion of Him, and Peter boldly answered (Matt 16:15).
 3. Peter declared Jesus to be the Christ, or Messiah, and the Son of the living God (Matt 16:16).
 4. Jesus explained such faith was by revelation of grace rather than human learning (Matt 16:17).
 5. No man can declare – in any real or sincere way – that Jesus is Lord but by the Spirit (I Co 12:3).
 6. Many have feelings of the heart or words of the lips that do not count (Matt 7:21-23; Luke 6:46).
 7. Jesus has turned away from some believers already in this gospel record (John 2:23-25; 8:30-37).
- C. Martha went further to identify Him as the Messiah and Son of God according to prophecies of Him.
1. The first book of the Bible included prophecies of Jesus Christ (Genesis 3:15; 22:15-18; 49:10).
 2. The last book of the O.T. included two distinct prophecies of Jesus Christ (Malachi 3:1-5; 4:1-6).
 3. The books of Psalms and Isaiah had special prophecies of Him (Ps 2; 110; Isaiah 7:14; 9:6-7).
 4. The identity of the Christ or Messiah of God for the Jews had very unique traits and offices.
- D. Who actually and specifically is the Christ, the Son of God? This simple issue is confusing to many.
1. Origen invented an eternally generated god and son of God in the Trinity, which most confess.
 2. Most Christians think Jesus is eternal and was with God in the beginning because the Word was.
 3. Jesus is a Man, born of a woman, in Bethlehem, raised in Nazareth, died, buried, and rose again.
 4. Drop the vague and confusing concepts to accept Biblical terminology and know Jesus correctly.
 5. The Word of God is not the Son. The Word of God is not Jesus. Jesus is the Word made flesh.
 6. Jesus of Nazareth, a Man, with a flesh beginning (human nature and body), is the Son of God.
 7. Key verses defining and limiting this point must be maintained (Luke 1:35; John 1:14; Col 2:9).
 8. For slides about the sonship of Jesus ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/sonship-simplified-slides.pdf>.
 9. For much more about this controversy ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/bible/christ/sonship-of-christ.php>.

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?
- D. Such a statement, now repeated by the other sister, should and did provoke the Lord to sympathy.

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. Was Jesus moved by weeping of His friends over a death, or irritated at their lack of faith and hope?
 - 1. Nothing in the context indicates that His troubled spirit was angry or disappointed (11:33-38).
 - 2. When Jesus is angry at those in His presence, the Bible can and will say so (Mark 3:5; Matt 9:4).
 - 3. When Jesus is disappointed by lack of faith, He will say so rather clearly (Matt 6:30; 8:26; 16:8).
 - 4. It is only a perverse bias that suggests Jesus was irritated by any perceived lack of faith or hope.
 - 5. This perverse bias may claim a good motive of trying to protect Jesus from sinful human frailty.
 - 6. But this perverse bias reduces the empathy and sympathy of the compassion of our High Priest.
 - 7. Wisdom says there is no negative angle in context, so we exalt the gentle, tender spirit of Christ.
- B. Jesus was touched with our feelings, even human emotions like grief, without sin (Heb 4:15; 2:18).
 - 1. In a desire to keep Jesus free from human sin or compromise, let us not deny His human nature.
 - 2. He was made of our same human nature to endure our temptations in every respect (Heb 2:17).
 - 3. The Spirit tells us that His groaning and trouble were a result of seeing Mary and others weeping.
 - 4. Gethsemane shows our Lord's emotional side that we should grasp (Luke 22:39-44; Heb 5:7-9).
 - 5. He set His face to go to Jerusalem and saw joy before Him, yet agonized (John 12:27; Heb 12:2).
 - 6. Any Catholic or Stoic doctrine that denies our Lord and/or us a place for such passions is heresy; the Catholics deny His compassion to exalt Mary; the Stoics deny it to exalt their will worship.
 - 7. Jesus loved Lazarus; He loved Mary; He loved Martha; He commiserated with their heavy grief.
 - 8. The greatest saints in and out of scripture weep at such events (II Sam 1:11-27; Acts 8:2; 9:39).
 - 9. Jesus also wept over the city of Jerusalem, which He would soon destroy for sin (Lu 19:41-44).
 - 10. Jesus encouraged weeping even for those women that believed in Him very much (Luke 23:28).
 - 11. He sees a cup of cold water and tiny kindnesses to the least brethren (Matthew 25:40,45; 10:42).
 - 12. We are to weep with them that weep, and He gave us a perfect example (Ro 12:15; I Cor 12:26).
 - 13. When Jesus saw grief and loss, He had compassion, as He did in the city of Nain (Luke 7:11-18).
 - 14. Jesus was troubled as He got closer to death (John 12:27) and at the thought of Judas (Jn 13:21).
 - 15. Jesus as the Son of God should reflect or exceed God His Father in empathy and sympathy toward His brethren due to His unique human nature (Ex 2:23-25; 3:7-9; Judges 10:16; Ps 103:13-16; 106:44-45; Isaiah 63:9,15; Jer 31:20; Hos 11:8; Zech 2:8; Matt 5:43-48; Acts 14:17).
 - 16. God had sympathy and expected Jonah to also have it for the children of Nineveh (Jonah 4:11).
 - 17. God even has sympathy and expects it in us for animals (Prov 12:10; Ex 23:19; Deut 22:6-7).
 - 18. Where is the mercy of this high priest, unless He has compassion on our grief (Heb 2:17; 5:2)?
 - 19. The great prophecy of Him called Him a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief (Isaiah 53:3).
 - 20. Should we despise devout men, Epaphroditus, and Paul for similar grief (Acts 8:2; Phil 2:25-27)?
 - 21. Jesus corrected the harsh spirit of James and John, though His very dear apostles (Luke 9:51-56).
 - 22. David, the father of Christ, biologically and in type, rebuked the sons of Zeruah (II Sam 3:39).
 - 23. For godly grief ... *Funerals and Eulogies* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/funerals-eulogies.pdf>.
- C. We do not have any evidence in the context that Jesus groaned and was trouble for their unbelief.
 - 1. Though we could easily imagine 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.
 5. If not careful, we will impose our view of His combined natures to preclude any human grief.
 6. We must balance His perfect knowledge of His death with His strong crying about it (Jn 12:27).
- D. The next time you take your groans and tears to the Lord, remember His sympathy from John 11.
1. We may believe that He truly has the tears of His people in both His bottle and book (Ps 56:8).
 2. We may believe He practiced the apostolic injunction to suffer adversity with others (Heb 13:3).
 3. Job distinguished himself from his friends by saying what he would do in their grief (Job 16:5).
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- E. Overdone grief, sincere or hired, reflects a lack of faith and temperance, as Jesus said on an occasion, but even there they had no reason to expect resurrection, and He shocked them (Mk 5:39).
- F. Christians do not grieve and sorrow as others that have no hope of the resurrection (I Thess 4:13-18).

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

- A. The consequence or result of our Lord's groaning and troubled spirit was to seek out Lazarus' grave.
- B. The effect or response was not to instruct, rebuke, or warn for a lack of faith or hope as believers.

35 Jesus wept.

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 2. When Jesus is angry at those in His presence, the Bible can and will say so (Mark 3:5; Matt 9:4).
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18. Where is the mercy of this high priest, unless He has compassion on our grief (Heb 2:17; 5:2)?
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 - F. Christians do not grieve and sorrow as others that have no hope of the resurrection (I Thess 4:13-18).

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.
- C. It is near blasphemy and high ignorance to think because He did not heal that He could or would not.
 1. Jesus intentionally avoided healing Lazarus for a much greater display of God's glory. Grasp it!
 2. Do not measure God's good and holy intentions by your infinitely inferior analysis of a situation.
 3. While this evil thinking contracted the power of Jesus, He was about to expand it demonstrably.

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

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- F. Christians do not grieve and sorrow as others that have no hope of the resurrection (I Thess 4:13-18).
- G. In the mountainous area around Jerusalem it was common to bury in a cave and not straight down.

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 He would do something with Lazarus to increase faith even in apostles (11:15).
 3. He had declared to Martha directly that Lazarus would rise again, though she diverted (11:23).
 4. He had declared belief was important and had solicited her own confession about it (11:25-27).
 5. 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. Those present had enough faith and obedience to do a thing extraordinary to see the power of God.
 1. Until you are willing to trust God and do what He asks, you will not see the full power of God.
 2. Abraham took Isaac for a burnt sacrifice, knowing he would be saved (Gen 22:8; Heb 11:17-19).
- B. Never be afraid to trust God in matters or ways not known to men, because God is greater than men.
 1. Let the world mock corporal punishment. It may not make sense, but it works, always (Pr 22:15).
 2. Let the world mock liberal giving. It may not make sense, but it works, always (Prov 11:24-26).
 3. Let the world mock reverent wives. It will produce love and peace (Eph 5:22-33; I Peter 3:1-6).
 4. Our usage of immersion and symbolic communion are foolishly weak, but gloriously powerful!
- C. We assume by habit that prayer must be made with eyes closed, but it is not required or necessary.
 1. Jesus will pray this way again in a few weeks in His greatest prayer to His Father (John 17:1).
 2. We generally do so to reduce distraction and lift hearts to God in heaven, Whom we cannot see.
- D. The prayer of Jesus mentioned here is not this prayer, but one uttered verbally before this situation.
 1. First, there is no prayer revealed to us here for this event, so it must refer to another prayer(s).
 2. Second, our Lord's words in this context were not addressed to God His Father but to Lazarus.
 3. Third, this miracle was to show Jesus' own resurrection power by His authority (John 11:22-26).
- E. Jesus thanked the Father for hearing Him in an earlier prayer for an object lesson for the audience.
 1. He could easily have prayed when the messengers first arrived with Lazarus' news (John 11:4).
 2. As stated in the next verse, Jesus made the reference to His Father to confirm His divine mission.
 3. For three reasons above, Jesus did not ask for Lazarus' resurrection, but ordered him up Himself.
- F. We trust the verb tenses of this prayer, which indicate that an earlier prayer is under consideration.
 1. Jesus in the present tense thanked God for having heard Him, which is neither present nor future.
 2. He will use the past tense, *knew*, in the next verse to refer to a previous prayer and His hearing.
- G. The words, *where the dead was laid*, are missing in all Greek and English perversions to cast doubt.
- H. Of course, the italicized words, *from the place*, are also missing from all the same manmade books.

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. This prayer could have been made during His weeping and groaning and trouble in Spirit.
 6. For He explained to His apostles the reason for the delay was their increase in faith (11:15).
 7. There are three verb tenses indicating a past prayer or request – *hast heard, knew, and 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. Three verses into the Bible God commanded, Let there be light! So there was! Who? Jesus (Jn 1:3).
- B. We love Jesus’ powerful voice! “Peace, be still,” to waves! “Lazarus, come forth,” to a dead man!
1. Those in Capernaum said, “What a word is this!” when He ordered a devil out (Luke 4:31-37).
 2. Those in a ship in a storm with Him marveled that He verbally ordered the elements (Mark 4:41).
- C. Hopefully He has already called you (John 5:25), and He will assuredly yet call you (John 5:28-29).
1. Our blessed Lord of life shall soon come from heaven to shout for all dead bodies to come forth.
 2. Paul compared His regenerating call of life to dead sinners to resurrection power (Ep 1:19 – 2:7).
 3. He commanded the light to shine out of darkness at creation and in regeneration (II Cor 4:1-7).
- D. We love the call of God to Israel in Ezekiel 16, “Live!” May we never profane our lives as they did.
- E. For many more examples of His voice ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/christ/what-a-word-is-this/sermon.php>.

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 Turin (Jn 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)?
- D. The name “Jesus” is omitted from all Greek perversions and several English perversions of scripture.

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

- A. What a difference among men! Some believe and will follow Jesus to death; others try to kill Him!
- B. These little tattletales were fawning puppets of the religious hierarchy with no fear of God, except for some few ignorant elect souls like Saul of Tarsus, who was eventually converted to be an apostle.
- C. 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 do 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!*
 - 1. What evidence of depravity! What evidence of judicial blindness, as prophesied (Isaiah 6:9-13)!
 - 2. The Jews required a sign; the scriptures told them to do so, and they had great signs of all kinds.
 - 3. They were more foolish and wicked than Pharaoh, for proof for Christ was greater than Moses.
 - 4. The Jews rejected Jesus their Christ and His miracles by ignorance (John 7:41,42; 12:34), blindness (John 12:37-41), envy (Mark 15:10), error (Ex 7:10-13; Deut 13:1-5; John 9:16), etc.
- B. The chief priests and Pharisees gathered a council together to do something against our Lord Christ.
 - 1. They were fearful of the influence Jesus was having and would have among the people (11:48).
 - 2. They feared a social upheaval would further aggravate the Romans (11:48), who were bothered like other nations with Jewish rebellion and insurrections (Ezra 4:19; Mark 15:7; Acts 5:36-37).
 - 3. They could lose their place of worship – the temple (John 4:20; 12:42; Acts 6:13-14; 21:28).
 - 4. They could lose their nation's independence and sovereignty to the degree they still retained any.
 - 5. Consider the actual reason the Jews did lose their place and nation by Romans (Luke 19:41-44)!

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!
 - 4. Why would any believe on Him, let alone *all men* of Israel, except for very good reasons for it?
- 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. Caiaphas was the high priest this same year – the year of our Lord's death in a few weeks or months.
 - 1. He and his father-in-law were high priests when John Baptist began his ministry (Luke 3:1-3).
 - 2. He was a Sadducee hardened by truth-rejecting heresy and God's blindness (Acts 5:17; 23:8-9).
 - 3. God chose him for this prophecy due to his God-given office of preeminence as the high priest.
 - 4. The arrogance of this man had no bound here or at the trial of our Lord Jesus (Matt 26:57-66).
 - 5. He used his office and arrogance to reduce them to buffoons when the solution was so obvious.
- B. 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 to destroy Him (John 18:12-28).

2. He interviewed Jesus and heard a glorious testimony and prophecy (Matt 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 wicked role that Caiaphas and others played (John 19:11).
 4. Judas had delivered Him to the Jews, but Caiaphas delivered Him to Romans for His crucifixion.
 5. He and Annas were privileged to hear all about Jesus again (Acts 4:5-10; 5:17-33; 7:1; 9:1-2).
- C. Caiaphas ridiculed the council for being so worried without a proper solution to deal with our Jesus.
1. This vile man mocked his associates for any wrangling or worrying about what to do with Jesus.
 2. He was so sure of political expediency, no matter the cost to justice, that he scorned discussion.

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 let us get rid of him to calm Rome.
1. This vile man mocked his associates for any wrangling or worrying about what to do with Jesus.
 2. He was so sure of political expediency, no matter the cost to justice, that he scorned discussion.
- 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 like politicians do.
 2. He reasoned that the Romans would have no cause for alarm if Jesus was killed and consequently His influence among the people of the nation of Israel was brought to nothing.
 3. He reasoned that the Romans would be quite satisfied with the Jews character and conduct if Jesus could 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, though their own Messiah (Isaiah 53:8-9; Dan 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 very blood (Matthew 23:34-36 cp Matt 27:25 cp Acts 5:27-28).
 7. The wisdom of Caiaphas did not defeat God's plan, but rather confirmed it (Prov 19:21; 21:30).
 8. The wisdom of Caiaphas turned the council's greatest fear on their heads (Ps 7:14-16; 9:15-17).
- C. Expedient! We never want expediency at the cost of truth, righteousness, or wisdom. Beware of it!
1. **Expedient.** Conducive to advantage in general, or to a definite purpose; fit, proper, or suitable to the circumstances of the case. Compare Bible usage in John 16:7; I Corinthians 6:12; 10:23.
 2. It may seem expedient to dicker with a seller, but God will judge the lies and theft (Prov 20:14).
 3. It may seem expedient to reduce giving to catch up financially, but God says different (Pr 11:24).
- D. The one Man they needed the most – the Messiah of God promised perpetually to Israel in writing – the representative of God on earth – they 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 here interjected two verses of commentary into his history of Jesus Christ's life (Jn 11:51-52).
1. John here informed his readers that Caiaphas's bold recommendation did not originate with him.
 2. John also explained that the secondary sense of the words were a prophecy of Messiah's death.
 3. Caiaphas's evil design and words were important to the crucifixion (John 18:13-14; 19:11).
 4. Jesus truly did die as a Substitute and as a Scapegoat for His people, just as Caiaphas declared.
 5. Jesus came to save Israel – His people – from their sins, and He did so by His death by the Jews.
 6. Jesus also came to save the rest of the children of God from their sins by His death (Gen 49:10).

- B. Caiphas did not intend to prophesy at all – he was simply and only calling for the murder of Jesus.
 1. God chose him to prophesy due to a God-given office of preeminence and revelation (Ex 28:30).
 2. God overruled his purpose in such a way that He glorified Jesus Christ by the very same words.
 3. God had also used king Sennacherib to do His will, though he knew it not at all (Isaiah 10:5-7).
- C. God can use, has used, and will use anyone that He chooses to accomplish things both good and bad.
 1. God used a dumb ass to stop Balaam’s madness (II Peter 2:16), and He so used Caiaphas. Glory!
 2. God overruled Balaam just like He had overruled his ass to bless Israel instead of curse them.
 3. God also used Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar to deliver prophecies to be recorded in scripture.
 4. God once supplied Peter a divine understanding to declare the identity of Jesus (Matt 16:15-17).
 5. God used Judas Iscariot to preach and do miracles and to be a religious thief and to betray Jesus.
 6. The wicked Jews made a prophecy about themselves that was fulfilled (Matt 27:25; Acts 5:28).
- D. Do you understand the extent of the mysteries of the gospel (hidden truth revealed to you by God)?
- E. Our Lord’s death as the ultimate sacrifice for the people would end the need for any more priests.
- F. We should reason that if He died for us then we should surely live for Him (Romans 12:1; I Cor 6:20; II Corinthians 5:13-15; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:1; Titus 2:14; I John 4:9).

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 here explained that Jesus Christ’s death would reconcile God’s elect children from the Gentiles.
 1. It was God’s wisdom that the one man Jesus Christ should die for all His brethren (Heb 2:9-17).
 2. John knew that the death of Jesus Christ was for more than just the Jews (John 10:16; I Jn 2:2).
 3. John would know even better later in life of Jesus Christ's death for many Gentiles (Re 5:9; 7:9).
 4. A great council took place in Jerusalem where the Gentiles were called God’s children (Acts 15).
 5. Paul taught Jesus Christ's death united Jews and Gentiles into one (Eph 1:7-12; 2:11-22; 3:1-7).
 6. Jesus Christ's death "for the people" was in place of the people rather than because of the people.
 - a. Jesus died not to confirm His ministry or to be an example but in the very 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.
 7. Gentiles not of the Jewish fold were seeking out Jesus Christ 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.

- A. Political expedience won the day. They all agreed to follow Caiaphas’s advice and murder our Lord.
 1. We should tremble and glory at the judgment of Caiaphas (Psalm 9:16-17; Matthew 23:34-36).
 2. They will shortly add Lazarus to the murder list, for him being alive was too much (Jn 12:11-12).
- B. Evil men agreeing do not raise the level of justice but rather reduce it to the common denominator.
 1. Evil men love fellow sinners so much they crave their own unity, as Solomon wrote (Pr 1:10-19).
 2. There is little to no value in a multitude of counselors, if the counselors are friends (Pr 11:14).

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.

- A. As Jesus had done before, He avoided Jerusalem and/or Judea until time to die (John 7:1; 10:39-40).
- B. Here is practical wisdom – Jesus knew both God’s will and His death – yet He used ordinary means.

- C. When it was time for Him to die, He did not hesitate to face His duty (Luke 9:51; 12:50; John 4:34).
- D. This small village is estimated to have been about 20 miles north of Jerusalem, far enough for safety.

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.*

- A. This is the fourth and last Passover of His ministry, for at this Passover He ordained our communion.
- B. There were specified ceremonial procedures to purify those unclean by various causes before eating.
- C. Hezekiah held a great Passover when many of those present were not purified (II Chron 30:17-20).
- D. The terminology here, *Jews' Passover*, indicates John's audience likely had many Gentiles (Re 1:4).

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?*

- A. These seeking for Jesus were the common people from the countryside, the better hearers of Jesus.
- B. Though they knew the rulers wanted to kill Him, they also knew He as a male should appear there.

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.*

- A. The Jewish religious rulers were intent by conspiracy to kill Jesus, so they ordered citizens to help.
- B. This legislated crusade against Christians has been practiced in all generations in many countries.
- C. Some of mankind's greatest cruelty has been the world's efforts against good, innocent Christians.
- D. Jesus warned that families would be torn apart by betrayal of close family members (Matt 10:21-22).
- E. We should bless and thank God for the First Amendment – freedom of religion for pagans and us.

Conclusion:

1. We should tremble and glory at the judgment of Caiaphas (Psalm 7:14-16; 9:15-17; Matt 23:34-36; 26:57-68).
2. We should believe and know that any who do not love the Lord Christ are cursed (Matt 22:1-7; I Cor 16:22).
3. We should reason that if He died for us then we should surely live for Him, like Martha and Mary did with plenty of evidence (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 politically expedient in the kingdom of God that Jesus Christ God's Son 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).
7. Let every man, woman, and child seek and pursue Jesus Christ to be His loving friends as the three siblings.

For Further Study:

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