

## Gospel of John Study Session 23

Our last session ended with the Jews making a concerted and determined effort to arrest Jesus. Jesus ended up making a retreat to Batanea, just far enough away from Jerusalem to find a refuge from the Jews. Many of the people at Batanea came to believe in Jesus over the course of time He spent with them. Though we don't know the specifics of time, what we do know is that chapter 10 took place in what on our calendar would be late December possibly into early January due to John mentioning that the tense conversations between Jesus and the Jews of Jerusalem were happening around the Feast of Dedication.

As we turn begin this session, chapter 11, we will see that probably one to two months have passed. We know this because as we'll see in our next session, the Passover is near (11:55). In this session we will witness what most would consider Jesus' greatest miracle Jesus performed in His earthly ministry. His personal friend, a man named Lazarus, will die and Jesus will bring him back from the dead. This account not only reveals to us a new part of Jesus' identity but it also gives us, believers, some solid counsel on our new lives and how to build our faith in Jesus. We'll break this session into five parts.

### 1. The death of Lazarus.

#### **[John 11:1-6]**

Q: Why is Jesus in Batanea? *(He is retreating from the Jews in Jerusalem who want to arrest and kill Him.)*

The Bethany mentioned in v.1 is not the Bethany of mentioned back in John 1:28. John distinguishes between the two Bethany villages by calling this one the Bethany where Mary, Martha, and Lazarus lived. This Bethany is less than 2 miles from Jerusalem. It is along the road to Jericho, to the southeast, barely past the city of Jerusalem. This Bethany was Jerusalem's backyard and had deep connections to the city.

Q: What do you think got Jesus to leave His place of relative safety in Batanea and go so close to Jerusalem? *(Two things: His love for the family of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus and (more importantly) He saw His Father's hand at work. By this part of the book, we have come to realize that Jesus does nothing on His own initiative - only what is part of His Father's plan and always in His Father's timing.)*

Q: How does John introduce us to Mary? *(v.2 - She was the one who anointed Jesus' feet with precious ointment.)*

Q: Does anything strike you as odd or interesting about that description of Mary? *(It hadn't happened yet. John does not relate this story about Mary until chapter 12. It is foreshadowing of what Jesus hasn't done yet but will be explained later. John is already foreshadowing the death and resurrection of Jesus through relating this account to his readers.)*

Q: How do the sisters appeal to Jesus for His help in dealing with their sick brother? (v.3 - *They mention to Jesus that “the one His loves” is sick. This lets us know that Jesus had a personal friendship with Lazarus. The word for love here is “phileo” which is the word for warm, brotherly love. However, in v.5 the word for Jesus’ love for this family is “agapeo” which is the Christian, self-sacrificial love given by God. The important thing this tells us is that Jesus had a very special, warm friendship with this family.*)

Q: In v.4, why does Jesus say this sickness will not end in death, when it turns out that Lazarus does indeed truly die? (*Jesus is not saying that this illness will not end up claiming Lazarus’ life but ultimately, Lazarus will be resurrected and will end up alive. For this account, it is important to see that John is giving us insight into Jesus and His disciples that the disciples themselves did not at that time understand. Upon hearing Jesus’ words, the disciples would have assumed Lazarus would recover from his sickness in normal fashion.*)

It is important to note that when Jesus speaks, whether or not we understand their full meaning at that moment or not, that we listen to Him and expect Him to act according to what He has spoken. There are times when all we have in this life is the promises of God. We can live by these promises despite whatever comes our way in this world. The key is to put our trust in God’s Word instead of what the circumstances and the world are dictating we do. If the disciples and Mary & Martha would have listened to Jesus’ words, they could have saved themselves a lot of needless agony in this chapter of their lives.

Q: According to Jesus, what is the purpose of the sickness of Lazarus? (v.4 - *The ultimate goal of this sickness is to glorify God and the Son of God. In this sense it is similar to Jesus’ statement back in 9:3 when concerning the reason for the man born blind’s condition. What Jesus is going to do will show Him to be the Son of God sent into the world by the Father.*)

Q: What does it mean to glorify God? What will that entail? (*It means that in some way the invisible God will be seen. His works will reveal His power, love, or some other characteristic of His nature. People will see it and be in awe over who God is and those with open hearts will be drawn to Him.*)

So to take a quick review. This sickness of Lazarus will be in order to bring glory to God and the Son of God - Jesus. V.5 lets us know that the glory that will be given to Jesus through this circumstance will not be devoid of genuine, personal love for His friends in Bethany. It’s John foreshadowing again in that this will not be some harsh, tough love sort of ordeal for the family. It will be in keeping with Jesus’ love for these people. This verse is important because some of the events and things Jesus does coming up are not going to look very merciful at first glance.

Q: After receiving the news that his good friend Lazarus was sick, what did Jesus do? (v.6 - *He stayed where He was for 2 more days.*)

Now we need to do a little math to put the timeline together for the rest of the story. To make sense, this is how things must have played out. It was a given that a healthy man could travel approximately 28 miles a day on foot. Batanea was about 95 miles from Bethany. So

that's just over a three day walk. Now we were just told that Jesus waited two days before leaving. Like everything in Jesus' life and ministry, this was intentional. Jesus' goal was to arrive at the tomb on day 4 after Lazarus' death. We'll get to the reason for the delay in a bit. We know at the end of the story that Lazarus was in the tomb for four days. This allows us to say that Lazarus must have died the day after He and His disciples received the first message that Lazarus was sick in vv.3-6. So by the time Jesus and His disciples actually leave, Lazarus has been dead for one day already. There are two reasons why this is important. First, it is part of a major teaching and faith building circumstance that was part of the Father's plan we'll see later. Secondly, it also means that Jesus' delay did not cause Lazarus's death. Even if Jesus had gotten up and left Batanea on the very moment He heard of Lazarus' sickness, He would have still not arrived until two days after Lazarus' death. This is something to keep in mind when Jesus encounters Martha and Mary. Remember, Jesus does nothing on His own initiative so this two day wait was part of the Father's plan. Jesus will not be manipulated by man's desires or His own emotions but rather only moved by His Father's direction and will. The Father wanted to glorify Jesus, His Son, and this event was going to do that mightily.

### **[John 11:7-16]**

Q: Why were Jesus' disciples' shocked that Jesus wanted to return to Judea? (v.8 - *Because the Jews wanted to stone Him last time He was there. It hadn't been that long for anyone to forget their last encounter. They were afraid that the hostility of the Jews was so great that they might kill Jesus on sight and possibly them too. They were clueless to this actually being part of the culmination and consummation of Jesus' earthly ministry.*)

Since there was little artificial light, the Jewish day, like the Roman day, was split into twelve hours of daylight. Those who do their movement and activity in the day will not stumble around in darkness. This is another one of John's bringing out a statement by Jesus that had two meanings. The first was the physical meaning. It's a simple truth: people do their work in the day light because that's when they can see what they are doing. It's safe and effective. In this sense the "light of the world" is the sun - the day star that burns in the sky.

The second meaning is that the "light of the world" is Jesus. Jesus knows that He is safe from the schemes of man as long as He walks in His Father's will. The daylight section of His ministry is coming to an end but He will not quit early before He has completed all the Father has in mind for Him to accomplish. There is a time coming, after His death, when He will no longer work. (This is the time between the cross and Pentecost.) This is the night Jesus mentioned. It also has an application for us as Jesus' disciples. Jesus invited His disciples to come along with Him on this trip to Bethany. As long as the disciples had Him with them, they had the same, full 12 hours of daylight as well. They should be busy doing the work assigned to them while the light of the world, Jesus, was with them. Soon, Jesus would be gone and work would be impossible (at least until the Holy Spirit arrived).

Q: What is the misunderstanding between Jesus and His disciples in vv.11-14? (*Jesus used the word sleep to indicate death but the disciples thought He meant literal sleep.*)

This is another item that lends us to know that the book of John was written later in the

first century after Christianity had grown and developed its own culture. Using sleep as a metaphor for death is a common among Christians. We've all heard it. This is because we have the hope that Jesus is the One who will awaken us into eternal life upon His next return. Jesus used it here and Paul used it in his letters. However, this metaphor was not very common in Jewish culture. This shows us that Jesus using this metaphor, which was uncommon and why the disciples misunderstood Jesus' meaning, had time to take root in the Christian community as it spread in the first century.

The disciples' statement in v.12 that Lazarus would recover meant that he would regain his full health and strength. The word is the word usually translated "saved". The disciples had no idea how right they were about to be without knowing it. Jesus cleared up the misunderstanding by telling them plainly that He meant that Lazarus was dead.

Q: In v.15 Jesus says He was glad He was not present during Lazarus' illness? Why would Jesus be glad at not healing His friend? *(If Jesus had been present, He would have healed Lazarus and they would have missed the opportunity presented by this faith-building lesson He was about to give them. Jesus wanted to give them the opportunity to believe - in Him in a new way.)*

Thomas shows courage and devotion to Jesus though he's full of apprehension and misunderstanding. He did not grasp the assurance Jesus made back in vv. 9-10. The death that Jesus had to face as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world could not be shared by His disciples. Thomas' response should be our response to any invitation Jesus gives us. That's how we walk after the Spirit. We must die to ourselves and thus allow our hearts to be surrendered to the Spirit within us who is leading us.

With this background to the account, now we will move to the meat of the story.

## 2. Jesus as the resurrection and the life

### **[John 11:17-20]**

Q: How long had Lazarus' body been in the tomb when Jesus and His disciples arrived? *(v.17 - four days)*

Here's the reason that this four day reference was included by John. According to rabbinic teaching, the soul of the deceased hovered over its body for three days after the death. It would be hoping to re-enter the body and return to life. However, one day four, when the body begins to change by decomposing, the soul witnessing this change, departs. At this point, in Jewish thought, the death was irreversible. There is no Biblical teaching on this subject and so it could be superstition but what is important is that the Jews believed this to be true and the Rabbis taught it so for what Jesus was about to do to have any impact, it needed to be done four days after Lazarus' death.

Another point concerning a Jewish funeral that gives us some insight into the family of Martha, Mary and Lazarus is that it was customary and expected that when a family member die,

the family would hire at least two professional flute players and at least one professional wailing woman to mourn the deceased. The fact that there were many Jews had come to this funeral, meant that this family was a prominent family, both here and in Jerusalem, as they lived in the “burbs” so to say. Also the number of mourners present would indicate that they had money for many professional mourners. The fact that the family had money also explains how Mary got the money to buy the expensive perfume with which she anoints Jesus in chapter 12. However, being in such close proximity to Jerusalem and with so many people present, vv. 18-19 give us some insight into the very real risk Jesus was taking by being there. Notice that Martha heard that Jesus was coming to visit them she went out to meet Him - out of the village and away from anyone from Jerusalem that might recognize Jesus. She did this for a more private meeting.

### **[John 11:21-27]**

Q: What was Martha’s statement to Jesus when she saw Him? (v.21 - *If you had been here my brother would not have died.*)

This wasn’t a rebuke by Martha, just grief but mixed with faith in Jesus as she also knows that God will listen to Jesus’ prayers. She knows that Jesus has a very special and unique relationship with God and that relationship leads to answered prayers. Despite losing her brother, she still retains her confidence in Jesus.

One commentator named D.A. Carson calls vv. 23-24 a “masterpiece of planned ambiguity”. Jesus makes a statement to Martha that is clear yet could not possibly be understood by her at that time.

Q: How does Martha take Jesus’ words that her brother will rise again? (v.24 - *She thinks this is just Jesus consoling her that one day in the sweet bye-and bye she will see Lazarus again in heaven. He will be fully restored on the last day. It is important to understand this is how Martha took Jesus’ words based on the following conversations and actions of the day. It escapes Martha’ grasp, at the moment, that Jesus has more planned, an immediate resurrection of her brother. )*

The truth is that Jesus is promising Martha a full restoration to life for her brother at that time. There would be no waiting until the last day. She had never seen a resurrection before. Jesus had raised several other people from the dead but none had been dead for four days - after the soul departed. What Jesus was about to do was beyond her capacity to even dream of asking.

Q: What does it mean when Jesus says He is the resurrection in v.25? (*He is saying that He alone will raise the dead on the last day because He has been sanctioned to do so by the Father. When Jesus speaks of “the” resurrection, He is speaking of His return and the resurrection from the dead of the righteous saints. Jesus alone has been given the authority and power to make this happen in the Father’s time.*)

Notice that Jesus is diverting Martha’s attention away from her “last day” statement to see that He alone rules over the resurrection and His power is not limited to any certain time but

anytime it fulfills the Father's plan. Just as He gave the bread from heaven and was also the bread of life; Jesus not only raises the dead on the last day but is also the resurrection - the power that brings people to eternal life. But Jesus said He was more than just the resurrection but also "the life". These are complimentary to each other. As Jesus has been revealing over the past few chapters, He is the life. He has authority over all life and is the giver of all life. This is not some truth pertaining only to the future but a present reality - as Martha is about to experience.

Jesus next statement illustrates both Him being the resurrection and the life. He is the resurrection in that if anyone believes in Him, they will live, even if they die - His resurrection power at work. He is the life in that anyone who lives and believes in Him will never die. His second statement isn't referring to physical life but spiritual life that never ends. It is the new life that once initiated and possessed by a person who believes in Jesus will never cease.

This means that each individual, in order to experience the eternal life of Jesus in the here and now, must make a personal decision to believe in Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God. So Jesus is saying that a believer can enjoy the resurrected life, the eternal life God wants each person to have, right here and now in this life. Ordinary human life fades away but the life of Christ never fades away.

**[Romans 1:3-4]** - The resurrection proved Jesus was the Son of God, not just a man.

**[Romans 6:4-7]** - This resurrection power is for our life today. It's present in us now so we can walk in newness of life, not sin.

**[Philippians 3:8-11]** - Again, Paul wanted experience the fulness of the resurrection power within him in this life now. This resurrection power came through his death to himself.

**[I Peter 1:3-5]** - This resurrection life that works within all believers now is what gives us hope in this world and in the next with an inheritance that cannot fade away. You are protected by the power of God through your faith right now and will be saved from God's wrath later.

Q: What is Jesus' final question to Martha? (v.26 - *Do you believe this? Jesus is not asking Martha if she believes that He is about to raise Lazarus from the dead. Instead He is asking her if her faith can go beyond the quiet confidence that her brother will be resurrected on the last day to a personal trust that Jesus, as the resurrection and the life, is the only person who can guarantee eternal life through the transformation of resurrection. He's focusing the conversation on Himself - not the results or rewards of believing in Him - just Him.*)

While Martha may not understand everything fully, she does answer that she believes that Jesus is the Messiah and the Son of God. He is the One who has been sent into the world by the Father. Her words "Yes, Lord" indicate that she is open to what Jesus is saying.

Q: What does this tell us about Martha's faith in Jesus? (*It is sufficient for salvation. Thus she is at a point where she knows the essentials about Jesus to possess His life but now is ready for the next revelation of who Jesus truly is. She is ready to see what Jesus is about to do and have it build her faith in Jesus up. Here we see the love of Jesus for Martha in wanting to gently build up her faith in Him so that when He brings Lazarus back from the dead, she can understand the*

*fulness of the event.)*

### 3. Jesus - outraged and grief-stricken

#### **[John 11:28-37]**

Q: What does Martha do after talking to Jesus privately? *(v.28 - she went to Mary and told her that Jesus wanted to speak to her. We have no recorded words of Jesus asking for Martha to send Mary out to see Him but there's no reason to doubt her words here.)*

Notice that she tried to pull Mary aside secretly so that she could leave the village the professional mourners behind and have a private time with Jesus before He entered the village.

Q: What happened that wrecked any chance of this meeting being private? *(v.31 - the Jews saw Mary leave quickly and assumed she was heading in grief to the tomb. Instead the entire village followed Mary to Jesus.)*

Q: What did Mary do when she got to Jesus? *(v.32 - fell at His feet. Her approach to Jesus is more emotional than Martha's was. Different people grieve in different ways.)*

Q: What did Mary tell Jesus? *(v.32 - That if He'd been present, her brother would not have died)*

It sounds as if Mary and Martha had been talking about this for a few days while awaiting Jesus' arrival. The Jews in this passage are neutral in alignment. They are not the Jews of Jerusalem seeking to kill Him. These are just the Jews who live in Bethany and any friends that came from Jerusalem or other neighboring villages to mourn Lazarus' passing. Many of those are professional mourners.

Q: What was Jesus' reaction to Mary and the Jews? *(v.33 - Jesus was deeply moved and troubled)*

Q: What do you think was Jesus' emotional state when you hear the phrase "deeply moved"?

It turns out there are three emotions of Jesus described in a three verse passage (vv. 33-35). The translation of "moved" in v.33 is one of the greatest intentional misinterpretations in the Bible. The only Bible I've seen get it right in the English is the New Living Translation. Other than that, you have to go to a German Bible to see it in its un-watered-down true form. The word was used to describe a horse snorting. When used of humans it means to snort with anger or stern indignation, to be angry or outraged. Just about all the English translations soften this word down to "moved". By doing this it robs us of getting to know the truth about Jesus. Up to this point, Jesus had been perfectly calm. He knew Lazarus was dead and He knew that the Father was going to glorify Him by having Him raise Lazarus from the dead. But when He saw Mary's emotional reaction to His arrival and all of professional mourners behind her, He became angry in His spirit. He was not angry at Mary or the mourners, this was all to be expected at a funeral of a loved one. What made Him angry was that He was seeing so vividly the death and destruction that sin creates. He was mad at the ravages of sin being displayed so

powerfully in bringing pain to those who He loved so dearly. Notice that it says that He was move to outrage in His spirit - in Himself (not the Holy Spirit) - He kept it inside of Himself at that moment. He was also angry at the unbelief these people were showing towards Him in not believing what He had just said.

This reveals something that is very important for us, as humans, to keep in mind. There is a tension between grief and anger that exists. When Jesus saw the results of sin at work around Him and the unbelief that many were showing at that moment, He became angry in His spirit. He didn't blow up but He was outraged. He loved them all but He became indignant at the attitudes they were showing that were not governed by the truth that the Father had revealed to them. This can help us in our times of grief. Grief and compassion without outrage is mere sentimentality. Outrage without grief hardens into self-righteous arrogance. The two go together in a healthy way. The anger and outrage that accompanies grief should be directed at sin and the fallen nature of our world.

The second emotion was "troubled". This word means agitation or stirring of emotions. Jesus became agitated by the same things that led Him to be outraged. It's just another description of the same basic emotional pattern that Jesus had within Himself yet, did not show outwardly - or at least in an explosive manner.

The third emotion given is in v.35 when Jesus wept. This is the shortest verse in the Bible. The word for "wept" is a different word and this is the only place in the New Testament where this word is used. It means to "shed tears". It does not mean to wail or cry loudly. Overcome with all the other emotions and thoughts, Jesus burst into tears. Think of it. He has genuine compassion for Mary who fell down at His feet upon His arrival. He can't help but feel and have sympathy for all those around who genuinely loved and now miss Lazarus. But as the Son of God, He knows these people's hearts and minds and that some don't believe in Him and are facing a death without a following resurrection.

Q: What did the Jews say when they saw Jesus weeping? (*v.36 - See how He loved him.*)

The Jews were both right and wrong. They were right in that Jesus did love Lazarus. They were wrong in that it wasn't the reason for His tears. His tears were not for the same reason as theirs. They wanted to know why He couldn't prevent this death as He had with many others. Jesus had revealed the Father's power on many occasions yet this time, with someone so close to Himself, He lets Lazarus die? Notice that the statement of the Jews in v.37 causes Jesus' anger to flare up within Himself one more time. Notice the crowd is still talking about Jesus healing the man born blind yet is missing what He's able to do right now. It is very rare that any passage shows Jesus' humanity as well as His emotional state as well as this one.

#### 4. The resurrection of Lazarus

#### **[John 11:38-44]**

The description of the tomb in v.38 is that of a standard Jewish tomb in ancient times.

Q: What does Jesus ask Martha to do once they arrive at the tomb? (*v.39 to remove the stone in front of the entrance to the cave/tomb.*)



Q: What is Martha's reaction to Jesus' request? (*v.39 - she didn't want to comply because the body had been dead so long it would stink*)

Martha's reaction to Jesus shows that she missed the entire point of the earlier conversation. Jesus is referring to vv. 23-26 when He speaks in v.40. Here's the rub. Jesus had told His disciples and Martha (and possibly Mary and the crowd) by this point that this death of Lazarus was for the purpose of the Father revealing the Son's glory. They had never seen the glory of Jesus manifest itself in this way so they simply continued to fall back into their old thinking patterns - those of unbelief. God wanted to show these people something new about Jesus. They had seen Jesus the healer but now they were going to see Jesus as One with authority over life and the resurrection of the dead. They had to see it to believe it and were not wanting to take Jesus at His word. Despite this, Jesus' great love and sympathy for these people is amazing in that He is about to show them something new about Himself that will change their lives, despite themselves. How often does God have to work in our lives, despite us?

Q: In vv. 41-42 Jesus prays. What things stand out to you in this prayer? *(1) He makes a direct reference to God being His Father, and that is characteristic of His prayers though not of the Jews at that time. 2) The prayer assumes that Jesus has already asked for Lazarus' life back and so that's why all that's left to say to the Father is "Thank You that You heard Me...". (This also confirms what we read in v.11 that Lazarus' raising had been determined for some time by this point.) 3) Jesus prays so that those listening will understand the intimacy Jesus had with His Father. 4) The prayer also reinforces that Jesus does nothing of Himself but only what the Father gives Him to do. 5) He also wants others to hear this prayer so that they might come to believe that He was truly sent by the Father to do His works.)*

It is important to see that everything Jesus has done and said up to this point is for the purpose of showing that He did come from the Father and that He is the Son of God. He wants people to believe in Him.

Q: After His prayer, what did Jesus say? (*v.43 - Lazarus, come forth*)

Though not specified, Jesus' power as the Son of God is unlimited. It is so powerful that if Jesus had not specified the name "Lazarus", all dead people would have risen from their graves.

### **[Matthew 27:50-53]**

Never underestimate Jesus' power when it comes to giving life. He is truly the resurrection and the life.

The picture of Lazarus coming out of the tomb, still wrapped in his grave clothes is almost laughable. It shows a minor miracle within the miracle. The ancient Jewish method of burying a body was to get a linen sheet slightly more than twice as long as the dead body and a little more than twice as wide. Then they would lay the body so that they could wrap the sides up tightly and then fold the top of the sheet over the whole body and then tie it together at the feet.

It says Lazarus came forth. There was no way he could have walked due to the tightness of the burial cloths. He might have been able to hop or shuffle but getting out of the tomb would have been a challenge.

Q: What was Jesus' charge to those who had seen Lazarus come out of the tomb? (v.44 - *To unbind him - to get the burial clothes off of him.*)

So Lazarus had been dead for four days. He was truly dead by all the teaching and practice of the day. Yet, Jesus revealed Himself as the resurrection and the life by raising Lazarus from the dead. This first command of Jesus is critically important for believers today.

When we are born again, when we first come to life spiritually, Jesus commands the same thing from us. We are to talk off the old burial clothes that were associated with our old life of sin, our death. We don't walk around in the old clothes, the old ways of sin and selfishness any longer. If we try to live our lives in our tight burial clothes we'll never be able to follow Jesus fully. We'll fall down trying. This is because burial clothes were not meant to be lived in by those with new life. They were meant for bodies of people with no life. Now we have life and need to change our clothes.

### **[Colossians 3:5-11]**

The new life cannot live itself out in the death clothes of our old lives. How often do people come to the know the Lord yet fail to change their beliefs, the actions, their speech or the way they think to be conformed to the new life given to them by Christ.

Q: Later in John we'll see Jesus' resurrection. Knowing what you know about Jesus' resurrection, what are some of the differences between Jesus' resurrection and Lazarus' resurrection? (1) *Lazarus' resurrection was a restoration to mortal life, while Jesus rose with a spiritual body (I Corinthians 15), 2) Lazarus was not able to take off his own burial clothes while Jesus was able to get out of His Himself - due to becoming glorified - spirit and material bodies depending upon what He desired to express. 3) Jesus would never die again but Lazarus would die again at some point, 4) Jesus walked through the stone at His resurrection and an angel had to roll it away to show that He had left, with Lazarus' resurrection, those present had to roll the stone away to allow Lazarus the ability to get out of the tomb. )*

Lazarus' resurrection was but an illustration of what was to come. It was a huge sign to everyone who saw the event that Jesus was the resurrection and the life and was the Son of God. Lazarus came back to life and lived a completely normal rest of his life - resuming his previous life. He would be subject to death again at some point in the future.

### **5. The judicial decision to kill Jesus**

### **[John 11:45-54]**

Q: What was the result of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead? (v.45 - *many of the Jews came to*

*believe in Jesus; v.46 - some of those who saw the event went and reported the event to the Pharisees, thus giving the authorities Jesus' location.)*

How often have we seen this in John. Jesus' words and actions often divide the Jews. Some put their faith in Him (though we don't know if it was beyond superficial faith or not) while others ran to tell the authorities. This event was so significant that the ruling Jewish religious authorities convened a council to deal with this matter.

Q: What did those at the council fear if Jesus went unchecked? *(v.48 - they would lose their place (or authority over the people) and they would lose their nation. Things would be radically changed so that Rome would get involved due to the division that Jesus would bring.)*

It is important to understand the speech of Caiaphas, the high priest and what John meant when he said he prophesied about Jesus dying for the people that year. To get the gist here you must see this a two tracks of thought. What Caiaphas spoke and what he meant were two very different things. As Christians we read his words and this passage and think, "OK, so God spoke to Caiaphas about Jesus dying for the sake of Jews and all the children of God." Since Jesus as to be the Lamb of God who took away the sins of the world, we'd say that Caiaphas got it right. The problem is that is exactly backwards of how Caiaphas meant what he said. He was speaking purely politically and in a physical, worldly sense. He saw Jesus as a threat to the nation and that either Jesus was going to die or the nation of Israel was going to die - one of the two. He saw that it was much more expedient to put Jesus to death in order to save the Jewish nation (and the leaders' place of authority given to them by Rome) than allow Jesus' teachings wreak havoc with and undo the law of Moses so that the nation would descend into chaos and the Romans would come and put secular leaders over them.

In this respect both John and Caiaphas saw Jesus' death as substitutionary but differed on who Jesus' death benefitted or substituted for. Jesus would die to make them one. The one is different for John and Caiaphas. For Caiaphas it was the Jewish nation - that God would bring the Jews back from the diaspora and resettle them in the Promised Land. For John, it was Jesus bringing everyone who believed in Jesus Christ together into one body (which would be called the church). Remember, Jesus said He would draw sheep from many pens (John 10:16). John saw it was Christians who were the true children of God and would inherit the promises of God since they believed in the name of the incarnate Word. This oneness that John is talking about is just foreshadowed here. He will pick this theme up again in chapters 14-17 where it culminates in the High Priestly Prayer of Jesus before His crucifixion.

Q: What was the official ruling of the council? *(v.53 - They took Caiaphas' advice and resolved to put Jesus to death. The decision was made but now to carry it out. From the Jewish standpoint it purely for political expediency - not a spiritual decision at all. From God's standpoint, it was why He sent Jesus to earth in the first place.)*

There were sympathizers among the Pharisees and ruling class. So they would have reported back to Jesus or His disciples through their backdoor communications methods about the ruling to kill Jesus. He heard their decision and at the same time knew His time was not yet. The Passover was close but not there yet. It says that Jesus retreated again to a town called

Ephraim. This was about 12 miles from Jerusalem. It was far enough away that He could conduct His ministry without being on the Jerusalem Jew's radar and near enough that He could get to the Passover without any of the troubles of a long journey.

We need to read a side note concerning the Jew's decision to kill Jesus and this amazing sign He just performed.

**[John 12:9-11]**

The Jews realized that they needed to kill Jesus but they also need to kill Lazarus due to his life showed the power of Jesus and that He was God's Son. They were attempting to control something that was completely uncontrollable - something completely in God's hands. Can you imagine the hardness of heart and blindness of a person's mind that leads them to kill the Son of God and a man whose risen life proves those points rather than submit to His authority and loving teaching? That's what happens when we live with expediency - the desire to get an end without caring how it's done. This is the purest form of ends justify the means mentality.

Q: Do you have any questions, comments, rebukes or rebuttals?