



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Holy Gospel According to St. John

Chapter 11

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Introduction

- This chapter describes Jesus' great miracle in raising Lazarus from the dead
- Only John records this miracle
- Although other writers record other events in which Jesus raised the dead, some people wonder why none except John records this great miracle
- There may be various reasons that are not recorded
- John 12:9-11 says that, after this miracle, the Jews wanted to kill Lazarus to eliminate the evidence that Jesus had raised him



Introduction

- John apparently wrote much later than the other gospel writers
- So, some commentators have supposed that perhaps the earlier writers did not record the miracle in order to minimize the threat to Lazarus' life
- The more they spread the claim of the miracle, the more likely the Jews would want to eliminate the evidence by killing Lazarus
- But by the time John wrote, so many years had passed that Lazarus may have been dead or at least the event had happened so long ago that the threat to Lazarus was minimal



Introduction

- Another explanation that has been suggested is that John was the only one of the four writers who had witnessed the event first-hand
- Perhaps some of the apostles were elsewhere at the time
- If Matthew and Mark were elsewhere, maybe they simply left the miracle for John to record, since John was a first-hand witness



Introduction

Chapter Outline:

- The Death of Lazarus 11:1-16
- Jesus Is the Resurrection and the Life 11:17-27
- Jesus and Death, the Last Enemy 11:28-37
- Lazarus Raised from the Dead 11:38-44
- The Plot to Kill Jesus 11:45-57



The Death of Lazarus 11:1-16

- The account here introduces us to some new characters who have a prominent role in the life of Jesus
- They are two sisters and their brother, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus
- Lazarus' name is literally La'zar, the shortened form of Eleazar which means "God helps"
- Bethany was situated at the foot of the mount of Olives, about two miles from Jerusalem



The Death of Lazarus 11:1-16

- We are told that, on another occasion, Mary anointed Jesus with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair
- This has apparently not yet happened, but John wrote after these events, so he includes a note about it here to help identify the people, 12:1-11
- Since there are a number of women named “Mary” in the gospel accounts, John distinguishes this Mary by referring to another event that involved her



The Death of Lazarus 11:1-16

- On still another occasion, Jesus taught at their home and rebuked Martha for being so concerned about the meal that she wanted Mary to help with the serving instead of spending time listening to Jesus' teaching, Luke 10:38-42
- It is unlikely that John is referring to the sinful woman who whipped her tears from Jesus' feet and then anointed them in Luke 7:37
- Mary of Bethany has always been a symbol of virtue the Church Fathers did not associate her with the sinful woman in the Gospel according to St. Luke



The Death of Lazarus 11:1-16

- *Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick*, Nothing could be more simple, nor more modest, than this prayer
- They do not say, Come and heal him: or, Command the disease to depart even where You are, and it will obey You
- They content themselves with simply stating the case, and using an indirect but a most forcible argument, to persuade our Lord to show forth His power and goodness
- *he whom You love is sick*, Therefore You cannot neither abandon him, not us



The Death of Lazarus 11:1-16

- Jesus was quite deliberate about the whole thing
- He said the sickness was not to death but for God's glory and for the Son of God to be glorified, as in 9:3, where He said a similar thing about the blind man
- The point is not that Lazarus would not die, for he obviously did so
- But his death would not be the final result or main result accomplished by the sickness



The Death of Lazarus 11:1-16

- Instead, glory to God and Jesus would result
- *Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus,* Therefore His staying two days longer in *the place where He was,* was not through lack of affection for this distressed family
- But merely that He might have a more favorable opportunity of proving to them how much He loved them
- Christ never denies a less favor, but in order to grant a greater one



The Death of Lazarus 11:1-16

- God's delays, in answering prayers offered to Him by persons in distress, are often proofs of His purpose to bestow some great kindness
- It is usual for some to explain this delay as caused by His wish to test the faith of the sisters, or by the nature of the work which He was then doing, and was unwilling to leave
- But the first reason passes over the fact that their faith had been shown in their message to Him



The Death of Lazarus 11:1-16

- And the second assumes His presence at Bethany as necessary for the restoration of Lazarus, John 4:49-50
- Some thinks it is the principle which He had taught at the first miracle, John 2:4, that the hours of His work were marked out by signs that He alone could read
- A comparison with John 11:11 makes it certain that Lazarus was dead before they set out for Judea, but he was living when the words of John 11:4 were spoken
- The fact of death may have determined the hour of their departure



The Death of Lazarus 11:1-16

- Jesus suggested that He and His disciples go to Judea
- This surprised the disciples, since He had left Judea due to the opposition of His enemies there who had determined to kill Him, 10:40
- The disciples reminded Him of this and asked why He wanted to go back
- The residence beyond Jordan had been brief, and they are amazed that the Lord will so soon put Himself in the power of that furious and hostile crowd



The Death of Lazarus 11:1-16

- Perhaps they thought He had not gone to heal Lazarus because He sought to avoid the danger facing Him in Judea
- But Jesus had left Judea, because it was not yet time for Him to die
- And He had not gone back to see Lazarus, because the time was not yet right for what He needed and intended to do
- Now the time was right, so He was ready to return



The Death of Lazarus 11:1-16

- The Jews divided the day from sunrise to sunset into twelve equal parts. A similar illustration our Savior uses in John 9:4-5
- *If anyone walks*, If any man travels
- The illustration here is taken from a traveler
- The conversation was respecting a journey into Judea, and our Lord, as was His custom, took the illustration from the case before Him



The Death of Lazarus 11:1-16

- *he does not stumble*, He is able, having light, to make his journey safely
- He sees the obstacles or dangers and can avoid them
- *the light of this world*, The light by which the world is illuminated that is, the light of the sun
- *in the night*, In darkness he is unable to see danger or obstacles to avoid them
- His journey is unsafe and dangerous



The Death of Lazarus 11:1-16

- *the light is not in him*, He sees no light
- It is dark; his eyes admit no light within him to direct his way
- This description is figurative
- Perhaps the meaning was that there was an appointed time for Him to live and do His Father's will, represented here by the 12 hours of the day
- The day points out the time of life and the night that of death
- *Are there not*, He said, *twelve hours in the day?* I have not traveled these twelve hours yet



The Death of Lazarus 11:1-16

- My last hour is not yet come and the Jews, with all their malice and hatred, shall not be able to bring it a moment sooner than God has purposed
- I am immortal till my work is done and this, that I am now going to Bethany to perform, is a part of it
- When all is completed, then their hour, and that of the power of darkness, shall commence, Luke 22:53



The Death of Lazarus 11:1-16

- This passage teaches us that we should be diligent to the end of life
- Life is the time to fulfill the will of God
- Jesus is the light of the world; he that walks in His Spirit, and by His direction, cannot stumble - cannot fall into sin, nor be surprised by an unexpected death
- But he who walks in the night, in the darkness of his own heart, and according to the principles of this dark world, he stumbles - falls into sin, and at last falls into hell



The Death of Lazarus 11:1-16

- Jesus uses the word "sleep" to express the death of Lazarus
- It is strange that the disciples could imagine that Christ spoke of an ordinary sleep
- And that He would go two or three days' journey to awake him
- Nothing but the fear and concern they were under, could make them think so
- His words *our friend* gently remind them that Lazarus was their friend as well as His, for they as well as He had probably been welcome guests in the well-known house



The Death of Lazarus 11:1-16

- Christians have the hope of eternal life
- A Christian must face physical death but for the Christian it is only a "sleep" because death will not be final, there will be an awaking out of this sleep, or a resurrection
- The significance of the death of their friend Lazarus includes the strengthening of the disciples' faith through the miracle of his resurrection
- It is a strengthening of faith they will all need to recall in during Christ's trial when their faith is severely put to the test



The Death of Lazarus 11:1-16

- *they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep,* These words forbid the thought that they really understood that Lazarus was dead, but did not wish to seem to know it
- Three of them, indeed, had heard our Lord apply the word “sleep” to death before, Matthew 9:24, *“He said to them, ‘make room, for the girl is not dead, but sleeping’”*
- The words of deeper truth, *Our friend Lazarus sleeps,* have conveyed no true meaning to their minds
- *Jesus said to them plainly, Lazarus is dead,* He uses words, therefore, which fall short of that truth, but are the only words which they can understand



The Death of Lazarus 11:1-16

- *I am glad ... I was not there*, The words are at first sound startling, as following immediately upon the plain statement, *“Lazarus is dead”*
- The utterance is not of sorrow, but of joy
- But the joy is not at the fact of death, but at the fact that He was not there
- Had He been there, Lazarus would not have died, John 11:21,32
- It was a greater miracle to raise a dead man than to cure a sick man



The Death of Lazarus 11:1-16

- And it was a still greater miracle, to raise one that was three or four days buried, and in whose body decay might have begun to take place, than to raise one that was but newly dead, John 11:39
- “When Christ says, *that you may believe*, we must not suppose He means, that they might begin then for the first time to believe, but that their faith, already begun, might be increased; for the faith of the disciples still stood in need of miracles, to make it grow more strong and rooted.” St. Augustine
- Thomas is Didymus in Greek which means a twin



The Death of Lazarus 11:1-16

- *that we may die with Him*, This he said perhaps exhorting the other disciples not to fear
- He seemed to agree that they should all go with the Lord Jesus Christ and get exposed to the death awaiting Him
- Note how this contrasts to their attitudes when He did finally die
- The time of that death was drawing near
- When it came, they fled
- And after the resurrection, Thomas doubted, 20:24-29
- Yet, here Thomas expressed devotion and courage



Jesus Is the Resurrection and the Life 11:17-27

- Bethany, we are told, was close to Jerusalem, about two miles away
- By the time Jesus arrived, Lazarus had been in the tomb four days
- Other evangelists record some of the events that occurred during this journey towards Bethany
- For example, the healing of the blind man in Jericho, the meeting with Zacchaeus and his conversion



Jesus Is the Resurrection and the Life 11:17-27

- Although the Lord loved Lazarus and his sisters and was on His way to raise him from the dead, yet, He did not dismiss the needs of others
- The detail that Lazarus had been dead for four days is significant
- It makes it clear that Lazarus was truly deceased
- According to the cultural traditions of the Jews it was believed that the soul hovered near the body for three days but after that time there was no hope of resuscitation or revival and decay would begin



Jesus Is the Resurrection and the Life 11:17-27

- *many of the Jews*, They had come before our Lord's arrival
- Bethany being so near to Jerusalem, many of the relatives and friends of the family came, according to the Jewish custom, to mourn with the afflicted sisters
- The word "Jews" is to be understood in St. John's general sense, John 1:19, of those opposed to our Lord, who had lately sought to stone Him, John 10:31, and afterwards to take Him by force, John 10:39



Jesus Is the Resurrection and the Life 11:17-27

- The family at Bethany was one of position and substance, Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9, and they would naturally have had many friends among the higher rank of the Jews
- The days of mourning were usually thirty, which were divided into (1) three days of weeping; (2) seven days of lamentation; (3) twenty days of sorrow
- This fourth day after the death was the first of the seven days of lamentation



Jesus Is the Resurrection and the Life 11:17-27

- It seems that Martha was eagerly awaiting the Lord's arrival
- Some suppose she was the eldest of the two sisters - she seems to have had the management of the house, Luke 10:40
- She needed Him to comfort her and her sister
- Upon hearing that He was on the way to the house, she abandoned all traditions of mourning as well as the mourners who were visiting her; and hurried to meet the Lord
- She left the house as well as the village and met Him outside



Jesus Is the Resurrection and the Life 11:17-

- *Mary was sitting in the house*, It is likely that St. John intended to convey the idea of her sorrow and distress; because anciently afflicted persons were accustomed to put themselves in this posture, as expressive of their distress
- Their grief having rendered them as were immovable, Ezra 9:3-4; Nehemiah 1:4; Psalm 137:1; Isaiah 47:1; Luke 1:79; and Matthew 27:61
- Or it could be that she had not heard of the Lord's arrival



Jesus Is the Resurrection and the Life 11:17-27

- Mary said the same words to Him a little after, John 11:32, which proves that these sisters did not have a complete knowledge of the omnipotence of Christ
- They thought He could cure at hand, but not at a distance
- Or, they thought that it was because He did not know of their brother's illness that He permitted him to die
- In either of these cases it plainly appears they had not a proper notion of His divinity; and indeed the following verse proves that they considered Him in no other light than that of a prophet



Jesus Is the Resurrection and the Life 11:17-27

- Martha further stated she was confident that God would give whatever Jesus asked
- But why doesn't she ask for Lazarus' resurrection at this time if she believes in the power of Jesus as the Son of God?
- Some scholars suggest that her faith was imperfect but according to St. Augustine Martha illustrates the perfect example of Christian faith
- She places herself and her brother entirely in God's hands, in submission to His will



Jesus Is the Resurrection and the Life 11:17-27

- Jesus told Martha that Lazarus would rise again
- The context makes it obvious that He meant this would happen miraculously even that day, but He did not specify when it would happen
- Martha had believed there would be a resurrection at the last day, so she confirmed that she was confident Lazarus would rise then
- She apparently thinks He is offering only words of comfort affirming the doctrine of the resurrection of the body in the final judgment that He has taught



Jesus Is the Resurrection and the Life 11:17-27

- *I am the resurrection and the life*, She said that her brother shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day; but by whom shall he arise if not by Him the author of both
- I am the resurrection, I am He who will at the last day raise him up
- I can, therefore, if I will, raise him up now also
- *I AM the resurrection* is a direct answer to Martha's profession of faith in verse 24



Jesus Is the Resurrection and the Life 11:17-27

- And also tells her of the present realization of what she had only expected on "the last day"
- The very fact Jesus made such claims proves He is Divine or else He is not even a good man
- No middle-ground position can be accepted
- Jesus is the resurrection in the sense that not only will whoever believes in Him, even though he may suffer a physical death, shall come to eternal life but there is the gift of spiritual rebirth that is offered now, in this life



Jesus Is the Resurrection and the Life 11:17-27

- The believer who is resurrected spiritually in Christ, even though remaining "in the flesh" for a time, already lives by the Spirit and when he dies physically, will live spiritually
- That is why we speak of 2 resurrections: one through baptism when we die to sin and are raised to eternal life and the other at the end of time
- *and the Life* is a statement related to verse 26
- The believer who is alive spiritually will never die spiritually



Jesus Is the Resurrection and the Life 11:17-27

- Whoever receives the gift of life through belief in Christ Jesus will never die a spiritual death because this life is eternal
- The "life" that Jesus speaks of is life that comes from "above" and is begotten through God the Holy Spirit
- His life conquers physical death as well as gives spiritual life
- The believer in Christ has triumphed over death forever and this victory will be the sign of Lazarus' resurrection



Jesus Is the Resurrection and the Life 11:17-27

- Martha responds in faith, in love, and in obedience to the teachings of Christ in her profession of faith in Him
- Her statement is one of the clearest recognitions of Jesus as the Messiah that we have heard in the Gospel according to St. John, and it is one of the fullest professions of faith found in the New Testament
- It has the force of Peter's confessions of faith in Jesus expressed in Matthew 16:16 and in John 6:69



Jesus Is the Resurrection and the Life 11:17-27

- *Yes, Lord, I believe*, Either meaning that she had believed this for some time past, or that, since He began to teach her, her faith had been considerable increased
- But verb preter, in Greek, are often used to signify the present
- Martha here acknowledges Christ for the Messiah promised to their fathers
- But her faith goes no farther and having received some hope of her brother's present resurrection, she waited for no farther instruction, but ran to call her sister

Jesus and Death, the Last Enemy 11:28-37



- When Martha had made this great utterance of faith, her heart was filled with hope
- The horrific shadow of death is now transparent to a heavenly light
- She must share her hope with her sister
- Jesus gave the commission to get Mary, as is obvious from the words of Martha which follow
- Jesus has remained outside the town

Jesus and Death, the Last Enemy 11:28-37



- *secretly called Mary her sister*, Some say that it was done secretly to avoid attracting the notice of the Jews who were with her, John 11:19,31
- And lest the hostile Jews should hear and interrupt the dialogue
- Others believe that the secrecy was due not so much to the presence of Jesus' enemies as to Martha's desire that Mary should meet Jesus alone, unaccompanied even by friends
- For the same purpose Jesus remained in the place where He had met Martha

Jesus and Death, the Last Enemy 11:28-37



- The word Master here is not the Hebrew Rabbi, John 1:38, but the Greek word our Teacher, John 13:13-14
- He is not named, but Mary at once knows who is intended
- Perhaps the name was that by which they usually spoke of Him who had been their Teacher
- Mary was sitting in the house, John 11:20, after the manner of mourners
- The news she now hears tells her that their true Comforter was at hand, and she at once goes forth to meet Him

Jesus and Death, the Last Enemy 11:28-37



- *Jesus had not yet come into the town*, so Mary immediately went to Him
- This confirms that Mary had not previously heard that Jesus had arrived, verse 20
- Yet, when Mary arose to go to Jesus, the Jews saw it and concluded she was going to the tomb to weep there
- So, they decided to follow her
- The result of this was that there were many witnesses present when Jesus raised Lazarus
- It was customary to visit, occasionally, the sepulchers, there to weep over the deceased

Jesus and Death, the Last Enemy 11:28-37



- We have exactly the same words spoken by Martha in John 11:21
- Mary also mildly reproaches Jesus with these words
- She adds no more
- It may be that she was prevented doing so by the presence of the Jews
- But the next verse suggests rather that her emotion was too powerful for words, and that the only possible language was that of a begging lying at His feet and weeping

Jesus and Death, the Last Enemy 11:28-37



- *He groaned in the spirit and was troubled.*, It is Jesus' response that has caused so much debate among Biblical scholars
- In both verses 33 and 38 Jesus exhibits a strong display of emotion
- Scholars have found the Greek in these passages very difficult to translate
- The difficulty is that what is being translated in Greek seems to be two Semitic idioms that express deep internal emotion
- The debate is whether the emotion is sorrow, as expressed in this translation, or anger?

Jesus and Death, the Last Enemy 11:28-37



- Some believe that *groaned* does not mean cry out or grieved, but rather He made a visible effort to restrain those tears which were ready to gush from His eyes
- And *was troubled* rather, troubled Himself; referring probably to this visible difficulty of repressing His emotions
- Another explanation may be that He was angry because once again He is face to face with the realm of Satan and the sin that brings suffering and death, manifestations of Satan's evil influence over creation and mankind

Jesus and Death, the Last Enemy 11:28-37



- St. John Chrysostom suggests that in this passage Jesus has the same mixture of emotion that He felt in the Garden of Gethsemane as recounted in the Synoptic Gospels, Mark 14:33 which is an emotional distress caused by the imminence of His suffering and death and the climax of His struggle with Satan
- Whether His emotion was anger or grief or a combination of both, this passage allows us to reflect on the depth of Jesus' human feelings reminding us that He was both fully divine and fully man and therefore experienced of all the depths of emotion that we feel

Jesus and Death, the Last Enemy 11:28-37



- His intense feeling prompts Him to end the scene by asking *Where have you laid him?*
- He asks what He knows, says St. Augustine, to raise their attention, their faith, and hope
- *Jesus wept*, The word is different from that which is used to express weeping in John 11:33; but this latter is used of our Lord in Luke 19:41
- The present word means not the cry of lamentation nor the wail of excessive grief, but the calm shedding of tears

Jesus and Death, the Last Enemy 11:28-37



- It has been remarked that this is the shortest verse in the Holy Bible; but it is exceedingly important and tender
- It shows the Lord Jesus as a friend, a tender friend, and shows clearly His character as a man
- Some suggest if Jesus can be moved to tears over the temporary physical death of a friend and believer what must He feel over the spiritual death of the sinner who has brought about his own eternal condemnation?

Jesus and Death, the Last Enemy 11:28-37



- Jesus was about to give proofs of His divinity in raising the dead, He is pleased to give, first, undoubted proofs of His humanity, that He might show Himself both God and Man
- The Jews observed Jesus' sorrow
- Clearly, they knew who He was and what He was reported to have done in the past
- Some of them were greatly impressed by the love He had for Lazarus
- Some of them stated that He had opened the eyes of the blind

Jesus and Death, the Last Enemy 11:28-37



- They therefore reasoned that He could have kept Lazarus from dying
- It is not clear whether this was said sincerely or critically
- In any case, they misunderstood Jesus' motivations
- He did not do miracles just because He loved people, nor to remove all suffering from people's lives
- Had that been His motive, indeed He would have stopped Lazarus from dying
- Instead, He let even His dearest loved ones endure the suffering and grief that is the common fate of mankind

Jesus and Death, the Last Enemy 11:28-37



- Then He used the opportunity to work a far greater miracle than any of them expected
- The result was to give great proof for His claims
- Yet it shows us that removing all suffering, even from His disciples, was not the purpose of His miracles
- The result of Jesus' conduct was to give greater evidence than even the Jews proposed
- Not only had He healed the blind, and not only could He have healed Lazarus, but He removed all doubt about His miraculous power by raising one who had been dead four days

Lazarus Raised from the Dead

11:38-44



- The tomb *was a cave and a stone lay against it*, This was a common burial arrangement
- Still sorrowing or groaning in Himself, Jesus went to the tomb
- There He told the people to remove the stone
- He could have done this by His word and command; or He could have made Lazarus come out without taking off the stone
- Martha objected or at least questioned Him, pointing out that Lazarus had been dead four days and would by that time have an odor or *stench*

Lazarus Raised from the Dead

11:38-44



- Perhaps she thought He just wanted to see the body
- But Martha's statement assures us of the length of time since the death
- There was no doubt Lazarus was dead
- His family and friends had witnessed all that happened and they were convinced he was dead
- He had been dead so long decomposition would have begun

Lazarus Raised from the Dead

11:38-44



- St. John continues to give the details that assure us of the greatness of the miracle
- Martha's doubt is mildly rebuked
- Jesus reminded Martha that He had told her she would see the glory of God
- She needed to continue to have faith that He knew what He was doing and would use the situation in the best way

Lazarus Raised from the Dead

11:38-44



- They removed the stone, and Jesus prayed to God before proceeding
- Here, the Lord clarifies that the relationship between the Father and Son does not require such a prayer
- It is intended for those present who need to believe that the Lord has a relationship with God the Father
- As it was a common opinion that great miracles might be wrought by the power and in the name of the devil, Jesus lifted up His eyes to heaven

Lazarus Raised from the Dead

11:38-44



- And He called upon the supreme God before these unbelieving Jews, that they might see that it was by His power, and by His only, that this miracle was done
- So every barrier and obstacle to this people's faith might be completely taken out of the way, and that their faith might stand, not in the wisdom of man, but in the power of the Most High
- On this account our Lord says, He spoke because of the multitude, that they might see there was no diabolic influence here, and that God in His mercy had visited His people

Lazarus Raised from the Dead

11:38-44



- *with a loud voice*, This was distinctly asserting His power
- He uttered a distinct, audible voice, that there might be no suspicion
- Speaking aloud, so as all might hear, and understand, that what was done was done by His powerful word
- He did not use another person's name, but rather gave an order and the dead arose
- He calls him by his name, he orders him come forth

Lazarus Raised from the Dead

11:38-44



- He would have the disciples and those who were at hand take part in this matter, that the fullest conviction might rest on every person's mind concerning the reality of what was wrought
- In this 6th sign Jesus has given back physical life as a sign of His power to give eternal life and as a promise that on "The Last Day" He will bodily raise the dead!
- So, also, in the day of judgment He will call the dead with a great sound of a trumpet, Matthew 24:31; 1 Thessalonians 4:16

Lazarus Raised from the Dead

11:38-44



- Christ, says St. Gregory, by giving these orders to His apostles, shows that it belongs to His ministers to loose and absolve sinners, when they are moved to repentance, though it is God Himself that forgives their sins and they by His authority only
- Lazarus comes forth bound from the sepulcher, that he might not be thought to be a spirit or a ghost
- And that the eyewitnesses might themselves loose him, and touching and approaching him, might know for certain that it was him, St. Chrysostom
- St. Cyril and St. Augustine both quote this verse to show the power of priests in absolving sinners

The Plot to Kill Jesus 11:45-57



- Many believed in the Lord when they saw what He did, while others went to the religious leaders and Pharisees
- They are called those “which had come to Mary,” because they had remained with her after Martha had gone to meet our Lord, and had followed her when she herself went
- Those who went to the Pharisees, either to arouse them, or to present a testimony of what had occurred, or to invite them to the faith



The Plot to Kill Jesus 11:45-57

- What they have seen has carried conviction to their own minds, and they report it to the Pharisees, either as a proof that He really was the Messiah, or in any case to demand from them a judgment on the facts which they report
- *some of them went away to the Pharisees* , We see here the different effect which the word and works of God will have on different individuals
- Some are converted and others are hardened
- Yet the evidence of this miracle was as clear to the one as the other, but they would not be convinced



The Plot to Kill Jesus 11:45-57

- The Pharisees at once acted on the information and went in their difficulty to the chief priests, who were for the most part Sadducees, and they together called a meeting of the Sanhedrin
- They accept the testimony of the Jews who have come to them, and cannot longer throw doubt upon His miracles
- They feel that they have been inactive but too long, while He has been daily gaining influence

The Plot to Kill Jesus 11:45-57



- The form of their question is a strange contradiction; they cannot but admit that He does many signs, and yet their pride will call Him by no name but the insulting “this Man!”
- It is amazing and enlightening that even Jesus' most hardened enemies admitted He did miracles
- The concern seems to be that the people, if they came to believe Jesus was the Messiah, would cause an uprising in an effort to make Jesus king



The Plot to Kill Jesus 11:45-57

- The Romans would be compelled to crush the uprising, and these leaders feared this would result in the loss of the privileges they then had
- Rome was in power, but continued to allow the Jews to have their own nation and their own rulers, including this council
- Rebellion could lead to such opposition from Rome that they would lose what position and favor they had
- When men act in opposition to God's counsel, the very evils which they expect thereby to avoid will come upon them



The Plot to Kill Jesus 11:45-57

- They said, If we do not put Jesus to death, the Romans will destroy both our temple and nation
- Now, it was because they put Him to death that the Romans burnt and completely destroyed their temple to the ground, and put a final period to their political existence
- *our place* , This probably refers to the temple, Acts 6:13-14
- It was called "the place" by way of eminence, as being the chief or principal place on earth - being the seat of the special worship of God

The Plot to Kill Jesus 11:45-57



- According to the law of Moses, Exodus 40:15, the office of high priest was for life, and the son of Aaron's race always succeeded his father
- But at this time the high priesthood was almost annual
- The Romans and Herod controlled the appointment of the high priests and apparently saw a life time appointment as a position of too much power and influence
- They put down and raised up whom they pleased, and when they pleased

The Plot to Kill Jesus 11:45-57



- The 1st century AD Jewish historian Josephus has confirmed that this was the practice under Roman rule at the time Jesus lived
- Josephus records also that Caiaphas is the name by which he was popularly known; that his real name was Joseph
- *one man should die for the people*, In saying these remarkable words, Caiaphas had no other intention than merely to state that it was better to put Jesus to death than to expose the whole nation to ruin
- But the Spirit of prophecy so directs him, as that he uses words suited to express what was spiritually appropriate

The Plot to Kill Jesus 11:45-57



- *he did not say on his own authority*, Wicked and worthless as he was, God so guided his tongue that, contrary to his intention, he pronounced a prophecy of the death of Jesus Christ
- Joseph Caiaphas intends that Jesus be executed to save the nation of Judea from political annihilation by the Romans
- But the higher prophetic purpose, which he does not recognize, is that the death of Jesus is necessary for the salvation of the world, John 1:29



The Plot to Kill Jesus 11:45-57

- It is ironic that this is the same Greek verb *sunago* - *gathered together* in verse 52 that was used in verse 47 for the gathering together of the priests and Pharisees
- The priests and Pharisees are "gathered together" to kill Jesus and God's dispersed children are "gathered together" that they may be given the gift of life
- The children of God who are scattered abroad are the believers from all nations
- They will come together as members of the one Body of Christ



The Plot to Kill Jesus 11:45-57

- These rulers were of one accord in the matter, and had fully made up their minds on the subject; and they waited only for a proper opportunity to put Him to death
- They had attempted this before, but from this point on it became their settled intent, 5:16-18, 7:32,45, 8:37,59, 10:39
- The remaining question was how they could carry out this decree without exciting a popular uproar, or bringing themselves into collision with the Romans
- To avoid this, Jesus no longer openly associated and taught among them

The Plot to Kill Jesus 11:45-57



- He went with His disciples to a city called Ephraim in the wilderness
- This time of retirement did not last long
- Jesus was apparently waiting till the proper time for the final confrontation that would lead to His death
- This is Jesus' last opportunity to teach His disciples, to strengthen their faith, and to prepare them for His death and their mission

The Plot to Kill Jesus 11:45-57



- The Passover feast was approaching; so, many Jews went to Jerusalem to attend the feast as required by the law
- The Passover was the annual celebration of the time God spared the firstborn Israelites when He slew the firstborn Egyptians
- The people wondered whether He would even come to the feast, considering the opposition of the rulers
- But the rulers had commanded that anyone who knew His whereabouts should report to them so they could seize Him

The Plot to Kill Jesus 11:45-57



- Jesus had not then arrived, because He would not expose Himself to the fury of His enemies before His own time
- *the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a command*, This was their hour, and the power of darkness; and now they are fully determined to take away His life
- The order here spoken of was given in consequence of the determination of the council, mentioned John 11:48-53



Discussion

- How would you explain Jesus' relationship with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus?
- Do you think it was difficult for Jesus to wait two days?
- Why do you think Martha was the one to go meet Jesus while Mary stayed at home?
- What does Jesus tell Martha that strengthen her faith?

Discussion



- Why do you think Jesus was deeply moved in spirit and troubled?
- What effect did the miracle have on the people?
- Describe the characteristics of miracles that are confirmed by this event.
- Who was Caiaphas, and what prediction did he make? How was God using Caiaphas, and what did God mean by what Caiaphas said?