

**Bear Witness: Death does not have the final word John 12:1-2, 9-11 FBC Canton
Sunday am June 14,2026**

Introduction: What if your witness is so strong that even death could not silence it?

Lazarus bears a witness without words that even death could not stop.
There are no words from Lazarus written in the scriptures.

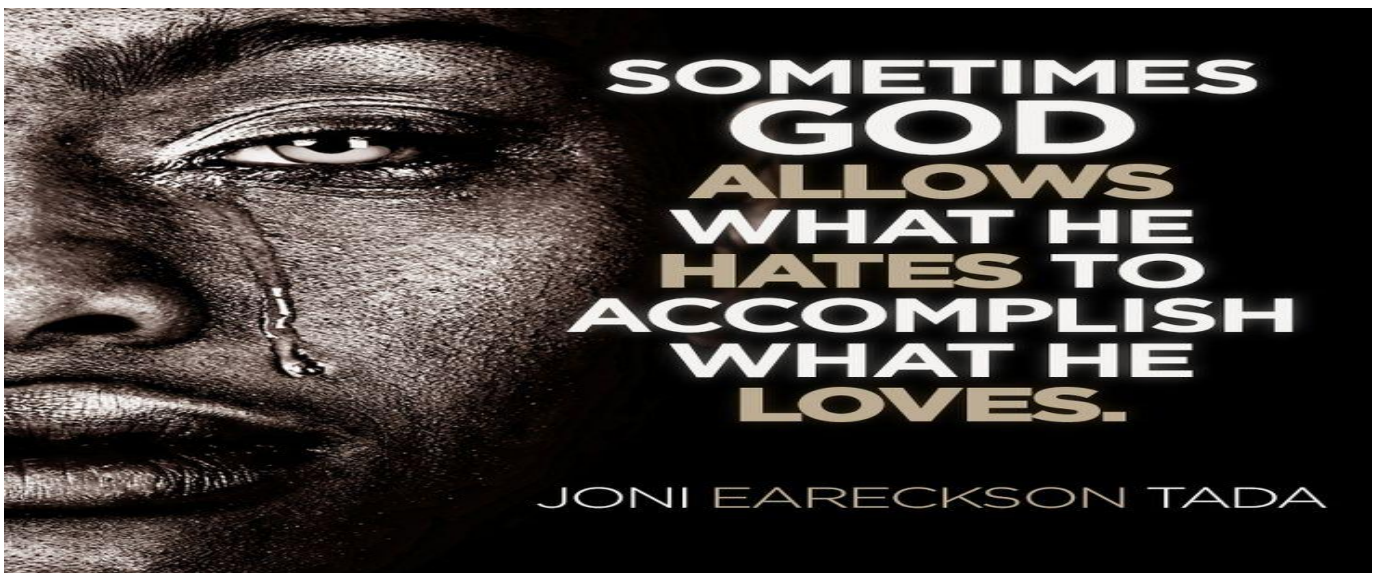
**God loves believers who get sick, some believers watch their loved ones die.
11:4**

They loved Jesus too.



v. 5 Jesus loved this family...

Some of his children he loves he sends through the toughest times.



**Jesus waited 4 days after death to draw a crowd of witnesses, not mourners. V.
5-18**

Jewish Burial Customs and the Four-Day Benchmark

First-century Judea buried the deceased the same day (cf. [Acts 5:6, 10](#)). A body was wrapped in linen and placed in a rock-hewn tomb, sealed with a stone ([John 11:38](#)). Rabbinic sources (e.g., y. Moed Qatan 3.5; Gen. Rabbah 100:7) record the widespread belief that a person's soul hovered near the body for up to three days, hoping to re-enter; on the fourth, seeing decay, it departed permanently. By arriving on the fourth day Jesus waited until every natural hope, popular superstition, and cultural expectation of revival was past.

Medical Finality and Decomposition

Medically, irreversible cellular death sets in minutes after cardiac arrest, but visible decomposition—the “stench” Martha mentions ([John 11:39](#))—takes roughly 36–72 hours in Near-Eastern climate. By 96 hours (four days) putrefaction ensures zero possibility of resuscitation. The delay silences any naturalistic or “swoon” explanation, anticipating later skepticism

He told them he delayed in order that they may believe in Him...the resurrection and the life...death cannot stop him or us! V. 15

Never link God's ability to solve problems to his physical presence. 11:20-22, 32

20 “Now Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house. 21 Now Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.”

Jesus was making a present promise, not a future prophecy. 11:25-26

She thought he meant at the resurrection. Even 1st century bible readers knew Jesus will resurrect us...Job 19

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

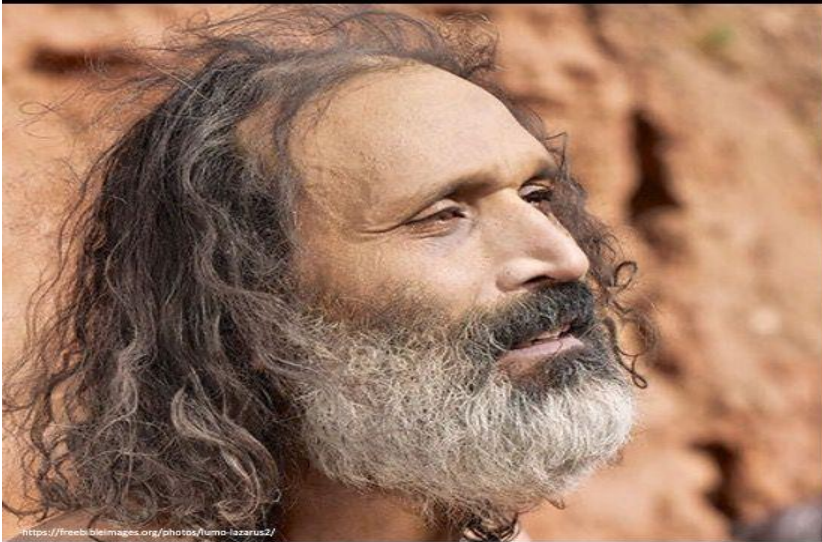
John 11:25-26

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Jesus didn't go to the tomb to mourn, but to do the miraculous. 11:27-38
He wants to do the miraculous in us today too, at the tombs of our lives!

Jesus prayed not to be heard, but to be believed. Even in the tombs of our lives. 11:42

When Jesus spoke to Lazarus, the dead rose. He wants to speak us even at the point of death. 11:43-44



John 11:43-44

⁴³And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.
⁴⁴And 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.

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- I. How would you bear witness that death has lost its sting? 12:9-11
 - a. Believe in the one who is the resurrection and the life. Ephesians 2:8-9
 - i. Many did believe! Will you?
 - ii. Many who did not believe in him, could not deny the miracle!
 1. Why would you?

- b. Stay with Jesus. He is calling you to come forth!**
 - i. Believing his word to you, personally.
 - ii. Can you imagine what Lazarus and Jesus talked about?
- c. Stay with Jesus people.**
 - i. Mary and Martha. Other believers
- d. Believe he has greater reasons than you can understand. Romans 8:28**
 - i. Loose him and let him go!
- e. Your survival after death bears witness to Jesus' power.**
 - i. Lazarus' survival caused an assignation plot. 12:10
 - ii. Many came to see Lazarus.
 - 1. Many believed because Lazarus.
- f. Trust his timing, even if it is a long way away. Revelation 21:1-5**
 - i. How long was 4 days for Lazarus?
 - ii. How would seeing your future change your present?
 - 1. You can see it, by faith!

Conclusion: You can bear witness that death has no sting!

◀ Why wait 4 days to raise Lazarus? ▶

Why did Jesus wait four days before raising Lazarus in John 11:39?

Historical and Scriptural Context

John situates the event in Bethany, “about two miles from Jerusalem” ([John 11:18](#)). The proximity to the city meant that many mourners from Jerusalem would witness what Jesus did ([John 11:19, 45](#)). This is the climactic “seventh sign” in the Gospel of John, intentionally positioned shortly before the Passion to compel a verdict about Jesus’ identity ([John 11:53](#)).

Immediate Clues in the Text

1. Jesus intentionally remains where He is when He hears the news ([John 11:6](#)).
2. He states the purpose: “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it” ([John 11:4](#)).
3. He tells the disciples plainly, “Lazarus has died, and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe” ([John 11:14-15](#)).

The deliberate postponement is therefore purposeful, not accidental.

Jewish Burial Customs and the Four-Day Benchmark

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Public Verification and Multiple Eyewitnesses

Many Jews are present ([John 11:31, 45](#)). Jesus prays aloud, “I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that You sent Me” ([John 11:42](#)). The four-day gap ensures crowds, establishing a public data point later cited by early Christian writers such as Irenaeus (Against Heresies 2.32.4) and Tertullian (On the Soul 55).

Strengthening the Disciples’ Faith

The disciples soon face the trauma of the crucifixion. Jesus says, “for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe” ([John 11:14-15](#)). By witnessing mastery over a four-day-dead corpse, they are prepared to comprehend His own resurrection after three days ([John 2:19-22](#)).

Foreshadowing Christ’s Resurrection

- Location: Bethany’s tomb with a stone parallels Jesus’ own tomb.
- Timing: Lazarus is raised on the fourth day; Jesus rises on the third, fulfilling prophecy ([Luke 24:46](#); [Hosea 6:2](#)).
- Command: “Lazarus, come out!” ([John 11:43](#)) prefigures the Father’s call to the Son ([Acts 2:24](#)).

The sign teaches that Jesus is “the resurrection and the life” ([John 11:25](#)) before He proves it personally.

Glory to God and the Son

John consistently links signs to glory ([John 2:11](#); 9:3). The four-day delay maximizes contrast: complete decay meets immediate life. The result: “Many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in Him” ([John 11:45](#)). Glory accrues to both Father and Son as a unified act of the Trinity ([John 5:21](#)).

Catalyst for the Passion

The miracle’s undeniable nature provokes the Sanhedrin: “So from that day on they plotted to kill Him” ([John 11:53](#)). God’s sovereignty over timing places the Crucifixion precisely at Passover ([John 18:28](#)). The waiting period moves the redemptive timeline forward.

Pastoral and Behavioral Dimensions

Delays test trust. Martha confesses, “Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You” ([John 11:22](#)). Mary and the mourners voice disappointment ([John 11:32, 37](#)). Jesus weeps ([John 11:35](#)), validating grief. The narrative models perseverance in unanswered prayer while affirming God’s greater purpose. Contemporary counseling data show that hope anchored in transcendent purpose correlates with resilience—mirroring [Romans 5:3-5](#).

Archaeological and Topographical Corroboration

Bethany (modern-day al-Eizariya) features first-century kokhim tombs matching John’s description. The traditional site, surveyed by archaeologists like Charles Clermont-Ganneau, contains a rock-cut chamber with a stone groove, supporting the Gospel’s realism.

The Apologetic Force of the Sign

The event answers skeptics on three fronts:

1. Historical—early, multiple, independent attestation.
2. Philosophical—demonstrates that life originates from a personal Creator, not impersonal processes.
3. Theological—shows Jesus’ identity as Yahweh in flesh (cf. [Deuteronomy 32:39](#), “I put to death and I bring to life”).

Conclusion

Jesus waited four days to ensure Lazarus was undeniably dead, to dismantle cultural superstitions, to gather maximum witnesses, to build disciples’ faith, to foreshadow and authenticate His own resurrection, to glorify God, and to trigger the events leading to the Cross. The delay was an intentional, sovereign act demonstrating that the One who spoke life in [Genesis 1](#) still commands life and death, validating His claim: “Whoever lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?” ([John 11:26](#)).

Matthew Henry Commentary on John 11

Chapter 11

In this chapter we have the history of that illustrious miracle which Christ wrought a little before his death—the raising of Lazarus to life, which is recorded only by this evangelist; for the other three confine themselves to what Christ did in Galilee, where he resided most, and scarcely ever carried their history into Jerusalem till the passion-week: whereas John's memoirs relate chiefly to what passed at Jerusalem; this passage therefore was reserved for his pen. Some suggest that, when the other evangelists wrote, Lazarus was alive, and it would not well agree either with his safety or with his humility to have it recorded till now, when it is supposed he was dead. It is more largely recorded than any other of Christ's miracles, not only because there are many circumstances of it so very instructive and the miracle of itself so great a proof of Christ's mission, but because it was an earnest of that which was to be the crowning proof of all-Christ's own resurrection. Here is,

- I. The tidings sent to our Lord Jesus of the sickness of Lazarus, and his entertainment of those tidings ([v. 1-16](#)).
- II. The visit he made to Lazarus's relations when he had heard of his death, and their entertainment of the visit ([v. 17-32](#)).
- III. The miracle wrought in the raising of Lazarus from the dead ([v. 33-44](#)).
- IV. The effect wrought by this miracle upon others ([v. 45-57](#)).

Chuck Smith

Verse by Verse Study on John 11-12 (C2000)

The gospel according to John, chapter 11.

Now we remember that John is carefully picking out certain incidents in the life of Jesus by which he might prove that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of the living God, bringing people to a faith in Him, as such, that through that faith they might have the life of Christ imparted to them. And he testifies there were many other things that Jesus did which he did not record, but these he recorded that you might believe. And so John is writing from a slant, trying to encourage faith. At the end of the epistle, he again declared that if all of the things were written that should be written, all of the libraries could not hold the books that should be written on the subject of Jesus Christ. So, he is carefully choosing certain events, and he has been pointing out different types of miracles that Jesus did. And in our last study, we studied the miracle of the man who was born blind. And the proof that it offered, that no man can open the eyes of the blind, except he is from God.

Now, he comes to one of the most powerful proofs of the deity of Jesus Christ and of His Messiahship, as we come to the raising of Lazarus from the dead.

There was a certain man who was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany ([Jhn 11:1](#)),

Bethany is just a little village just over the top of the Mount of Olives on the eastern slope toward the Judean wilderness away from Jerusalem. It's just adjacent there to Jerusalem. And it is called here, interestingly enough,

the town of Mary ([Jhn 11:1](#))

Which gives us just a little insight into Mary, the sister of Lazarus. Mary was a special kind of a person that, when you think of Bethany, you think of Mary. She is that kind of a sociable person, so friendly, so sociable, that everybody knew her and it was just her town. It was just the town that Mary just sort of had captivated, no doubt, by her friendliness and sociability and all. It was just the town of Mary. You say, "Oh, Bethany? Yeah, that's the town of Mary." She was very devoted to Jesus, was sitting at His feet just drinking in and learning, when Martha, her sister, said, "Lord, make her come and help me. It's not fair." And Jesus said, "She's chosen the better part, Martha. You're always so busy, wanting to make sure everything is set just right, and all, and everything is just so, but Mary has really chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her" ([Luke 10:40-42](#)). And, of course, she was the one that anointed the feet of Jesus with the costly perfumes. So the town of Mary--very special. I'm looking forward to meeting Mary. I'm certain that she's just a special kind of a person that you'll just like knowing. Her sister Martha was also a very outstanding person, but of a different temperament than was Mary.

(It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) ([Jhn 11:2](#))

So, John is identifying for us that it's Mary, because actually, in the New Testament there are probably four Mary's that are involved around the story of Jesus. Of course, his mother, and then Mary Magdalene, and then Mary, the sister of Lazarus, and then there was a Mary who was the wife of Cleopas. There at the cross there were: Mary, the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene and Mary, the wife of Cleopas. And so, you have at least four Mary's in the New Testament record. And so, John felt it necessary to identify that Mary.

Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick ([Jhn 11:3](#)).

It is interesting to me that they did not make any demands that Jesus heal him. All they did was inform Him, "The one you love is sick." And they knew that Jesus would respond, respond to the need because of that relationship they had with Him. And so, they didn't feel it was necessary to tell Him how to respond or to demand the response. Just to declare, "Lord, the one you love is sick."

So, 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 ([Jhn 11:4](#)).

Now, there was a purpose. God had allowed this sickness in order that God might demonstrate His power through Jesus Christ in the raising of Lazarus.

Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. And when he heard therefore that he was sick, he abode for two days still in the same place where he was ([Jhn 11:5-6](#)).

So John felt it was necessary to point out that Jesus really loved them. It wasn't a lack of concern, but there was a deliberate waiting of Jesus for two days. At this point, Jesus was down at the Jordan River, about twenty miles from Bethany. And in those days, you figured with travelling with a group that you make about ten miles a day. And that was just an average day's journey. So, just about every ten miles along wherever you were going you would come either to a village, or if there were no villages in that span, then they would have the inns, the enclosures where you could stay. And inasmuch as it's pretty barren between Bethany and Jericho, no villages at all, about halfway there is an inn. This is what was quite common in those times. If no villages, then the establishing of an inn, so you make your ten miles. Your goal is to get the ten miles to the end where you go into the courtyard.

And an inn isn't like a hotel or a motel, either one. All it is is a walled-in area with a little house where the innkeeper stays, and there is a well, usually, in the center of the courtyard. But you could just get next to the wall and be sheltered from the wind. It was just a place to spend the night, get water. They provided no food. Just a shelter was all that it was, not even a covered shelter.

And so, being at the Jordan River, He was a two-day journey from Bethany. So they sent the message to Jesus. It took two days for the messenger to get from Bethany to the Jordan River. And after He received the message, He stayed two more days at the Jordan River before He began His two-day journey back to Bethany. So, you have about six days involved here. Or, if the messenger, say, ran all the way in one day, the fact that He stayed an extra two days and then made the two-day journey, you've got between five and six days from the time that the message went out to Jesus and Jesus' arrival at Bethany. But we notice that it was a deliberate delay on the part of Jesus. And during this deliberate delay, Jesus knew exactly what was going on in Bethany. "So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed for two days at the same place there at the Jordan River."

After that he said to his disciples, Let us go into Judea again ([Jhn 11:7](#)).

That is, into the area of Jerusalem.

His disciples said unto him, Master, the last time you were there the Jews sought to stone thee ([Jhn 11:8](#));

You remember, it was when Jesus was there and they said, "Tell us plainly if You're the Messiah." And Jesus again asserted His relationship with the Father, and they took up stones to stone Him. So they said, "Hey, Lord, the last time you were there, they tried to stone You. What do You want to go back for?" So,

Jesus said, Are there not twelve hours in a day? ([Jhn 11:9](#))

That is, twelve hours of light. And He's talking about what we call, well, the daytime, twelve hours of light. So, just the daytime.

If any man walk in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbles, because there is no light in him ([Jhn 11:9-10](#)).

So, it's "I've got to do My work while it is yet day" is what He is basically saying.

These things he said: and after that he said unto them, Our friend Lazarus is sleeping; but if I go, I may awake him out of his sleep ([Jhn 11:11](#)).

Now, what happens to a child of God is different from what happens to a person who is not a child of God in what we call death. And because there is a vast difference, the Bible did not use the term [death](#) to signify the departing of a believer's soul from his body. They just called it sleep. You remember when Jesus went to heal Jarius' daughter, and when He got to the house, the people were all wailing because she had died. And Jesus said, "She's not dead, she's only sleeping." And they laughed Him to scorn, and so He put them out. Paul, in writing to the Thessalonians, said, "Now, concerning those that are asleep in Christ; I write to you that you sorrow not as those who have no hope" ([1 Thessalonians 4:13](#)). And so, it was a term that was used, and yet, not an accurate term,

because there are those who have taken the idea of sleep then and created a doctrine of soul sleep. Your soul is asleep until the resurrection according to the soul sleep doctrine. But the Bible does not teach that. As we pointed out this morning, the Bible teaches that to be absent from this body is to be present with the Lord. So, in order that we might distinguish, though, the difference between a believer and a non-believer, as far as death is concerned; to the believer the term sleep was often used. And Jesus used it here of Lazarus. He said, "He is sleeping." Now, His disciples did not understand Him, and they thought sleeping like we think of sleeping. So, they said, "Well, if he's sleeping he ought to be getting better."

Jesus was speaking of his death. So Jesus said unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent that ye may believe ([Jhn 11:13-15](#));

Now, as John said, these things that he recorded were recorded in order that they might believe. And so Jesus is now again calling upon His works as a witness to His deity. "Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in me, or else believe me for the very works' sake" ([John 14:11](#)). "The works that I do," He said, "they do testify of Me." Now, "I'm glad for your sakes I wasn't there..." Because had He been there, He would have healed him from his sickness. That would have been a glorious miracle, but He wanted even a more glorious miracle. He waited until Lazarus had died. In fact, He waited until he was buried. And they usually bury the person the same day, because they really didn't practice embalming in Israel to any great extent at all. And they would bury the person the same day that they died. And so, Jesus said, "I'm glad for your sakes that I wasn't there that you might believe when you see this miracle. You might really know and believe who I am." So, "Nevertheless, let us go unto him." Now Thomas probably didn't understand completely what was going on at this point and felt he had to say something, and usually when you say something not knowing really what to say, you say something stupid. Someone said, "It's better to keep your mouth shut and let people think that you're a fool than to open it and dispel all their doubts."

Thomas, which is called Didymus, said unto his fellow disciples, Let us go also, that we may die with him ([Jhn 11:16](#)).

Now, he probably...you remember they said, "Lord, why do you want to go back there? The last time you were there they tried to stone you." And he's probably saying, "Lord, it's fool-hardy for you to go back there. They're going to kill you." And so, he's saying, "Well, if He wants to go back, well, let's all go back and die with Him." In other words, "We're heading towards our death," in a sense.

When Jesus came, he found that he had been in the grave for four days already. Now Bethany was near to Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off ([Jhn 11:17-18](#)):

A furlong is about an eighth of a mile, so it's just about two miles from Jerusalem over to Bethany.

And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house ([Jhn 11:19-20](#)).

Now, Bethany is up near the top of the Mount of Olives on the eastern slope, and you can see from Bethany all the way down to the Dead Sea. And you can see the road coming from Jericho for miles, as it winds on up the hill towards Jerusalem. So, as you're looking out from Bethany, you can see them coming from a long distance. And so, they saw a company of people coming and they realized it must be Jesus and the disciples. And so, Martha left the people that had gathered to mourn and she came out on the path and met Jesus before He ever got to Bethany.

And then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died ([Jhn 11:21](#)).

Bitterness in her voice, no doubt, disappointment at least. "Lord, where were you? Why didn't you respond?" It was really sort of a rebuke of Jesus. "Lord, if you would have been here, my brother would not have died. Why didn't you come, Lord, when we called you? Don't you realize it's been six days?"

But I know, that even now, whatsoever you will ask of God, God will give it to you ([Jhn 11:22](#)).

Now there's a tremendous expression of faith, but I don't think that Martha was anticipating the resurrection of her brother. But yet, here is a very remarkable statement of faith, and maybe a hint, "Lord, you know, maybe--who knows? Whatsoever You ask of the Father, I know He'll give it to You." And it may be that she is suggesting at this point that He raise him from the dead. However, when they came to the tomb and He said, "Roll back the stone," they said, "Oh, he's been there for four days. He smells by now." But it could be that Martha somehow had that kind of faith, "Lord, I know that anything you ask the Father, He will give it to You."

And Jesus said unto her, Your brother is going to rise again. And Martha said unto him, I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day. And Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: and he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And he who lives and believes in me shall never die. Believest thou this? ([Jhn 11:23-26](#))

A very radical statement that Jesus would not dare to make unless He were the Son of God. This statement is so radical, no man could dare make this statement without immediately being classified as a lunatic, a madman. For someone to stand before you and say, "I'm the resurrection and the life. If you live and believe in me, you'll never die." The guy's got to be diluted, or he has to be the Son of God. And in this case, He was the Son of God. And then Jesus said, "Believest thou this?"

Jesus always demanded a "yes" or a "no." You could not be neutral. He said, "He who is not for Me is against me. You're not neutral. If you don't have a positive attitude towards Me, then you're against

Me." Now, when He said, "Do you believe this?" you can either answer "yes" or "no." "Yes, I believe that; no, I don't believe that." And you can't move to a middle position. There is none. I either believe it or I don't believe it. It's a radical statement that marks Him as the Son of God, or as a raving madman. And you believe it or not. If you believe it, then you have the hope of eternal life; if you don't believe it, you have no hope for eternal life. There is no other hope, there is no other way. And so Jesus challenged Martha on her faith, and she responded,

Yes, Lord: I believe that thou art the Messiah, the Son of God, which was to come into the world ([Jhn 11:27](#)).

Now, because of this statement of Jesus, we realize that He said in the previous chapter concerning, "My sheep hear My voice," verse 27, "and I know them and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish." Now, you see how inconsistent it would be to say that someone who had eternal life died. It's a total inconsistency of terms. "Oh, he has eternal life. Yes, he died yesterday." No, if you have eternal life, you can't die. And this is the record that God has given unto us life, eternal life. This life is in the Son, and he who has the Son has life. "I'm the resurrection and the life."

So then, what happens to the child of God that we say died? What has happened is that he has his spirit, which is the real me, has moved out of the tent, the temporary abode that God has made for my spirit, into the house, the building of God not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. This tent in which I am living is only a temporary measure for me. You never think of a tent as a permanent residence. It's always transient; we're moving on.

It's interesting that in the Holy Land today there are still the Bedouins, a nomadic people who live still in their tents, and they move their tents from place to place. They keep their sheep and their goats and all, and they'll let them sort of work out a pasture area and then they'll fold up their tents--the ladies will, the men don't know how to handle tents--and they will move to another place where the ladies will set the tents up again. They are nomadic people. Now, it is also interesting that the Bedouins are, some of them, beginning to settle in areas, and when they start to settle in an area, when you know that the Bedouins have decided this is where they're going to settle, they move from tents into little shacks that they make. They start to build a houses.

And so, God has a new body for me. It's a body that's designed for the heavenly environment. It is a body that is my eternal abode; it is a body that cannot and will not age. It is a body that cannot know pain or suffering. It is a body that can't be incapacitated by a virus or disease or whatever. It is a body that won't get tired, and won't have a bulge in the middle. The new body, the building of God not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Now I am living in this body that is designed for the environment of the earth. God has a new body for me designed for the environmental conditions of heaven. For me to come into the heavenly scenes, I have to have a metamorphosis, the change of a body. And we think of the little caterpillars, which go through a metamorphosis. Their body is designed for the ground. They have all those little legs, and they go crawling through the fields. And as they get to the highways, they crawl across the highways. And you get into some places, there are so many caterpillars and all going across the highway, it's dangerous to drive, it gets slick. And as they are crossing those highways, the black asphalt during the fall of the year, I can imagine the little caterpillar thinking to himself, "Oh, it's rough having all these hot dirty feet, coming out of the field to the highway. Oh, I wish I could fly. This is hot! If I could only fly." But the poor little caterpillar, his body is not designed to fly. It's designed only to crawl on the ground. The aerodynamic design isn't there; it's designed for the environment of just crawling on the ground, not for the environment of flying through the air.

But one day that little caterpillar crawls up the wall of your house, exudes a little glue, sticks himself under your windowsill and spins a chrysalis around himself. And if you take that chrysalis and you pop it, you'll find just juices come shooting out. But, if you let that chrysalis go, after a period of time you'll see the thing begin to wiggle a lit bit. And you want to keep watching it, because it'll begin to wiggle more and more, and then get sort of convulsive kind of jerks. Then that chrysalis will pop open and two beautiful golden black wings will emerge, and the tiger-swallow tail butterfly will sit perched on the chrysalis for just a moment, as the wings just seem to expand and then it starts flying around the yard. Pretty soon it flies over the fence, across the fields, away. No more hot dirty feet. It has had a metamorphosis. It has now a new body, designed for a new environment. It can now exist where it used to not be able to exist. Had the little caterpillar tried to fly, he had had a real problem. If he had climbed up on a tree and out on a twig and jumped and wiggled himself as fast as he can, his body isn't designed for flying. It's only going to plop on the ground. But once it is gone through the metamorphosis, now flight is very natural.

We, too, the Bible says, are to be changed. We, too, will experience a metamorphosis. I look around and I see the world in which we live. I see the corruption. I see the hurt, the pain. I see the child abuse. I see the threat of the holocaust. And I say, "God, I'm so tired of hot dirty feet. I wish I could fly." And one day there's going to be a metamorphosis, for we shall be changed in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye. For this corruption must put on incorruption, this mortal must put on immortality. I'm going to get a new body; I'm not going to die. Oh, people may say, "Oh, Chuck Smith died." No, not so. I've just moved into the new body, the building of God not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. So, the metamorphosis, I have the new body now designed to exist in a whole new environment. And I dwell now, as David said, in the house of the Lord forever.

So, "He who lives and believes in me," Jesus said, "shall never die. They shall not perish. I have given to them eternal life, eternal LIFE." And it is impossible that one with eternal could die, else it isn't eternal life. All it is is a change for the better, to be sure. From the tent to the house. From the temporary to the permanent. From the restricted to the unrestricted. It'll be fascinating indeed for us to discover what that new life and body will be like with Jesus.

I have a brother who was a great tinker, who went to be with the Lord. I'm anxious to see him, because I'm sure he's got a lot of things figured out that other people haven't yet. He was one who pressed his body to its limits. He had no fears, and he was always pushing his body to its limits. And I'm just anxious to see what he can do in that new body of his. "The building of God not made with hands eternal in the heavens." So, the glorious hope.

"Do you believe this?" Jesus said. Martha said, "Yes, Lord: I believe."

And when she had said this, she went ahead, and she called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master has come, and he's asked for you. So as soon as Mary heard that, she arose quickly, and came to Jesus. Jesus was still at that place outside of the village, where Martha had met him. And the Jews which were with her in the house, who were comforting her, when they saw Mary rise up hastily and going out, they followed her, saying, Oh, she's probably going to weep at the tomb. Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hast been here, my brother would not have died ([Jhn 11:28-32](#)).

So, He's getting the accusation now from the other sister. You see, Martha said the same thing, "Lord, where were You? Why didn't You respond? If You'd only have been here, things would have been different." And He's getting it again now from Mary.

And when Jesus therefore saw her weeping ([Jhn 11:33](#)),

He realized the grief, the pain she had gone through, and He loved her, He loved Martha, and He saw the pain. The pain of human limitations.

Jesus groaned in his own spirit, and was troubled ([Jhn 11:33](#)),

It bothered Him to see the pain of humanity.

And he said, Where have you laid him? They said, Come and see. Jesus wept ([Jhn 11:34-35](#)).

Now, there are those who suppose that Jesus wept, they say, because His friend Lazarus was dead. That's ridiculous. Why would He weep because Lazarus was dead? He knew that He was going to raise him from the dead in a few minutes. Don't you remember that Jesus said to His disciples down there at the Jordan River, "I must go to wake him out of his sleep"? And He said, "This is happened that the Son of God may be glorified, and I go that I may awake him out of his sleep." And then He

said, "He's dead. I'm going to raise him from the dead." So, those commentators who say that Jesus was weeping because His friend was dead haven't really read the whole text. He was weeping when He saw the pain and the sorrow of humanity, when He saw the pain that His friends Mary and Martha were experiencing as a result of death. And He wept for their grief. Jesus is moved by our infirmities; we have such a great High Priest, who is touched by our weaknesses. He sees us in our frailties. He sees us in our griefs. And He's touched by our feelings of grief and sorrow, by our weaknesses. He's just a loving and compassionate Lord, and One who is moved by our own sorrow and grief. And so, He wept for them.

It is interesting that in death, in reality we usually weep not for the person who is gone, but for those that are left. When my father and brother were killed, I didn't weep for them, I wept for me. I lost the greatest supporter any man could ever have when my dad was killed. And I'd just lost a fabulous brother when they were killed together. I experienced a tremendous loss, and I wept for me. A little upset that they were going to get there so far ahead of me and get a head start, envious for them. But I've lost so much loving support, a companion with my brother. We always had a great time together. We purchased boats together, skied together, and did everything together, and we had a great time together; though he was several years younger than me, we just had a neat bond between us. And I knew I was going to miss them, I knew I was going to miss all their input. And I wept for me. It was a selfish weeping. "That dirty guy...he's going on and leaving me here!" I was weeping, though, for me.

Jesus wept not for Lazarus. You don't weep for the dead if they are in the Lord. If they're not in the Lord, then that's a different thing. "Them we sorrow as those who have no hope."

Then said the Jews, Oh, look how he loved him! ([Jhn 11:36](#))

They misunderstood completely His weeping too.

And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind ([Jhn 11:37](#)),

Referring to the last notable miracle there in Jerusalem,

Could not this man, who opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man would not have died? And Jesus again just groaning in himself came to the grave. It was a cave, and there was a stone there upon it. And Jesus said, Take away the stone ([Jhn 11:37-39](#)).

Now Martha, you remember, said, "Lord, I know that anything you ask God, He would do." And it was Martha who said,

Oh, Lord, by this time he stinks: he's been dead for four days. Jesus said unto her, Didn't I tell you, that, if you would believe, you would see the glory of God? So they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank

you that you have heard me. And I know that you always hear me: but because of the people which stand by I'm saying it, that they may believe that you have sent me ([Jhn 11:39-42](#)).

"Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in Me....the works that I do I do not of Myself, but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works. Believe Me, or else believe for the works' sake," Jesus said. Now He's giving another great proof that the Father is in Him and He is in the Father, that He is one with the Father. He's offering now another great proof. "And so, I'm only saying this, Father, not for My sake, but for the sake of the people that are here; that they may believe that You have sent Me."

And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth ([Jhn 11:43](#)).

One commentator said that had He just called "Come forth," the whole graveyard would have been resurrected. So He said, "Lazarus, come forth!"

And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes; and his face was bound with a napkin. Jesus said unto them, Loose him, and let him go. Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. But some of them went their way to the Pharisees, and told them what Jesus had done. And so, there gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and they said, What are we going to do? for this man is doing many miracles. And if we let him alone, all of the people will believe on him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and our nation ([Jhn 11:44-48](#)).

Now, John gives us here a little bit of the insight to the conspiracy to put Jesus to death. It was that these religious leaders were fearing their position. You know, "We won't be the big shots any more. We'll loose our jobs. And we'll loose our position. What are we going to do? We've got to do something. If we don't, our jobs are threatened."

And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, You know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, that the whole nation perish not ([Jhn 11:49-50](#)).

Now, John is saying he didn't understand what he was saying fully. He was the high priest, and because of that position, he was now prophesying that one man should die for the nation--a very interesting prophecy. The high priest later offered a prophecy when Jesus was hanging on the cross. He said, "Others He saved, Himself He cannot save." Very true! If He saved himself, He couldn't save others...you can't do both in His position. Had Jesus come down off the cross, He could not save us. So he said, "Others He saved, Himself He cannot save." Very interesting statement, and yet, very true because he was a high priest speaking prophetically. Here now, speaking prophetically as the high priest, "Don't you realize it's necessary that one man die that the whole nation perish not?" Die for the people in order that the whole nation perish not.

And so, John points out that he was not really saying this of himself:

but being the high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation; And not for the nation only, but that also that he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. Then from that day forth they took council together to put him to death. Therefore Jesus walked no more openly among the Jews; but went from there unto the country near to the wilderness, unto a city called Ephraim, and there he stayed with his disciples ([Jhn 11:51-54](#)).

So Jesus went back down towards the Jordan River, did not stay around Jerusalem after the raising of Lazarus.

And the Jews' Passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves ([Jhn 11:55](#)).

Now, it was necessary to go through the purification rites in order to participate in the Passover. And you would go up to Jerusalem and you'd take a vow before the Lord and you'd go through these purification rites.

You remember when Paul returned to Jerusalem, there was a feast coming that Paul was desiring to get to Jerusalem for this feast. And so, when he arrived, because he wanted to participate in the Jewish feast, he was going through the purification rites. And that's when someone from Asia spotted him and said, "Hey, isn't that the guy that's been preaching to the Gentiles everywhere?" And they raised a big ruckus over Paul when they saw him in the temple going through purification rites. And so, many of the Jews would go early in order that they might go through these purification rites, in order that they might participate then in the feast.

And so,

They sought for Jesus, and they were talking among themselves, as they were standing in the temple, [and they said,] Do you think he's going to come to the feast? Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he was, they should let them know, that they might arrest him ([Jhn 11:56-57](#)).

Chapter 12

Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he had raised from the dead. They made him a supper; and Martha served [typical of Martha]: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very expensive, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the aroma of the ointment ([Jhn 12:1-3](#)).

Typical of Mary, worshipping; Martha, working...it takes all types. God has built into our characters these very qualities. Martha, busy serving; Mary, busy worshipping.

Then said one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray him, Why didn't they sell this perfume for three hundred pence, and given the money to the poor? ([Jhn 12:4-5](#))

Actually, it was very expensive. A pence was a day's wage for a laboring man. So you've got almost a year's wages involved here that this perfume could have been sold for.

This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and he held the purse, and he was stealing out of the money in the purse ([Jhn 12:6](#)).

Now, it's unfortunate that in the betrayal of this whole scene in "Jesus Christ, Superstar" they try to make Jesus a very lavish kind of a person, living in opulence, no care for the poor. And Judas turns out the hero; he's the social reformer and the man who's concerned for the poor and all. And they don't really do justice to the text, and that, you have to assume, is deliberate. Because it's right there. Judas didn't really care for the poor, as he would be made out that marvelous man with social concern. He was a thief. He was holding the purse and had been stealing the money out of the purse. That's the only reason he wanted the perfume sold and the money put in the purse. He was not that kind of a person that they tried to portray him.

Then said Jesus, Get off her case: against the day of my burying has she kept this. For the poor always you will have with you; but you will not always have me ([Jhn 12:7-8](#)).

So He made Judas leave her alone.

Many of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not only for Jesus' sake, but they wanted to see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead. But the chief priests ([Jhn 12:9-10](#))

And notice how evil men they are.

they consulted how that they might put Lazarus to death also; because by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus ([Jhn 12:10-11](#)).

So they're going to try and destroy the evidence by killing Lazarus.

The next day many people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches off the palm trees, and they went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that comes in the name of the Lord ([Jhn 12:12-13](#)).

And so, knowing that Jesus was going to be coming from Bethany, having to come down from the Mount of Olives, they went over to the path that comes from Bethany, down the Mount of Olives, into the Kidron valley to Jerusalem. And as Jesus was coming, they greeted Him, waving the palm

branches. And so, we have Palm Sunday, the Sunday before the crucifixion. And they were crying the 118th Psalm, "Hosanna!" "Save now" is what the word means in Hebrew. "Blessed is the King of Israel that comes in the name of the Lord!"

Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it was written, Fear not, daughter of Zion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt. These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him ([Jhn 12:14-16](#)).

Now, John is very honest and very frank here. He said, "You know, we didn't think about it until after He was glorified, and then we thought, 'Oh, wow, remember how we waved the palm branches and He was riding on a donkey? Isn't that what Zachariah said? "Rejoice greatly, O daughters of Jerusalem, behold thy King cometh unto thee, but he is lowly, he is sitting on a donkey, the foal of an ass." Wow!"

In other words, he is saying, "We weren't trying to deliberately set the stage. We didn't say, 'Now what does the Bible say is supposed to have next? Let's work it out this way.'" It wasn't a deliberate conspiracy to set the stage. It was something they just did, and afterwards they realized, "Wow! We were fulfilling prophecy." And the realization came, but not until after Jesus was glorified. So it wasn't a deliberately staged event as far as the disciples were concerned.

And the people therefore that were with him when he called Lazarus out of the grave, and raised him from the dead, they bare record ([Jhn 12:17](#)).

They were telling everybody about it.

For this cause the people also met him, for that they had heard that he had done a great miracle ([Jhn 12:18](#)).

I mean, it had really been buzzed, this miracle of the raising of Lazarus from the dead. And so everybody was excited.

The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Hey, do you realize how we're not prevailing? the whole world is going after him. There were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast ([Jhn 12:19-20](#)):

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1. of Bethany--at the east side of Mount Olivet.

the town of Mary and her sister Martha--thus distinguishing it from the other Bethany, "beyond Jordan." (See on JF & B for [Joh 1:28](#); [Jhn 10:40](#)).

2. It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, &c.--This, though not recorded by our Evangelist till [Jhn 12:3](#), was so well known in the teaching of all the churches, according to our Lord's prediction ([Mat 26:13](#)), that it is here alluded to by anticipation, as the most natural way of identifying her; and she is first named, though the younger, as the more distinguished of the two. She "anointed THE LORD," says the Evangelist--led doubtless to the use of this term here, as he was about to exhibit Him illustriously as the *Lord of Life*.

3-5. his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick--a most womanly appeal, yet how reverential, to the known affection of her Lord for the patient. (See [Jhn 11:5, 11](#)). "Those whom Christ loves are no more exempt than others from their share of earthly trouble and anguish: rather are they bound over to it more surely" [TRENCH].

4. When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death--to *result* in death.

but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby--that is, by this glory of God. (See *Greek*.) Remarkable language this, which from creature lips would have been intolerable. It means that the glory of GOD manifested in the resurrection of dead Lazarus would be shown to be the glory, *personally* and immediately, of THE SON.

5. Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus--what a picture!--one that in every age has attracted the admiration of the whole Christian Church. No wonder that those miserable skeptics who have carped at the ethical system of the Gospel, as not embracing private friendships in the list of its virtues, have been referred to the Saviour's peculiar regard for this family as a triumphant refutation, if such were needed.

6. When he heard he was sick, he abode two days still. . . where he was--at least twenty-five miles off. Beyond all doubt this was just to let things come to their worst, in order to display His glory. But how trying, meantime, to the faith of his friends, and how unlike the way in which love to a dying friend usually shows itself, on which it is plain that Mary reckoned. But the ways of *divine* are not as the ways of *human* love. Often they are the reverse. When His people are sick, in body or spirit; when their case is waxing more and more desperate every day; when all hope of recovery is about to expire--just then and therefore it is that "*He abides two days still in the same place where He is.*" Can they still hope against hope? Often they do not; but "this is their infirmity." For it is His chosen style of acting. We have been well taught it, and should not *now* have the lesson to learn. From the days of Moses was it given sublimely forth as the character of His grandest interpositions, that "the Lord will

judge His people and repent Himself for His servants"--when He seeth that their power is gone (Deu 32:36).

7-10. Let us go into Judea again--He was now in Perea, "beyond Jordan."

8. His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought, &c.--literally, "were (just) now seeking" "to stone thee" (Jhn 10:31).

goest thou thither again?--to certain death, as Jhn 11:16 shows they thought.

9. Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day?--(See on JF & B for Joh 9:4). Our Lord's day had now reached its eleventh hour, and having till now "walked in the day," He would not mistime the remaining and more critical part of His work, which would be as fatal, He says, as omitting it altogether; for "if a man (so He speaks, putting Himself under the same great law of duty as all other men--if a man) walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him."

11-16. Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may wake him out of sleep--Illustrious title! "Our friend Lazarus." To Abraham only is it accorded in the Old Testament, and not till after his death, (2Ch 20:7 Isa 41:8), to which our attention is called in the New Testament (Jam 2:23). When Jesus came in the flesh, His forerunner applied this name, in a certain sense, to himself (Jhn 3:29); and into the same fellowship the Lord's chosen disciples are declared to have come (Jhn 15:13-15). "The phrase here employed, "our friend Lazarus," means more than "he whom Thou lovest" in Jhn 11:3, for it implies that Christ's affection was reciprocated by Lazarus" [LAMPE]. Our Lord had been told only that Lazarus was "sick." But the change which his two days' delay had produced is here tenderly alluded to. Doubtless, His spirit was all the while with His dying, and now dead "friend." The symbol of "sleep" for death is common to all languages, and familiar to us in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, however, a higher meaning is put into it, in relation to believers in Jesus (see on JF & B for 1Th 4:14), a sense hinted at, and clearly, in Psa 17:15 [LUTHARDT]; and the "awaking out of sleep" acquires a corresponding sense far transcending bare resuscitation.

12. if he sleep, he shall do well--literally, "be preserved"; that is, recover. "Why then go to Judea?"

14. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead--Says BENGEL beautifully, "Sleep is the death of the saints, in the language of heaven; but this language the disciples here understood not; incomparable is the generosity of the divine manner of discoursing, but such is the slowness of men's apprehension that Scripture often has to descend to the more miserable style of human discourse; compare Mat 16:11."

15. I am glad for your sakes I was not there--This certainly implies that if He had been present, Lazarus would not have died; not because He could not have resisted the importunities of the sisters, but because, in presence of the personal Life, death could not have reached His friend [LUTHARDT]. "It is beautifully congruous to the divine decorum that in presence of the Prince of Life no one is ever said to have died" [BENGEL].

that ye may believe--This is added to explain His "gladness" at not having been present. His friend's death, as such, could not have been to Him "joyous"; the sequel shows it was "grievous"; but *for them* it was safe ([Phl 3:1](#)).

16. Thomas,. . . called Didymus--or "the twin."

Let us also go, that we may die with him--lovely spirit, though tinged with some sadness, such as reappears at [Jhn 14:5](#), showing the tendency of this disciple to take the *dark* view of things. On a memorable occasion this tendency opened the door to downright, though but momentary, unbelief ([Jhn 20:25](#)). Here, however, though alleged by many interpreters there is nothing of the sort. He perceives clearly how this journey to Judea will end, as respects his Master, and not only sees in it peril to themselves, as they all did, but feels as if he could not and cared not to survive his Master's sacrifice to the fury of His enemies. It was that kind of affection which, living only in the light of its Object, cannot contemplate, or has no heart for life, without it.

17-19. when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days--If he died on the day the tidings came of his illness--and was, according to the Jewish custom, buried the same day (see JAHN'S [Archaeology](#), and [Jhn 11:39](#) [Act 5:5, 6, 10](#)) --and if Jesus, after two days' further stay in Perea, set out on the day following for Bethany, some ten hours' journey, that would make out the four days; the first and last being incomplete [MEYER].

18. Bethany was nigh Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs--rather less than two miles; mentioned to explain the visits of sympathy noticed in the following words, which the proximity of the two places facilitated.

19. many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary to comfort them--Thus were provided, in a most natural way, so many witnesses of the glorious miracle that was to follow, as to put the fact beyond possible question.

20-22. Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him--true to the *energy* and *activity* of her character, as seen in [Luk 10:38-42](#). (See on JF & B for [Lu 10:38-42](#)).

but Mary sat. . . in the house--equally true to her *placid* character. These undesigned touches not only charmingly illustrate the minute *historic fidelity* of both narratives, but their *inner harmony*.

21. Then said Martha. . . Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died--As Mary afterwards said the same thing ([Jhn 11:32](#)), it is plain they had made this very natural remark to each other, perhaps many times during these four sad days, and not without having their confidence in His love at times overclouded. Such trials of faith, however, are not peculiar to them.

22. But I know that even now, &c.--Energetic characters are usually sanguine, the rainbow of hope peering through the drenching cloud.

whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee--that is "even to the restoration of my dead brother to life," for that plainly is her meaning, as the sequel shows.

23-27. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again--purposely expressing Himself in general terms, to draw her out.

24. Martha said, . . . I know that he shall rise again. . . at the last day--"But are we never to see him in life till then?"

25. Jesus said, I am the resurrection and the life--"*The whole power to restore, impart, and maintain* life, resides in Me." (See on JF & B for [Joh 1:4](#); JF & B for [Joh 5:21](#)). What higher claim to supreme divinity than this grand saying can be conceived?

he that believeth in me, though. . . dead. . . shall he live--that is, The believer's death shall be swallowed up in life, and his life shall never sink into death. As death comes by sin, it is His to dissolve it; and as life flows through His righteousness, it is His to communicate and eternally maintain it ([Rom 5:21](#)). The temporary separation of soul and body is here regarded as not even interrupting, much less impairing, the new and everlasting life imparted by Jesus to His believing people.

Believest thou this?--Canst thou take this in?

27. Yea, . . . I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, &c.--that is, And having [such](#) faith in Thee, I can believe all which that comprehends. While she had a glimmering perception that Resurrection, in every sense of the word, belonged to the Messianic office and Sonship of Jesus, she means, by this way of expressing herself, to cover much that she felt her ignorance of--as no doubt belonging to Him.

28-32. The Master is come and calleth for thee--The narrative does not give us this interesting detail, but Martha's words do.

29. As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly--affection for her Lord, assurance of His sympathy, and His hope of interposition, putting a spring into her distressed spirit.

31. The Jews. . . followed her. . . to the grave--Thus [casually](#) were provided witnesses of the glorious miracle that followed, [not prejudiced](#), certainly, [in favor](#) of Him who wrought it.

to weep there--according to Jewish practice, for some days after burial.

fell at his feet--more impassioned than her sister, though her words were fewer. (See on JF & B for [Joh 11:21](#)).

33-38. When Jesus. . . saw her weeping, and the Jews. . . weeping. . . he groaned in the spirit--the tears of Mary and her friends acting sympathetically upon Jesus, and drawing forth His emotions. What a vivid and beautiful outcoming of His "real" humanity! The word here rendered "groaned" does not mean "sighed" or "grieved," but rather "powerfully checked his emotion"--made a visible effort to restrain those tears which were ready to gush from His eyes.

and was troubled--rather, "troubled himself" (*Margin*); referring probably to this visible difficulty of repressing His emotions.

34. Where have ye laid him?. . . Lord, come and see--Perhaps it was to retain composure enough to ask this question, and on receiving the answer to proceed with them to the spot, that He checked Himself.

35. Jesus wept--This beautifully conveys the sublime brevity of the two original words; else "**shed tears**" might have better conveyed the difference between the word here used and that twice employed in [Jhn 11:33](#), and there properly rendered "weeping," denoting the loud wail for the dead, while that of Jesus consisted of **silent tears**. Is it for nothing that the Evangelist, some **sixty years** after it occurred, holds up to all ages with such touching brevity the sublime spectacle of **the Son of God in tears**? What a seal of His perfect oneness with us in the most redeeming feature of our stricken humanity! But was there nothing in those tears beyond sorrow for human suffering and death? Could these **effects** move Him without suggesting the **cause**? Who can doubt that in His ear every feature of the scene proclaimed that stern law of the Kingdom, "**The wages of sin is death**" ([Rom 6:23](#)), and that this element in His visible emotion underlay all the rest?

36. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!--We thank you, O ye visitors from Jerusalem, for this spontaneous testimony to the **human** tenderness of the Son of God.

37. And--rather, "But."

some . . . said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that this man should not have died?--The former exclamation came from the better-feeling portion of the spectators; this betokens a measure of suspicion. It hardly goes the length of attesting the miracle on the blind man; but "if (as everybody says) He did that, why could He not also have kept Lazarus alive?" As to the restoration of the dead man to life, they never so much as thought of it. But **this disposition to dictate to divine power, and almost to peril our confidence in it upon its doing our bidding, is not confined to men of no faith.**

38. Jesus again groaning in himself--that is, as at [Jhn 11:33](#), checked or repressed His rising feelings, in the former instance, of sorrow, here of righteous indignation at their unreasonable unbelief; (compare [Mar 3:5](#)) [WEBSTER and WILKINSON]. But here, too, struggling emotion was deeper, now that His eye was about to rest on the spot where lay, in the still horrors of death, His "friend."

a cave--the cavity, natural or artificial, of a rock. This, with the number of condoling visitors from Jerusalem, and the costly ointment with which Mary afterwards anointed Jesus at Bethany, all go to show that the family was in good circumstances.

39-44. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone--spoken to the attendants of Martha and Mary; for it was a work of no little labor [GROTIUS]. According to the Talmudists, it was forbidden to open a grave after the stone was placed upon it. Besides other dangers, they were apprehensive of legal impurity by contact with the dead. Hence they avoided coming nearer a grave than four cubits [MAIMONIDES in LAMPE]. But He who touched the leper, and the bier of the widow of Nain's son, rises here also above these Judaic memorials of evils, every one of which He had come to roll away. **Observe here what our Lord did Himself, and what He made others do.** As Elijah himself repaired the altar on Carmel, arranged the wood, cut the victim, and placed the pieces on the fuel, but made the by-standers fill the surrounding trench with water, that no suspicion might arise of fire

having been secretly applied to the pile ([1Ki 18:30-35](#)); so our Lord would let the most skeptical see that, without laying a hand on the stone that covered His friend, He could recall him to life. But what could be done by human hand He orders to be done, reserving only to Himself what transcended the ability of all creatures.

Martha, the sister of . . . the dead--and as such the proper guardian of the precious remains; the relationship being [here](#) mentioned to account for her venturing gently to remonstrate against their exposure, in a state of decomposition, to eyes that had loved him so tenderly in life.

Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he hath been dead four days--(See on JF & B for [Joh 11:17](#)). It is wrong to suppose from this (as LAMPE and others do) that, like the by-standers, she had not thought of his restoration to life. But the glimmerings of hope which she cherished from the first ([Jhn 11:22](#)), and which had been brightened by what Jesus said to her ([Jhn 11:23-27](#)), had suffered a momentary eclipse on the proposal to expose the now sightless corpse. *To such fluctuations all real faith is subject in dark hours.* (See, for example, the case of Job).

40. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?--He had not said those very words, but this was the scope of all that He had uttered to her about His life-giving power ([Jhn 11:23, 25, 26](#)); a gentle yet emphatic and most instructive rebuke: "Why doth the restoration of life, even to a decomposing corpse, seem hopeless in the presence of the Resurrection and the Life? Hast thou yet to learn that 'if thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth?'" ([Mar 9:23](#)).

41. Jesus lifted up his eyes--an expression marking His calm solemnity. (Compare [Jhn 17:1](#)).

Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me--rather, "heardest Me," referring to a specific prayer offered by Him, probably on intelligence of the case reaching Him ([Jhn 11:3, 4](#)); for His living and loving oneness with the Father was maintained and manifested in the flesh, not merely by the spontaneous and uninterrupted outgoing of Each to Each in spirit, but by specific actings of faith and exercises of prayer about each successive case as it emerged. He prayed (says LUTHARDT well) not for what He wanted, but for the manifestation of what He had; and having the bright consciousness of the answer in the felt liberty to ask it, and the assurance that it was at hand, He gives thanks for this with a grand simplicity before performing the act.

42. And--rather, "Yet."

I knew that thou hearest me always, but because of the people that stand by I said it, that they might believe that thou hast sent me--Instead of praying now, He simply gives thanks for answer to prayer offered ere He left Perea, and adds that His doing even this, in the audience of the people, was not from any doubt of the prevalency of His prayers in any case, but to show the people that *He did nothing without His Father, but all by direct communication with Him.*

43, 44. and when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice--On one other occasion only did He this--on the [cross](#). His last utterance was a "loud cry" ([Mat 27:50](#)). "He shall not cry," said the prophet, nor, in His ministry, did He. What a sublime contrast is this "loud cry" to the magical

"whisperings" and "mutterings" of which we read in [Isa 8:19](#) [29:4](#) (as GROTIUS remarks)! It is second only to the grandeur of that voice which shall raise all the dead ([Jhn 5:28, 29](#) [1Th 4:16](#)).

44. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him and let him go--Jesus will no more do this Himself than roll away the stone. The one was the necessary [preparation](#) for resurrection, the other the necessary [sequel](#) to it. THE LIFE-GIVING ACT ALONE HE RESERVES TO HIMSELF. So [in the quickening of the dead to spiritual life, human instrumentality is employed first to prepare the way, and then to turn it to account.](#)

45, 46. many. . . which. . . had seen. . . believed. . . But some. . . went. . . to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done--the two classes which continually reappear in the Gospel history; nor is there ever any great work of God which does not produce both. "It is remarkable that on each of the three occasions on which our Lord raised the dead, a large number of persons was assembled. In two instances, the resurrection of the widow's son and of Lazarus, these were all witnesses of the miracle; in the third (of Jairus' daughter) they were necessarily cognizant of it. Yet this important circumstance is in each case only incidentally noticed by the historians, not put forward or appealed to as a proof of their veracity. In regard to this miracle, we observe a greater degree of preparation, both in the provident arrangement of events, and in our Lord's actions and words than in any other. The preceding miracle (cure of the man born blind) is distinguished from all others by the open and formal investigation of its facts. And both these miracles, the most public and best attested of all, are related by John, who wrote long after the other Evangelists" [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

47-54. What do we? for this man doeth many miracles--"While we trifle, 'this man,' by His 'many miracles,' will carry all before Him; the popular enthusiasm will bring on a revolution, which will precipitate the Romans upon us, and our all will go down in one common ruin." What a testimony to the reality of our Lord's miracles, and their resistless effect, from His bitterest enemies!

51. Caiaphas. . . prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation--He meant nothing more than that the way to prevent the apprehended ruin of the nation was to make a sacrifice of the Disturber of their peace. But in giving utterance to this suggestion of political expediency, he was so guided as to give forth a divine prediction of deep significance; and God so ordered it that it should come from the lips of the high priest for that memorable year, the recognized head of God's visible people, whose ancient office, symbolized by the Urim and Thummim, was to decide in the last resort, all vital questions as the oracle of the divine will.

52. and not for that nation only, &c.--These are the Evangelist's words, not Caiaphas'.

53. they took council together to put him to death--Caiaphas but expressed what the party was secretly wishing, but afraid to propose.

Jesus. . . walked no more openly among the Jews--How could He, unless He had wished to die before His time?

near to the wilderness--of Judea.

a city called Ephraim--between Jerusalem and Jericho.

55-57. passover. . . at hand. . . many went. . . up. . . before the passover, to purify themselves--from any legal uncleanness which would have disqualified them from keeping the feast. This is mentioned to introduce the graphic statement which follows.

56. sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple--giving forth the various conjectures and speculations about the probability of His coming to the feast.

that he will not come--The form of this question implies the opinion that He *would* come.

57. chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment that if any knew where he were, he should show it, that they might take him--This is mentioned to account for the conjectures whether He would come, in spite of this determination to seize Him.