

As in the previous chapters, this chapter continues the theme of a feast of Israel that Jesus takes and uses as an opportunity to reveal more about who he is and what he has come to do. The previous sections occurred in the backdrop of:

- The Sabbath
- The Passover
- The Feast of Tabernacles

This section transitions into the feast of Dedication, otherwise known as Hanukkah. This is a memorial of the successful revolt against Syria lead by Judas Maccabeus. After Antiochus Epiphanes came into the temple and profaned the altar by sacrificing a pig to Jupiter, he then attempted to fully Hellenize the Jews, which prompted the rebellion in 165BC. This was successful and the temple was rededicated under the Maccabees and became a point of national pride for Israel. Though Judas Maccabeus wasn't of the line of David, he became king and his family was on the throne until the rise of the Herods. Even Herod married into the Maccabean family to be able to claim some legitimacy with the people. All the future revolutionaries and Messianic expectations looked back to this time as a model for what the Messiah would accomplish.

This is a fitting setting for Jesus' discourse in chapter 10, as the celebration of Hanukkah also recalled the purification of the Temple leadership, and a common text during that recollection was Ezekiel 34 and the corrupt shepherds, with the both the Lord and David presented as King and Shepherd over Israel. Having this text in the backdrop of our study will help to see where Jesus sees himself, where he sees his followers, and where he sees the Pharisees fitting into this story:

***“The word of the Lord came to me: “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy, and say to them, even to the shepherds, Thus says the Lord God: Ah, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but you do not feed the sheep. The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them. So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd, and they became food for all the wild beasts. My sheep were scattered; they wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. My sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth, with none to search or seek for them. “Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: As I live, declares the Lord God, surely because my sheep have become a prey, and my sheep have become food for all the wild beasts, since there was no shepherd, and because my shepherds have not searched for my sheep, but the shepherds have fed themselves, and have not fed my sheep, therefore, you***

**shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: Thus says the Lord God, Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will require my sheep at their hand and put a stop to their feeding the sheep. No longer shall the shepherds feed themselves. I will rescue my sheep from their mouths, that they may not be food for them. “For thus says the Lord God: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord God. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice. “As for you, my flock, thus says the Lord God: Behold, I judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and male goats. Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture, that you must tread down with your feet the rest of your pasture; and to drink of clear water, that you must muddy the rest of the water with your feet? And must my sheep eat what you have trodden with your feet, and drink what you have muddied with your feet? “Therefore, thus says the Lord God to them: Behold, I, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because you push with side and shoulder, and thrust at all the weak with your horns, till you have scattered them abroad, I will rescue my flock; they shall no longer be a prey. And I will judge between sheep and sheep. And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am the Lord; I have spoken. “I will make with them a covenant of peace and banish wild beasts from the land, so that they may dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places all around my hill a blessing, and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing. And the trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield its increase, and they shall be secure in their land. And they shall know that I am the Lord, when I break the bars of their yoke, and deliver them from the hand of those who enslaved them. They shall no more be a prey to the nations, nor shall the beasts of the land devour them. They shall dwell securely, and none shall make them afraid. And I will provide for them renowned plantations so that they shall no more be consumed with hunger in the land, and no longer suffer the reproach of the nations. And they shall know that I am the Lord their God with them, and that**

***they, the house of Israel, are my people, declares the Lord God. And you are my sheep, human sheep of my pasture, and I am your God, declares the Lord God.’” (Ezekiel 34:1–31, ESV)***

### **v.1-6**

***“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.***

Jesus, presumably speaking to the Pharisees, speaks in a parable. This parable dovetails nicely with the previous chapter, with the blind man as the sheep who does not follow the voice of the strangers, but recognizes and follows the voice of his master. However, given the setting of the feast of Dedication, it probably took place a few months later than the healing of the blind man.

- Thieves don't enter in through the door. The false prophets did not follow the way of the LORD in Christ, but sought a different way, thereby leading the people astray.
- The Shepherd enters in through the door and the gatekeeper lets him in. It is the LORD who is the shepherd of Israel in the OT (Psa 23; Psalm 80; Isa 40:11), and alternately it is the Son of David who serves this role (Eze. 34:23; Zech. 13:7). The Messianic king is the Shepherd of Israel on behalf of Israel. He leads them in the way they should go.
- The sheep know the shepherds voice, he leads them, and they follow. Those who are children of God, who are the sheep of God, they hear and recognize the voice of their Lord and they follow.
- The sheep do not follow strangers but run away from them because they do not know their voice. Likewise, they can recognize the false prophet and flee from him.

**What can you observe about the relationship between the sheep and the shepherd from verses 3-6 and 11-15? How do these things illustrate the relationship between Christ and his people?**

### **v.7-21**

***So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the***

**sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.” There was again a division among the Jews because of these words. Many of them said, “He has a demon, and is insane; why listen to him?” Others said, “These are not the words of one who is oppressed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”**

Jesus explains his parable to them.

- Jesus is the door
  - All who came before him didn't enter in through him, and are therefore thieves and robbers. The false prophets in the OT, as well as the false teachers in Jesus day - those promising a different way of salvation, or a fleshly deliverance from Rome - they were not leading through the way of the Messiah, but seeking a different way. Jesus implicitly connects the Pharisees to the thieves and robbers.
  - The sheep do not listen to them.
- Jesus is the door
  - Anyone who enters by him will be saved, they will go in and out to find pasture. Jesus alone is the way to true deliverance - whoever enters through him will be saved from the real enemy (sin and death), and consequently will also find deliverance from the oppression of Rome in a way previously unimagined.
  - The thief comes to steal and kill, but Jesus came that they may have life and have it abundantly.
- Jesus is the good shepherd
  - Not only is Jesus the door of the sheep - that is the way, but he is also the Shepherd himself, the one who leads the sheep in truth and righteousness. He is the Shepherd of Psalm 23, the one who leads us by still waters and who restores our soul.

- A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The shepherd's responsible for protecting the sheep, and will give his own life to keep the sheep safe. This is what Jesus does for us.
- Hired hands don't care for the sheep, but run when the wolf comes and the sheep are killed and scattered. The hired hands and the thieves don't care for the sheep and will run as soon as the wolves appears.
- Jesus is the good shepherd
  - He knows his sheep, and they know him. Just as the Father knows the Son and the Son knows the Father. Jesus seeks a relationship with his people that is just as close and intimate as his own relationship with the Father. This is profound, as he will later say, he desires that just as the Father is in him and he is in the Father, so shall we be in them and they in us.
  - He lays down his life for them.
  - There are other sheep not in this fold who must be brought in, and they will listen to his voice. **Who are the "other sheep" in verse 16? What is the "sheep pen"? What is Jesus going to do with the "other sheep"? (vs. 16; see John 11:51-52; Ephesians 2:19-22)** Undoubtedly, this refers to the Gentiles who will be brought into the fold, and there will be one shepherd and one flock. They also belong to him and know his voice. This imagery provides a great perspective from which to view Christian missions. Jesus knows those who are his and he is seeking them out - we are going out to gather in the sheep of God. We are sent speaking his voice, and his sheep will hear and believe.

The father loves the son because he lays down his life that he may take it up again. Jesus' relationship of love with the Father is one characterized by unwavering obedience and commitment to God's will.

#### **What does Jesus emphasize about his death in verses 17-18?**

No one takes his life from him, but he has the authority to lay it down and take it up again. One commentator writes: "Jesus is not a victim of human conspiracies. He was not a martyr whose life was ended as a tragedy. He obediently participates in the plan of God. The early Christians who interpreted Jesus' death reinforced this view. It meant that the sacrificial act of Jesus pointed to the saving work of God, not the attempt of Caiaphas and Pilate to end his life. Peter remarked to the Jerusalem crowd on Pentecost (Acts 2: 23– 24; cf. 4: 27– 28): This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. (italics added)" <sup>1</sup>

They are divided in their response to him.

## The Danger of False Shepherds

## v.22-30

***At that time the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon. So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me, but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one." The Jews picked up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?" The Jews answered him, "It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God."***

Jesus was walking through the temple complex when the Jews surround him - and that's how you should view this phrase with all of the ominous connotations. They want a public declaration from Jesus - is he or is he not the Messiah? The setting is appropriate. Is he or is he not the one who will set them free from the Romans? He has so far made this claim privately and others have claimed it on his behalf, but he has refrained from open declaration, though he has said much that would leave you with no other options.

This is why he says, I told you and you do not believe. The problem, as usual, is not a lack of clarity in teaching but unbelief on the part of the hearers. Anyone who has seen the works that Jesus has done and who has heard his teaching would know that he is the Messiah come from God. However, only his sheep have come to this conclusion. Jesus says they do not believe because they are not of his sheep.

The being part of the sheep comes before the believing - This is a clear declaration that even the belief itself which saves comes to us as a gift. We are his sheep and that's why we listen to his voice, believe, and follow.

**According to verses 28-29, is it possible for someone who has trusted in Christ to lose their salvation?**

**Why or why not? (see also John 6:39-40)**

**Why is the doctrine of eternal security, or perseverance, important to one's Christian life? How could**

**this doctrine be misused?**

Those who are his sheep can rest securely in his protection and guidance - they will never perish and none will snatch them away. It's does no good here to say, "well they could walk away on their own free will" - these are sheep, and the good Shepherd will not let them go astray. It is the Father himself who keeps them for, you see, Jesus and the Father are one. This claim brings a charge of blasphemy and a threat of stoning.

**What does Jesus mean by his statement that 'I and the Father are one?' (v. 30; see vv. 27-29)**

They are working together with a completely united purpose and will, but it is more than that. Jesus is the revelation of the Father in the world - he is one in the sense of equality with God.

**Why is it important that Jesus and the Father are "one"?**

v.31-42

***Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your Law, 'I said, you are gods'? If he called them gods to whom the word of God came—and Scripture cannot be broken— do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father." Again they sought to arrest him, but he escaped from their hands. He went away again across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing at first, and there he remained. And many came to him. And they said, "John did no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true." And many believed in him there."***

Jesus takes up his defense with a citation from Psalm 82:

***"God has taken his place in the divine council;  
In the midst of the gods he holds judgment:  
"How long will you judge unjustly  
and show partiality to the wicked?"***

***Give justice to the weak and the fatherless;  
maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute.  
Rescue the weak and the needy;  
deliver them from the hand of the wicked."***

***They have neither knowledge nor understanding,  
they walk about in darkness;  
all the foundations of the earth are shaken.  
I said, "You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you;  
nevertheless, like men you shall die, and fall like any prince."***

***Arise, O God, judge the earth; for you shall inherit all the nations!"***  
(Ps. 82:1–8, ESV)

What is his logic here? He quotes Psalm 82:6, and then says:

- If he called them gods to whom the word of God came -
- and we know he did since Scripture cannot be broken
- Since I am the one whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world,
- Why would I be blaspheming to say 'I am the Son of God.'

It's an argument from the lesser to the greater, but is it -

"He called men God, therefore it's not blasphemy to call me the Son of God?"

Or

"He called the sons of God to whom the word came (the angelic beings) gods, therefore it's not blasphemy to call me, the very Word whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, the Son of God."

34-36 "Is it not written in your Law, 'I have said you are gods'? . . ." The word "Law" is often used to refer to the whole Old Testament (Jn. 15:25; 1 Cor. 14:21); here, Jesus quotes from Psalm 82:6. His basic argument is simple: if God can refer to others as 'gods,' then the Jews should not object when Jesus claims this title for himself. But is this just a clever twist of rabbinic interpretation designed to confuse his opponents? Or is there more? To answer this, we need to understand to whom the Psalm was addressed. First, it may have been addressed to angelic beings, who had been unjust in exercising their delegated authority over the nations. In this view, Jesus is stressing his superiority over angels (see Heb. 1-2). Second, it may have been addressed to the judges of Israel, called 'gods' because they execute the godlike function of judging (see Dt. 1:17) . Finally, it may have been addressed to the nation of Israel, called 'gods' because they are Yahweh's children (Ezk. 20:21). In this view, the curse in Ps. 82:7, "you will

die like men, and fall like any one of the princes," refers to the fact that the generation who received the law at Sinai died in the wilderness due to unbelief. In the last two cases, the logic would be thus: If those who merely received God's Word (whether judges or the nation of Israel) were called 'gods,' how much more is this title deserved by Jesus, who is himself the Word of God (see Jn. 1:1-18)!



v. 36 "What about the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world? . . ." This seems to be an allusion to the Feast of Dedication (v. 22). As the Jews celebrated the dedication of the temple to God, so also Jesus, the one to whom the temple pointed, was set apart and dedicated to God by God Himself.

### **John 11:1–12:11 (ESV)**

**<sup>1</sup> Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. <sup>2</sup> It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. <sup>3</sup> So the sisters sent to him, saying, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." <sup>4</sup> But when Jesus heard it he said, "This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." <sup>5</sup> Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. <sup>6</sup> So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. <sup>7</sup> Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." <sup>8</sup> The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?" <sup>9</sup> Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. <sup>10</sup> But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him." <sup>11</sup> After saying these things, he said to them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him." <sup>12</sup> The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover." <sup>13</sup> Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep. <sup>14</sup> Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus has died, <sup>15</sup> and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." <sup>16</sup> So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."**

John sets up the scene, bringing in Lazarus, who was ill, and his two sisters Mary and Martha.

- He brings up the fact that Mary was the one who anointed Jesus' feet, even though he doesn't retell this event until the next chapter. Presumably, this was a well-known event, as Jesus himself declared that wherever this gospel is preached, the story of this woman would be told.

- Mary and Martha send word to Jesus that Lazarus is ill. Jesus declares that this sickness will not mean death for Lazarus but glory for the Father and Son. The Son of

God is glorified through it, and in so doing the God is glorified.

- Notice what is said here: Now Jesus loved the sisters and Lazarus, **SO** - that is, what is about to come is a result or follows from the fact that he loved them - so when he heard Lazarus was ill he stayed two days longer. **Why would he do this? And how does this act follow from his love for them? What significance does this have for us?**

This is somewhat disputed, but the answer depends on where Jesus is physically at when he receives the news.

If he was in the region of Perea: Since later we read that Lazarus has been dead for 4 days when Jesus arrives, it's likely that he didn't wait two days so that Lazarus would die. Jesus was in Bethany across the Jordan, which was about 1 day travel from Bethany near Jerusalem. It's likely that Lazarus died shortly after the messengers left, then it was 1 day for the messengers to get to Jesus, he waited 2 days there, and then 1 day to travel to Bethany. The standard Jewish belief was that the soul departed the body after 3 days, so the significance of it being 4 days since he died was that he was good and truly dead. This is in no sense a resuscitation.

If he was in Batanaea: It would have been a 3-4 day journey, so that means Jesus waited where he was until Lazarus died and then began his trip back

- The disciples warn him about the dangers of going back to Judea (after the altercation of the previous chapters) and Jesus responds with walking in the day vs. Walking in the night. **What does he mean here?**

The point of this statement seems to be that there is a certain period of time, predetermined by God, in which Jesus is to do his work. As long as that time has not elapsed, Jesus will be safe to carry out his ministry. Another application to the disciples is also possible: as long as they are being led by Jesus, the light of the world, they will have the insight they need to avoid "stumbling," or falling prey to the evil one (see Jn. 9:4-5; 1 Tim. 3:7, 2 Tim. 2:26; 1 Pet. 5:8).

- Jesus then tells them that Lazarus has died and that Jesus is glad he was not there so that they would believe.

- Does Thomas understand Jesus' statement as saying that they are going to "go to him" in the sense of die too, or has he just concluded that Jesus is bound to die upon returning, so they might as well go and face it with him?

**17** Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. **18** Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, **19** and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their

brother. <sup>20</sup> So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. <sup>21</sup> Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. <sup>22</sup> But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." <sup>23</sup> Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." <sup>24</sup> Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." <sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, <sup>26</sup> and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" <sup>27</sup> She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world." <sup>28</sup> When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." <sup>29</sup> And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. <sup>30</sup> Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him. <sup>31</sup> When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. <sup>32</sup> Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." <sup>33</sup> When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. <sup>34</sup> And he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." <sup>35</sup> Jesus wept. <sup>36</sup> So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" <sup>37</sup> But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?"

- When Jesus arrives, it's clear that Lazarus was good and dead. Four days would have left no doubt to that fact.

- Martha comes and expresses her grief that Jesus did not arrive earlier. Jesus promises that he will rise again. Martha misunderstands him to be speaking of the great resurrection at the end of the age.

### **What does Jesus want Martha to understand in v.24-27?**

- Jesus declares that he is both resurrection and life - those who live, and who continue to live, do so in him. Even if they die, he says, in Him they shall be made alive. And living, they shall never die. This prompts a confession of faith from Martha.

- When Mary arrives, she repeats the statement of her sister. Why didn't you come earlier? This wouldn't have happened if you had.

- Before going any further, **what do you see emphasized in this passage?** - Jesus stayed two days longer, Lazarus is dead and Jesus is glad he wasn't there for the sake of the disciples, Lazarus had been in the tomb four days, Martha says he could have helped, Mary says he could have helped, the Jews wonder whether the man who healed the blind couldn't keep Lazarus from dying. Everything in this passage makes it clear that Jesus knew what he was doing and did it intentionally - he could have saved Lazarus from death and he intentionally did not do so. He is allowed this tragedy and heartbreak to happen so that the glory of God would be manifest for the salvation of those witnessing it.

- When Jesus sees them all weeping he is deeply moved (literally, indignant) in his Spirit and greatly troubled. Upon coming to the tomb it says, Jesus wept. This is nothing short of striking! Don't move past this without considering the tension that the passage has created and what it reveals to us. Jesus is greatly troubled at this scene and weeps with those who are mourning. He knew this was coming, he wanted it to happen, he said he was glad for the disciples' sake that it happened - yet he weeps, and is indignant.

- Our God is sovereign and he is compassionate - banish forever that idea that pain is not still painful or that death is not still an enemy just because God has willed it. He weeps and is indignant and so should we be.

**38** Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. **39** Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days." **40** Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" **41** So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. **42** I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me." **43** When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." **44** The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go." **45** Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him, **46** but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.

- Jesus demonstrates his power over life and death by raising Lazarus from the grave. That is, rightly so, enough to convince many to believe in him.

- Jesus commanding Lazarus to come out of the tomb is a foreshadowing of that great

day when all the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and live.

**Have you ever been angry with God for failing to prevent suffering, in your life or the life of someone**

**close to you? How can this passage help us to deal with such situations?**

**Have you ever boldly taken a risk to follow Christ, as Thomas did? What was the result?**

**47** So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, “What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. **48** If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.” **49** But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all. **50** Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish.” **51** He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, **52** and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. **53** So from that day on they made plans to put him to death. **54** Jesus therefore no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there to the region near the wilderness, to a town called Ephraim, and there he stayed with the disciples.

Not surprisingly at this point in the story, it was not enough to convince the Pharisees. Instead, it invigorates their opposition and they decide that he must be stopped.

**What does Caiaphas mean by his statement in v. 50? What did he unknowingly say?**

A dual irony here:

- The Pharisees are concerned that if Jesus isn't stopped, the Romans will come and take away the Temple and the nation. As it turns out, it is by their opposition to Jesus and continued hostility towards Rome that this very thing they feared comes about.
- Caiaphas unknowingly prophesies that Jesus would die to save the nation - and not the nation only, but all the children of God scattered abroad. All of those sheep whom Jesus knows and who recognize his voice - those will be broad into the fold. This speaks of the Gentiles as well as Jews scattered throughout the world.
- At this point, the drama picks up intensity. From here on out Jesus is a marked man.

**55** Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves. **56** They were looking for Jesus and saying to one another as they stood in the temple, “What

do you think? That he will not come to the feast at all?”<sup>57</sup> Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where he was, he should let them know, so that they might arrest him.<sup>1</sup> Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.<sup>2</sup> So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table.<sup>3</sup> Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.<sup>4</sup> But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said,<sup>5</sup> “Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?”<sup>6</sup> He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it.<sup>7</sup> Jesus said, “Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial.<sup>8</sup> For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me.”<sup>9</sup> When the large crowd of the Jews learned that Jesus was there, they came, not only on account of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead.<sup>10</sup> So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well,<sup>11</sup> because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.

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<sup>1</sup> Burge, Gary M. (2009-08-22). John (NIV Application Commentary, The) (pp. 250-251). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.