

John 11

Overview

As the chapter progresses, we move through different people, each with a different attitude toward Lazarus and toward the Lord. The Lord seeks to bring each of them to belief, and the success of the raising of Lazarus achieves this end and sharpens the Jewish opposition. “Belief, believe” are John's words; he uses them more than any other book (98x, 15% of the total occurrences in the Greek Bible), and this chapter, with nine occurrences, is one of the main loci for the concept in the gospel.

vv. 4, 40 are the only references in John to “the glory of God.” The only other references to this in John's writings pertain to places (the temple in Rev 15:8; the New Jerusalem in 21:11, 23). (But John does talk about “glory” 12x.)

Divide by scenes (change in characters, place, or time):

<i>Ref</i>	<i>Targets</i>	<i>Attitude to L.</i>	<i>Attitude to J.</i>	<i>Refs to Belief</i>
11:5-16	Disciples	Let him alone; stay away from Jerusalem	Grudging acquiescence	15 to the intent ye may believe
11:20-27	Martha	Try to help by sending for Jesus	Head knowledge	26 believest thou this?
11:28-37	Mary		Worship	
11:38-46	All		2x Division among the Jews	40 if thou wouldst believe 42 that they may believe 45 many of the Jews ... believed on him
11:47-53	Jewish Leaders	Antagonistic because of his influence	Jealousy and fear	48 all men will believe

Maybe some trace of symmetry?

- Mary alone has no reference to belief—she already believes
- The ones who are coolest to the Lord are the disciples and the Jewish leaders, at the outside.
- Martha is in 2 and 4

1-4, Setting

1 Lazarus ... Mary and her sister Martha.--We know them from Luke 10:38-42 as a household that frequently entertained the Lord. But the ordering of the names is strange. From Luke 10, and from the initiative that she takes here in vv. 20-27, we would suppose that Martha is the senior member of the household. Yet here Mary is pre-eminent, something suggested also by v.45. The reason is given in the next verse:

2 that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment.--John is anticipating the event described in the next chapter (though that in turn may be an echo of the event in Luke 7:37). If Mary here is the same as in the synoptic story (cf. John Wenham), then Matt 26:13 may motivate her prominence here.

3 Therefore his sisters sent unto him.--Here is an example of our prayer for one another.

Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.--This is a model prayer, and exemplifies 1 Pet 5:7, “casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.” Note:

- “He careth for you”: It makes no appeal to our merit, but rests entirely upon the Lord's love for us. Cf. Bonar's hymn, “I hear the words of love”: “his love, not mine, the resting place; his truth, not mine, the tie.”
- “Casting all your care upon him”: It clearly states the need. The sisters do not presume to tell the Lord what to do. They just lay their burden upon him.

The sisters no doubt hope that their appeal to the Lord will be at least as effective as the similar appeal of the nobleman in 4:47-55. That man had no plea but the Lord's mercy. He had no history of hospitality to the Lord, or special evidence of the Lord's love for him, yet the Lord healed his son. How much more might these sisters hope that one who had been their guest, and who had given evidence of special love for them, would respond promptly in their time of need?

4 This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.--This verse is critical for understanding the “glory” theme in John (see extra notes at end). The Lord persistently insists that he does not seek his own glory (or “honor,” as the AV sometimes translates the word), but rather the glory that God will give him. E.g.,

- 7:18 He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.
- 8:54 Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God:
- 14:13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

His glory is the glory of the Father, 1:14. This theme of “glory” will be important in this chapter.

5-16, Explanation to the Disciples

5 Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.--John confirms for us the special relation that existed between the Lord and this family. He emphasizes that the foundation of the sisters' request in v.3 is sound.

6 When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still.--Two things are remarkable about this statement.

1. He didn't move immediately to heal Lazarus. Elsewhere he intervenes on the spot.
2. “Therefore” indicates that the motive for his delay is precisely his love for the family!

A major theme of this chapter is how the Lord sometimes allows bad things to happen in order to bring greater good out of them.

- 1 Cor 10:13; recognize that “way of escape” *ekbasis* elsewhere in biblical Greek means “outcome.” The point is not escape, but achieving a better goal. v.4, “this sickness is ... for the glory of God.”
- Whom the Lord loves he chastens, Heb 12:6. He does not squander his special outcomes on unbelievers. To them he gives rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, leading to their further condemnation for not thanking him. But to those whom he loves, he gives a special vision of his glory...often through suffering.

7 Let us go into Judaea again.--The example of the nobleman's son shows that he could have healed

Lazarus from a distance. The motive to do so here is even stronger than there, given the growing hostility of the Jews. But he does return, and brings the disciples with them, involving them in the risk of another encounter with the Jews.

Mary and Martha will learn the glory of God through their sorrow over Lazarus' death. The disciples will learn it by the discipline of following their Lord into hostile territory.

The disciples' response shows their apprehension.

8 Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?--Once at Tabernacles (8:59), and again at the Dedication (10:31). They did not scruple to defile their holy days with the blood of the Messiah. The disciples had no doubt breathed a sigh of relief when the Lord withdrew across Jordan. They cannot understand why he would return.

They have misunderstood his withdrawal from Jerusalem. They think that he has left through fear of the Jews, and do not understand why he would return.

In fact, his withdrawal was no flight. Rather, it is parallel to the withdrawal of the Glory of the Lord from the first temple just before the Babylonian conquest in Ezekiel 9:3; 10:4, 18-19; 11:22-23 (a parallel we are encouraged to draw by his two-fold reference in this chapter, the only two times on the lips of our Lord, to "the glory of God," 11:4, 40). He withdrew to show his rejection of the corrupt and hypocritical temple leadership. They might cast out the man born blind, but the Lord was effectively casting them out, withdrawing his presence and thus his approval from the temple.

His following comment makes clear that he is not walking in fear.

9 Are there not twelve hours in the day?--The Lord's response indicates that our safety depends not on *where* we go, so much as on *how* we go.

If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not ... 10 ... in the night, he stumbleth.--He contrasts two cases: trying to walk in the day, and trying to walk at night. In the day, you can walk safely. At night, you will stumble around. What makes the difference is not where one is walking, but whether or not one has light to guide one's steps.

9 in the day ... he seeth the light of this world. 10 in the night, ... there is no light in him.--This contrast is to be understood on two levels.

Literally, he observes that people can only walk when an outside source gives them light. When the sun, the light of this world, lends its light, we can walk safely, whatever the surroundings. When it does not, "there is no light in him." We do not illuminate our own paths.

Spiritually, John surely expects us to recall the Lord's words in 8:12, "I am the light of the world." As long as he is in the world, those who walk in his light need not fear anything. If he leads them back to Judaea, they are safe in following him, whatever the risks may appear to be. Conversely, if they attempt to walk without regard to his direction, "without me you can do nothing," 15:5.

He is the light of the world; he is the glory of the Father. When they left Judaea, they should have done so not out of fear of the Jews, but because they were following his direction. Now that he leads them back, not all the human adversity in the world should deter them. Nor should they trust their own discretion, for "there is no light in" man, in himself. He only walks safely when "he seeth the light of this world."

Calvin: "We are taught by these words, that whenever a man allows himself to be guided by his own suggestions, without the calling of God, his whole life is nothing else than a course of wandering and

mistake; and that they who think themselves exceedingly wise, when they do not inquire at the mouth of God, and have not his Spirit to govern their actions, are blind men groping in the dark; that the only proper way is, to be fully assured of our divine calling, and to have always God before our eyes as our guide. ... When the Lord invites us to go forward, by holding out, as it were, his lamp to us, we ought to go forward courageously, though many deaths besiege our path; for he never commands us to advance without at the same time adding a promise to encourage us, so that we may be fully convinced, that whatever we undertake agreeably to his command will have a good and prosperous issue.”

11 Our friend Lazarus sleepeth.--This was a common metaphor in the OT for death, particularly the death of the righteous. Cf.

- Jacob in Gen 47:30; Moses in Deut 31:16
- 36x in Kings and Chronicles, a monarch is said to “sleep with his fathers” and be buried.
- Dan 12:2, “many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake”

I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.--The Lord declares here his intention to raise the dead, per Dan 12:2. This is an amazing claim, the spiritual parallel to Babe Ruth calling his home run. Elijah (1 Kings 17:22) and Elisha (2 Kings 4:34, 35) raised dead children, but the outcome is in doubt until it happens. Here the Lord declares in advance what he will do. Indeed, in 5:25, 28 he has already claimed that he will one day call the dead from their graves, and now he will demonstrate this.

12 Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.--They miss the point of his metaphor. They are so preoccupied with the threat of the Jews, that they do not anticipate the amazing demonstration that he is offering them.

14 Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.--He accommodates himself to their dullness of heart.

15 And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there.--This statement is another expression of the remarkable connection between vv. 5 and 6, “Jesus loved ... therefore ... he abode.” Had he been there, it would have been difficult for him to avoid their pleas to intervene and stop the illness. But then they would have missed an important experience. Sometimes what he knows in his love is most needful for us, is in fact the least pleasant for us. Like a loving parent, he will always do what we need, not what we want. Calvin: “When God permits us to be overwhelmed with distresses, and to languish long under them, let us know that, in this manner, he promotes our salvation.” Recall the poem,

My life is but a weaving
Between my Lord and me.
I cannot choose the colors
He worketh carefully.

Sometimes he weaveth sorrow,
And I, in foolish pride,
Forget he sees the upper,
And I, the under side.

Not until the loom is silent
And the shuttles cease to fly
Will God unroll the fabric
And we'll know the reason why.

The dark threads are as needful

In the weaver's skillful hand
As the threads of gold and silver
In the pattern he has planned.

to the intent ye may believe.--Here is his objective, repeated often throughout this chapter (11:40, 42, 48). He is presenting people with irrefutable evidence that demands their belief.

Recall from 2:11 that they already believed, yet he calls them on to a higher level. Cf. 1 John 5:13, and Rom 1:17, "from faith to faith." These passages show two important features of faith.

1. It is not a one-time transaction with the Lord, but a growing relationship of trust and surrender.
2. It is not something that we enter into of our own power, but something into which he gently guides us, providing the appropriate incentives and motivations just as they are needed.

16 Then said Thomas.--This is the first reference to Thomas in John, the gospel that says the most about him. (The synoptics name him only in lists of the twelve.) John is the only one to emphasize that he is a twin. We are reminded of the arbitrariness of God's election from man's perspective, when we consider that it divides even between those who are twins. Thomas was a disciple. Of his twin we know nothing.

His attitude has something to commend it, but yet is flawed.

Let us also go.--He is willing to accompany the Lord, more so than perhaps the others. His dedication and commitment is noteworthy.

that we may die with him.--Yet he does not apprehend that as long as he is following the Lord's guidance, he is secure. Like the others (v. 8), he sees the Lord's return to Judaea as unnecessarily risky and foolhardy.

Summary of the Disciples

For Lazarus and his family, they feel no compelling love. They would rather stay where they are, in perceived safety, than expose themselves once again to Jewish antagonism.

Toward the Lord, they grudgingly acquiesce in his decision to return, pessimistic about the outcome.

They need to believe, and the Lord says that their belief is the objective of his return.

At Bethany, 17-44

17 four days already.--See Gill for citations from Jewish literature indicating three days as the time after which decomposition is so advanced that revival is impossible. Bereshit Rabba 100.88.2, "'for three days the soul goes to the grave, thinking the body may return; but when it sees the figure of the face changed, it goes away, and leaves it.'" This explains the Lord's delay. He did not want there to be any chance that people would think Lazarus had revived naturally.

18 about fifteen furlongs off.--That is, about two miles, a pleasant walk up one side of the mount of Olives, and just over the crest.

19 And many of the Jews came to <those around> Martha and Mary.--Note the added phrase. The Jews are distinguished from the comforters proper. Throughout John, "Jew" has a decidedly negative tone, emphasizing the organized opposition to the Lord.

20-27, Interview with Martha (Stoic Faith)

20 Then Martha ... went and met him.--This is the a standard part of NT courtesy to visitors. Compare

- Exod 4:27, Aaron meets Moses returning from his exile
- Matt 25:1, the virgins go forth to meet the bridegroom as he comes
- Acts 10:25-27, how Cornelius meets Peter before Peter comes into the house.
- Acts 28:15, the saints who come out on the road to meet Paul on his way to Rome
- 1 Thes 4:17, the rapture, when we meet the Lord in the air to accompany him back to the earth for the invasion of Rev 19.

Vocabulary:

- *upantaw* John 11:20; 12:18; other occurrences also deal with meeting someone who is coming, Mat 8:28; 28:9; Mark 5:2; Luke 8:27; 14:31; John 4:51.
- *sunantaw* Ex 4:27; Acts 10. Heb 7:21, what Melchizedek did to Abram.
- *Apanthisis*, Matt 25:1; Acts 28:15; 1 Thes 4:17

In each case, the verb or noun is built on the root antaw.

Mary sat still in the house.--The contrast is the same as in Luke 10:38-42. Mary is sitting, contemplative, reserved, while Martha is bustling about doing what duty requires.

21 Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.--The order of her comment differs from Mary's in v. 32. She starts with "My brother." This is her focus.

Her disappointment shows two errors:

- She assumes that the Lord's presence is required for him to work a miracle. John's readers will recall the healing of the nobleman's son at the end of ch. 4. We should never be discouraged that the Lord is not physically present here with us. He is teaching the disciples, Mary and Martha, and us as well that he can care for us without being physically here.
- She assumes that the death of Lazarus was not his will; that he would naturally have preserved Lazarus' life. In ch. 4, the Lord told the nobleman that his son would be OK. He sent no such comforting message to the family of Bethany, and in fact Lazarus did die. And we have already considered his words to his disciples, "Lazarus is dead ... and I am glad." Sometimes what is most needful for us is that we suffer.

In particular, death is the answer to the argument between God and the serpent in the garden. God said, "If you eat of the fruit, you shall die." The serpent said, "You shall not die." Physical death is God's persistent reminder to us that he won the argument—and that we should pay careful attention to his other promises as well. If our sorrow at the graveside teaches us to give fuller credence to God's other promises, it will be salutary indeed.

Her next statement is a model of blind "Sunday school" orthodoxy—absolutely true, yet revealing that deep down, she doesn't get it.

22 But I know.--Her focus is on what she knows. The Lord's response in v. 26 is, "believest thou?" Our life with the Lord is not determined by what we know, but by our belief—our trust.

even now.--Probably should be understood to modify “I know,” which it precedes in Greek, not the following clause. “Even though you didn't heal my brother, I still know that God hears your prayers.

whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.--Cf. the confession of the man born blind in 9:31,

Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshiper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.

Cf. Ps 66:8, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear *me*.”

Her following comments suggest that she is not asking or expecting the Lord to raise Lazarus at this point. It's a grudging, rather theoretical analysis: “If you had been here, you could have saved him. I still acknowledge your ability to get through to heaven, even though in this case it's now too late.”

23 Thy brother shall rise again.--To her Sunday-School assertion, the Lord replies with one of his own. “Ah well, he will rise someday.” Any good Jew would know this from Dan 12 (though the Sadducees denied it).

24 I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.--Her response again is at the level of knowledge, not belief. She concurs in the teaching about the resurrection. Her idea of speaking with the Lord is a theological discussion.

25 Jesus said unto her.--The Lord's response is one of the “I am” statements that John is so fond of collecting, and a key foundation for an important New Testament teaching. Paul draws on it in explaining the events surrounding the Lord's return.

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Promise of Resurrection</i>	<i>Promise of No Death</i>
John 11:25, 26	25 I am the resurrection and the life.
	he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:	26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.
1 Cor 15:51-54	51 ... We shall not all sleep,	but we shall all be changed,
	52 ... the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible,	and we shall be changed.
	53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption,	and this mortal <i>must</i> put on immortality.
	54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption,	and this mortal shall have put on immortality,
1 Thes 4:16, 17	16 the dead in Christ shall rise first:	17 Then we which are alive <i>and</i> remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air:

As “the resurrection,” the Lord will call the dead back to life. He has already promised this to the Jews in 5:25, 28-29. Daniel already anticipated that these would be in two categories: believers and unbelievers, each raised to their appropriate destiny. While both believers and unbelievers are raised, the unbelievers are raised to “the second death,” 20:14. Only believers are raised to life. This much, Martha has already confessed.

As “the life,” the Lord claims to be able to keep people from passing through death. This is what Martha had hoped he would do for Lazarus. He did not, but not for lack of ability, and one generation of believers will in fact be spared the pains of death, to demonstrate that he is able to remove even this burden.

Believest thou this?--The construction with the accusative is remarkable; the dative is much more

common. Compare 1 John 4:16, “we have known and believed the love that God has for us.” The progress in the verb there suggests that what is being invited here goes beyond mere mental assent, and amounts to a commitment.

27 Yea, Lord: I believe that.--Her response falls short of the Lord's challenge in two ways.

1. He asks, “Are you believing?” (present tense). She responds in the perfect, “I have believed and as a result now believe.” In other words, she does not acknowledge any inadequacy in her previous level of belief.
2. He asks whether she is trusting in his promise (accusative); she responds that she is believing in a proposition (“believe that”).

Yet the content of her faith is orthodox. She describes him in three phrases, all based on the OT promise of the Messiah.

- The Christ, the Messiah, the anointed son of David
- The Son of God, which according to 2 Sam 7:14 is another title for the Messiah.
- The one who should come into the world. This title is derived from Zech 9:9, “behold, thy King cometh unto thee.”

Remarkably, she believes God's *past* promises but is having difficulty laying hold of his *present* promises. It is easier to acknowledge mentally what was promised before, than to trust in the Lord day by day for current needs. This seems to lie behind the double reference to belief in 1 John 5:11-15. Those who have believed on him for eternal life still need to appropriate his day-to-day provision.

Summary of Martha

She sought help for Lazarus by sending for Jesus. But now that he is gone, she has no hope.

Her faith is orthodox and bookish. She believes God's past promises, but cannot hold to his present ones.

The Lord challenges her to believe.

28-37, Interview with Mary (At the Lord's Feet)

28 she went her way.--Perhaps she is a bit embarrassed when the Lord challenges her belief in this way. Of course she has believed. But he means to bless her, and to do so, he must uncover her shortcomings. We should guard against being defensive when the Lord challenges our commitment to him.

She ... called Mary her sister secretly.--Announcing the Lord's approach publicly would have drawn the crowd, and kept Mary from speaking with him privately.

The Master is come.--Master = *didaskalos*, “teacher.” This is an unusual title for the Lord in John (see notes). But it was that aspect of the Lord that especially appealed to Mary, to judge by Luke 10, where she delights to sit at his feet and hear his teaching. Perhaps using this title is intended to further avoid disclosing his presence to the mass of people.

and calleth for thee.--Did he? Or did his emphasis on points of doctrine suggest to Martha that her sister, the one who loved to sit at the Lord's feet and hear his words, ought to be there? “Mary, come

here. You need to hear this. You'll appreciate it.”

29 As soon as she heard ... she arose quickly, and came.--Mary is a model of obedience. She not only delights to listen to the Lord, but is committed to do what he says.

Gill notes that Jewish custom required the bereaved not to leave the house for a week after the death. Both Martha and Mary violate this custom, giving preference to the Lord. Contrast the disciple in Luke 9:59, 60, who gave priority to the dead over the Lord.

30 Now Jesus ... was in that place.--Calvin suggests that she had encouraged him to wait there, apprehensive at bringing him into contact with the Jews who had gathered with the mourners (v. 19) after the recent attempts in Jerusalem to stone him (ch. 10).

31 The Jews then ... followed her.--They seek to be good comforters, and to keep her company. How they must have been surprised to see her arrive, not at the grave, but by the road where the Lord was waiting.

32 She fell down at his feet.--Here is where we always find Mary. Whether in times of prosperity (Luke 10:39) or trouble (here), she is at the Lord's feet, listening to his teaching, submissive to his will.

Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.--This is the same thing that Martha said in v. 21. Apparently, this has been the substance of their conversation since they sent for the Lord. But Mary's word order is different.

- Martha said, “My brother would not have died.” Her focus is on her brother. “My brother is gone.”
- Mary said, “He would not have died of me, the brother.” The change in order emphasizes that she feels deprived.

Summary of Mary

Like Martha, she sent for the Lord to heal Lazarus. But her attitude toward the Lord is much more intimate. She falls down before him in submission to his will.

She is the only character in the story for whom there is no reference to belief. She already believes.

33-44, *The Raising of Lazarus*

John's description begins with the Lord's emotional preparation for this greatest of his miracles, and then the actual execution, at the tomb.

33-37, **The Lord's Emotional Preparation**

33 Jesus ... saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping.--Previously, we have been told that the purpose of the Jews was to “comfort” Mary and Martha: vv. 19, 31. Here, we have a glimpse into how they were doing this: they were weeping with them. The English words “comfort” (from Latin) and “sympathy” (from Greek) actually capture this; they mean “to suffer with” somebody. Comfort is not a matter of solving the problem for someone, or telling them reasons that they should not be sad—Proverbs condemns this as “singing songs to a heavy heart,” Prov 25:20. Rather, we are to “weep with those that weep,” Rom 12:15. An important part of comforting someone is joining them in their sorrow, taking their load on ourselves.

This is in fact how God has comforted our sin-sick world—by entering it in the person of his son to weep with us, to take our infirmity on himself, and thus deliver us. And in this chapter, we now see a practical example of how the Lord enters into the pain of this little group. Three verbs describe his emotional response. All of them reflect his redemptive work.

he groaned in the spirit.--The verb has the distinctive sense of being indignant or angry. So we are naturally led to inquire as to the object of the Lord's displeasure. Some think it is their disbelief (cf. Mark 3:5; Matt 17:17). But this does not seem in focus here, and in fact, this miracle brings many to faith. It seems more likely that he is indignant with death and sin. The verb is used in the OT of Jehovah's indignation over sin (Aquila in Ps 7:12; Symmachus in Isa 17:13; the noun in Lam 2:6).

Calvin: "Christ does not approach the sepulcher as an idle spectator, but as a champion who prepares for a contest; and therefore we need not wonder that he ... *groans*; for the violent tyranny of death, which he had to conquer, is placed before his eyes."

Warfield, cited in Morris: "Not in cold unconcern, but in flaming wrath against the foe, Jesus smites in our behalf."

Cf. the picture of his final victory over death in Rev 19, esp. v. 16, "he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."

he ... was troubled.--cf. 12:27; 13:21, both with reference to his death. Not only is he angry with the adversary, but he anticipates the price he will have to pay. The mere healing of the woman with the issue of blood caused a sensible drain to him (Mark 5:30). How much more did it cost him to bring back a man from death and decay? This was no easy task.

35 Jesus wept.--Jumping ahead one verse, we consider v. 35 with these. The word is different from that describing the weeping of the sisters and the Jews. With them, the word describes loud wailing, keening, which we hear on television in newsclips of the war in Iraq. This word simply means that tears flowed down his cheeks—not an ostentatious show of grief, but the simple result of the incredible pain that came upon him as he brought Lazarus back. The best commentary on this verse is Isa 53:3, "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," and the redemptive focus of that chapter again turns our attention to the Lord's redemptive work.

Summary: these three expressions of the Lord's emotional state all focus on his conflict with sin and death. They are indeed expressive of his sym-path^y, his com-passion, with the sisters in their grief, but at a much more basic and effectual level than the comfort offered by the Jews. The Jews merely joined with the sisters in their outward wailing. The Lord actually took their pain upon himself.

He hell in hell laid low,
Made sin, He sin o'erthrew,
Bowed to the grave, destroyed it too,
And death, by dying, slew.

34 Where have ye laid him? ...Lord, come and see.--The invitation appears six times in John's writings.

- 1:39, the Lord invites John and Andrew, disciples of the Baptist, to come see where he lives.
- 1:46, Philip invites Nathanael to come and judge for himself whether Jesus is the Messiah.
- Here, the people invite the Lord to see where Lazarus lies.
- Three times in Rev 6 (MT: vv. 1, 5, 7, and also v. 3 in TR), the cherubim invite John to pay close

attention to the opening of the first four seals, which happen to be the ones covered in the Lord's Olivet Discourse as belonging to this present age.

This emphasis on personal examination appears to be a distinctive characteristic of John. He is a fisherman, a country boy, who makes up his own mind based on the evidence that is presented to him. This emphasis goes along with his interest in the Lord's signs. Here, the people invite the Lord to "come and see" where Lazarus lies; he will shortly confront them with unavoidable evidence of his authority and power.

36 Then said the Jews.--The Jews see the Lord's emotional agitation, but they do not understand it. They attribute it to two different causes.

Behold how he loved him!--They think he is upset because he has lost a close friend. The Lord knows full well that in a few moments, his friend will be back with him. We do sorrow at the loss of loved ones, but "not ... as others which have no hope," 1 Thes 4:13. This does not explain the severe agitation that overtakes the Lord.

37 Could not this man.--They, like the sisters, are filled with despair. They believe all hope is gone, and some of them attribute the Lord's agitation to the thought that he has come too late to do anything. But he is not too late. He is still in control.

His agitation, as we have seen, is due to his wrath against sin and the personal burden he carries in executing that wrath, not to any sense of loss or defeat.

38-44, At the Grave

38 groaning in himself.--We see again the anger and fierceness with which he approaches his task. Yet it is "in himself" that he groans. He does not complain to others, but takes counsel with himself.

It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.--Since the example of Abraham (Gen 23:9), the Jews have preferred graves for burying places. The stone stands vertically to block the door, not horizontally over the top of a hole in the ground. Within the cave are two kinds of structures. First, the body is placed on a shelf until the flesh decays. Then the bones are placed into a small stone box (an "ossuary"), which is inserted into a small hole in the wall. In this way, a single cave can accommodate an entire family over many generations.

39 Take ye away the stone.--What a challenge! They no doubt shared Abraham's desire, to "bury my dead out of my sight" (Gen 23:4). The last thing they want is to be exposed to the corpse, ugly enough in death, but by now four days decomposed.

Why does he ask them to do this? Perhaps it is analogous to commanding the lame man to walk (5:8), or the blind man to go to Siloam and wash (9:7). He did not need man's help in these miracles. He healed other blind and lame people without such actions (Matt 21:14), and no one had to roll his tomb door away.

But his healings are uniformly preceded by some expression of faith on the part of the person being healed, even if it is not as dramatic as in John's examples. The sick person comes for help, or the Lord asks them if they believe he can help them. He does not simply wave his hand over the land of Israel and heal everyone. In fact, he taught the necessity of faith at his introductory sermon in Nazareth:

Luke 4:23 And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country. 24 And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country. 25 But I tell you of a

truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; 26 But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, *a city* of Sidon, unto a woman *that was* a widow. 27 And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.

In fact, Mark (6:5) says,

5 And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed *them*. 6 And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching.

It's not just that he *would* do no mighty work, but that he *could* do no mighty work there, apart from their faith. John makes clear that this faith is impossible without God's intervention, but we must never forget that salvation is also impossible without faith.

Lord, by this time he stinketh.--At this point, faith is exactly what Martha needs. She resists the Lord's command, because she does not believe at this point that anything can be done for her brother. The Lord's response shows that this is his diagnosis of her objection as well.

If thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see.--The order is important. Man says, "If I see, I will believe." The Lord says, "If you believe, you will see." Compare 7:16-17,

16 Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. 17 If any man will do [wills to do] his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or *whether* I speak of myself.

Cf. the same order in 6:69 "we believe and know," 8:31-32 ("if ye continue in my word ... ye shall know the truth"). "Without faith it is impossible to please him, for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him," Heb 11:6.

Said I not unto thee.--Just where did the Lord say this to her? Unless he is quoting something that John did not record in their earlier conversation, this must be a reference to 11:25-26. There he said that the one who believes will either be raised (resurrection) or never see death (rapture); here he says that the one who believes will see the glory of God. Clearly, he conceives of the glory of God as being most clearly demonstrated in deliverance from death. Paul develops both aspects of this.

- Concerning resurrection, cf. 1 Cor 15:43, "It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in **glory**."
- Concerning the rapture, cf. Phil 3:20, "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his **glorious** body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

For our Lord, the main point in resurrection is not the added life it gives to the deceased, or the comfort it offers to his loved ones, but the glory it brings to God in demonstrating his victory over sin and death. Selfishly, we often desire God's intervention for our own sakes, but his real motive for blessing us is to exalt his reputation and enhance his glory.

This brief exchange with Martha emphasizes her need, even as a believer, to trust the Lord for daily life.

41 Then they took away the stone.--Martha must have given permission for this, indicating her submission to the Lord.

And Jesus lifted up *his* eyes.--On the posture, compare the publican in Luke 18:13, who "would not

lift up so much as *his* eyes unto heaven” because he was so conscious of his sin. The Lord is without sin, and can face the Father directly. “The publican, who prays with his face cast down to the ground, does not the less, on this account, pierce heaven by his faith” (Calvin), but once we are accepted in the beloved, we can follow him “boldly unto the throne of grace” (Heb 4:16).

Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.--The Lord's prayer here is not for Lazarus' resurrection. That prayer was made earlier, in private, perhaps (Alford) in Perea before v. 4. Here the Lord gives thanks that the Father has heard that prayer. He is so confident of the Father's attention to his request that he gives thanks even before that for which he has prayed has been accomplished. He is not thanking God for Lazarus' resurrection, but for hearing his prayer. Compare Paul's exhortation in Phil 4:6, “in every thing by prayer and supplication **with thanksgiving** let your requests be made known unto God.” Whatever our immediate need is, we can be thankful that God has heard us, and that he will do what is best.

42 And I knew that thou hearest me always.--Note the tenses. He has always known (pluperfect) that God continuously hears him (present). This confidence undergirded him throughout his ministry.

I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.--Once again, we are reminded of the main point of the chapter, the need for people to believe on the Lord Jesus.

The point that the Lord wants the people to take away is not his personal power, but the authority he derives from the Father. From the resurrection of Lazarus he wants them to know, not that he can raise the dead, but that he can ask the Father for something and have it granted. This is in keeping with his persistent emphasis on his derived authority from ch. 5 on.

This emphasis is also key for our understanding of his ministry for us now, making intercession with the Father for us (Heb 7:25). His place is not to receive our final worship, but to reconcile us to the Father. Ultimately, he will deliver up the kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all (1 Cor 15:28). A proper understanding of the person of Christ must include his constant and complete submission to the authority of the Father.

43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice.--To reach the courts of heaven in v.41, he needed only to speak. But to call forth the dead, he cries with a loud voice. Compare his shout at the Lord's return, 1 Thes 4:16,

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

Perhaps his shout is related to the anger he manifested in vv. 33, 38. This is the shout of the warrior entering the battle, snatching Lazarus back from the forces of sin and death, just as he will shout when he returns to earth to establish his kingdom.

Lazarus, come forth.--This command reminds us of that to the lame man, “take up your bed and walk.” Lame people can't walk; dead people can't come forth. But Christ's authority is so great that his word changes the state of the world, as it did when “by him all things were created” (1:3; Col 1:16).

In uttering this command, he demonstrates what he has promised will take place at the last day, when “the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live” (5:25). It was important for him to name Lazarus, or else all the dead would have risen.

44 graveclothes ... napkin.--Contrast the Lord's resurrection (20:6,7), when the graveclothes were left behind. Lazarus brings his with him, for he will need them again.

Loose him, and let him go.--To remove every possible ground of doubt, he invites the onlookers to

draw near and handle Lazarus physically. They who certified his death by wrapping him for burial, now will certify his life by unwrapping him.

Hinge, 45-46

This miracle leads to a division among the Jews. They show two responses to it. In recording this division, John links what goes before (the raising of Lazarus) with what follows (the plotting of the temple hierarchy). Some of the Jews are persuaded by what they have seen, and believe on him. Others fear the impact it will have on the people, and go to the rulers.

45 the Jews.--The individuals in question are named with the title usually reserved for those who reject the Lord. Even this group was divided by the force of this great miracle.

Many ... believed on him.--Some even of them were compelled to acknowledge that his amazing claims from ch. 5 are true; that he is the one appointed by the Father to raise and judge the dead at the last day.

which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did.--They came to Mary on the occasion of Lazarus' death, but while with her, saw irrefutable evidence of the Lord's authority. The Lord had said that Lazarus' illness was "for the glory of God" (v. 4). It brought many together and put them in a frame of mind in which his demonstration of power would be most effective.

In Greek the "many of the Jews" who "believed" is equated with "those who came to Mary." It's interesting that she is set apart here. Throughout the narrative, Martha appears to be the senior sister: vv. 5, 19 (where the Jews come "to Martha and Mary"), 20 (where Martha as the hostess rushes out to greet the Lord). Compare also Luke 10:38, where Martha is clearly the senior sister. Is John distinguishing the Jews who came to Mary from those who came to Martha? Martha would be the social representative of the family, whom some would visit out of obligation. But those who came specifically because of their relationship with Mary would be attracted by her love of the Lord's teaching.

If this is so, we have here a powerful picture of one way that the Lord glorifies himself through us. We must be devoted to him (as Mary was), and willing to let him touch our lives with sorrow when that suits his purposes. If only those whom we meet in the occasions of our daily lives could be so touched by the Lord. Are we willing to let our lives, with the difficulties and challenges that the Lord permits in them, be similar venues for the demonstration of his power?

46 But some of them.--That is, "some of the Jews," not "some of those who believed." This is the other response. Perhaps these were those who came only out of social duty, or perhaps the ones mentioned here were not even at Bethany but only heard of the miracle.

It is amazing that some are so enthralled to the temple hierarchy that they are more concerned with criticizing Jesus than with appreciating the miracle he has done. The next paragraph reports the astounding outcome of their report.

Summary of the Jews

They have no concern at all for Lazarus. Some were drawn (to Martha?) by social politeness; others (Mary's friends) appear to have been more interested in her friendship with the Lord.

As a result of the raising of Lazarus, they are divided. Some are drawn to faith in the Lord, while others

are hardened in their unbelief.

Epilog

47-53, Jewish Response

47 the chief priests.--The Greek term is the same one that translates the Hebrew “high priest” in the OT. The plural appears only in the NT (Ezr 10:5 is a different underlying construction, “the princes of the priests”). By God’s design, this was a lifetime office. Once a person became high priest, he held it until death, so there was supposed to be only one high priest alive at a time.

After the return from Babylon, when the nation was no longer independent, the civil ruler had minimal influence, and the high priest was the most powerful person in the Jewish society. Herod the Great changed the high priest several times for political purposes. Under the Romans, “the high priest was the unquestioned representative and spokesman of the nation not only to the provincial governor, ... but to the emperor in Rome” (F.F. Bruce, *New Testament History*, p. 63), and wealthy families bought the office from venal Roman governors. Thus it could change from year to year (v. 49), and several high priests could be alive at once.

This is a sobering thought. The spiritual leaders of the people are more beholden to Rome than they are to God.

gathered ... a council.--Literally, “a sanhedrin.” The lack of the article suggests that this is not an official meeting, but a “rump cabinet.”

What do we?--The phrase expresses, not ignorant passivity (“Whatever are we to do?”), but confusion and doubt about their current course of action (“What are we doing? What are we allowing to happen?”) See other uses of the phrase:

- Isa 45:9, challenge of the pot to the potter;
- Mark 11:3,5, challenge to the disciples taking the colt;
- Acts 21:13, Paul’s challenge to the saints in Caesarea;

this man doeth many miracles.--Earlier (2:18; 6:30), the Jews had asked for a sign. Now they have all they could want—and they still do not believe. The verb is in the present tense, which in Greek emphasizes the ongoing nature of the activity: “This man keeps doing many miracles.” They no longer doubt that he can do miracles. But they are unwilling to submit to his authority.

Less than a year later, many of these same people make a similar comment in Acts 4:16, after Peter and John healed the lame man by the beautiful gate:

“What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them *is* manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny *it*.”

These episodes show that the problem is their will, not a lack of evidence.

48 If we let him thus alone.--“Thus,” as we have been doing.

all men will believe on him.--“All” is perhaps an exaggeration. But it shows how persuasive they feel his miracles are.

and the Romans shall come.--In 5:16, they sought to slay him because of his theological position.

Here, a more practical concern emerges: they are worried that he will stimulate such a messianic fervor that the Romans will squelch it, and in the process destroy the nation. Thus the temple hierarchy actually finds itself at odds with the common man, who wanted to know, “wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 2:6). Receiving their position from Rome rather than from God, they are willing to reject God's Messiah in order to retain Rome's favor.

We see here the danger of seeking spiritual benefit from the world's political system. The “believer” may mean well at the outset, but eventually becomes so beholden to the world system that he no longer serves God! We must remember that we are “strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”

Their plan backfired. Instead of the “times of refreshing” that could have come had they received the Lord (Acts 3:19), in 40 years the Romans will come and destroy their city and temple!

take away both our place and nation.--Their convoluted logic justifies their rejection of God's Messiah on spiritual grounds!

- “Our place” may be either the temple or the land. The point is the same: this was the place where God chose to dwell (Deut 12:5, 11, 14, 18, and often; Psalm 132:13-14, “For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired *it* for his habitation. 14 This *is* my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it”). To be separated from it, as they had been for seventy years in Babylon, was to lose touch with him.
- “Our nation” is their cultural unity as the people whom God had chosen and on whom he had placed his special favor. If they were to lose that identity, the chain of promise would be broken.

So hardened are their hearts, that they thus construct a spiritual motive for a most unspiritual deed!

A clue to their error is the possessive pronoun, “our.” They thought of the place—the temple and land—as theirs; of the nation as theirs. But John's theme is, “He came unto his own [place], and his own [people] received him not.” Both the “place and nation” belonged, not to the high priest and his cronies, but to the Messiah! They refused to recognize his title.

49 Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year.--Later that year his father-in-law Annas (18:13) would become high priest (Acts 4:6).

The unbiblical transiency of the Jewish high priesthood forms a stark contrast with our Lord's priesthood. Hebrews says that his Melchizedekian priesthood is superior to that of Aaron because they were appointed only for life:

Hebrews 7:23-24 And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: 24 But this *man*, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.

How much greater the contrast appears, when we see that the tattered remnants of the Levitical priesthood did not even continue that long! In the sovereignty of God, the human priesthood that has unbiblically curtailed its tenure is the instrument to establish our Lord as our eternal high priest.

Ye know nothing at all.--His words mark his arrogance and pride. If they had any genuine uncertainty about the Roman risk to recognizing Jesus as the Messiah, they should have humbled themselves before the Lord together. Consider the examples of

- Jehoshaphat confronted with the Moabite threat, 2 Chr 20:3
- Ezra (the priest!) before setting out through lawless lands from Babylon to Canaan, Ezr 8:21
- Jehoiachim, faced with Nebuchadnezzar's siege, Jer 36:9 (though he rejected the word of the prophet, v. 23)
- The king of Nineveh, facing the destruction promised by Jonah, 3:5.

Instead of leading them in humility before God, he arrogantly dismisses his colleagues as ignorant.

50 it is expedient for us.--As a Sadducee, he had no fear of resurrection and judgment. This life is all that matters for him, and he seeks only what will maximize his own enjoyment of it. He urges his listeners to join him in seeking what is “expedient for us.”

one man should die ... the whole nation perish not.--What he means is that by eliminating the source of messianic fervor, the Roman threat will be alleviated, and the nation preserved (not to mention his own perks!)

Note that he distinguishes “the people” (emphasizing their racial unity and common customs) from “the whole nation” (emphasizing their political place in the world).

51 And this spake he not of himself.--In spite of the wickedness of his heart, yet there was a deeper meaning to his words that he did not perceive. Just as God could speak through the pagan prophet Balaam, he could direct the words of Caiaphas. There is a difference, though. Balaam was conscious that God was constraining his words. Caiaphas thought he knew what he was saying, but his words had a deeper and alternative meaning of which he was ignorant.

We have often had occasion to note that even men's sinful antagonism is under God's control:

- 7:30, they sought to take him, but his hour was not yet come
- 8:59, his escape from the temple when they took up stones to stone him
- 11:8-10, answering the disciples' fear about returning to Jerusalem

John's interpretation of Caiaphas' words reinforces this teaching. Even the inciting words that eventually led to the Lord's death (humanly speaking) were designed to God to explain that divine reason for the event. He is completely in control, even of the disasters of life. “I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these *things*” (Isa 45:7). Therefore we can trust in him to bring us through whatever he allows in our lives.

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

1 Corinthians 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

being high priest that year, he prophesied.--The Mosaic economy, however polluted and distorted, was still in effect, and God could still speak through him.

Note that the meaning Caiaphas intended was *not* true. His plan failed. The murder of Jesus did not

deliver the nation from the tragedy of AD 70. But in a deeper meaning, his words were true, as John goes on to show. John extends them in two ways: in the notion of “die for,” and in the distinction between “people” and “whole nation.”

die for.--Caiaphas saw the death of Jesus as taking the place of the (physical) judgment of the nation by the Romans. John recognizes that we all fall under threat of (spiritual) judgment, and that Jesus' death takes our place. The perishing from which he saves us is spiritual, not physical.

That nation.--That is, the Jews, the only ones about whom Caiaphas was concerned. John derives this reference from “the people.”

Gather together.--John appears to relate this to Caiaphas' reference to “the whole nation.” (*egnos* is the LXX reflex of Heb *goy*). Recalling the Lord's reference to “other sheep, not of this fold” (10:16), he sees that the death of Jesus will be the means of expanding the “children of God” beyond the Jewish nation to encompass Gentiles as well. (As Hendriksen notes, he is not distinguishing “the children of God” from “that nation,” but recognizes the elect “children of God” as being found among the Jews, as well as “scattered abroad” among the Gentiles.)

Once again, John's gospel anticipates Paul's teaching, in this case Eph 2:13-15,

13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. 14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;

53 Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.--As early as 6:15, they “sought” to kill him, but now that desire has hardened into a resolve that will formulate a specific plan.

54, Jesus' Response

54 Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews.--Following the rhythm of 1:11-12, having come to his own place and been rejected by his own people, he now withdraws once again. Compare

- 4:1 When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, 2 (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) 3 He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee.
- 7:1 After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.
- 39-40 Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand, And went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode.

The Lord's behavior is consistent with his instructions to his disciples in Matt 10:14 and parallels,

and whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.

And the apostles followed his example: Acts 13:51; 18:6. Our job is to be messengers, not brainwashers.

His pattern, and their imitation of it, show that the motive is not fear of personal harm. Compare the disciples' misunderstanding in 11:8-10. His withdrawal is not to protect him, but to bring judgment on them by withdrawing the revelation of God. Compare

- the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit from the first temple described in Ezekiel 8-11
- Paul's words in Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:46): It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.”

It is a terrible thing when God withdraws his merciful presence.

- There is an “accepted time,” a “day of salvation” (2 Cor 6:2, < Isa 49:8).
- Isa 55:6 warns, “Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.”
- Consider the sober example of Esau, who first rejected his birthright: “For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears” (Heb 12:17).

Our Lord warned the Jews of this danger:

- 7:33 Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and *then* I go unto him that sent me. 34 Ye shall seek me, and shall not find *me*: and where I am, *thither* ye cannot come.
- John 8:21 Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come.
- John 12:35 Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. 36 While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.

It is a constant principle in Scripture that resistance to the moving of God's spirit engenders hardness and an insensitivity to his further revelation, while obedience to him yields further direction. “Isaiah 30:21, “And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This *is* the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.” The Lord is patient and longsuffering with sinners, but the time comes when he withdraws his spirit, and leaves them to their own devices.

a country near to the wilderness.--It's interesting how, throughout the Bible, cities are places of sin and corruption,

- The first city was built by Cain, Gen 4:17
 - Nimrod in Gen 10:9, who was a mighty hunter “against the Lord”
 - the people of Babel, Gen 11
 - the contrast between nomadic Abraham and city-dwelling Lot, Gen 13:12
- while God brings his people into the wilderness to draw them near to himself.

- Israel at the exodus;
- Elijah fleeing Ahab, 1 Kings 17:3
- Paul being instructed by the Lord in Gal 1:16-17

- Israel in Rev 12:6, protected from the beast

a city called Ephraim.--cf. 2 Sam 13:23; a country town in sheep-raising territory. This is not a major metropolis, but a rural settlement.

and there continued with his disciples.--It matters not how remote or desolate the wilderness may be, if only we can be with the Lord.

Preparation for the Passover (perhaps goes with next chapter?)

55 And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand.--As in 2:16 and 6:4, John describes this as “the Jews' passover.” The possessive is important. Cf.

- Ex 12:11 *it is* the LORD'S passover.
- Ex 12:27 ye shall say, *It is* the sacrifice of the LORD'S passover,
- Ex 12:48 when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised,
- Lev 23:5 In the fourteenth *day* of the first month at even *is* the LORD'S passover.
- Num 9:10 yet he shall keep the passover unto the LORD.
- Num 9:14 If a stranger shall sojourn among you, and will keep the passover unto the LORD
- Num 28:16 And in the fourteenth day of the first month *is* the passover of the LORD.
- Deut 16:1 Observe the month of Abib, and keep the passover unto the LORD thy God:
- Deut 16:2 Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the passover unto the LORD thy God,
- 2 Kings 23:21 and the king [Josiah] commanded all the people, saying, Keep the passover unto the LORD your God,
- 2 Kings 23:23 in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, *wherein* this passover was holden to the LORD
- 2 Chr 30:1 And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, ... to keep the passover unto the LORD God of Israel.
- 2 Chr 30:5 they should come to keep the passover unto the LORD God of Israel at Jerusalem:
- 2 Chr 35:1 Moreover Josiah kept a passover unto the LORD in Jerusalem

It is always described as “the Lord's passover” or “a passover unto the Lord” (same Hebrew in both cases, *pesax leyhwh*). It's not illegitimate to designate a passover by the people who celebrate it, cf. Ezra 6:20, but John is the only gospel to use “Jews' passover,” and the contrast with “the Lord's passover” would seem to be deliberate. Christ is the true passover (1 Cor 5:7), and in forsaking him, the Jews have abandoned the passover that God ordained. The feast is completely theirs, not God's. This was not a new problem. Isaiah recognized it seven hundred years before: Isa 1:11-15; 58:1-8.

out of the country up to Jerusalem ... to purify themselves.--The contrast with v. 54 is striking. The Lord leaves the vicinity of Jerusalem and goes out into the country to avoid the murderous wrath of the religious leaders. The common people come out of the country into Jerusalem to purify themselves. Now, they did this out of obedience to the Law of Moses, which commanded the Jews to celebrate the feast in “the place that the Lord your God shall choose,”

Deut 16:2 Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the passover unto the LORD thy God, of the flock and the herd, in the place which the LORD shall choose to place his name there.

Still, we cannot miss the irony of a city that harbors such hatred for the Messiah still presenting itself as the place where people must come to be purified. In contrast, in the next chapter we will see that the true worship of God is going on, not in Jerusalem, but outside of its borders.

56 Then sought they for Jesus.--It is encouraging that the common people at least looked forward to seeing Jesus at the feast. Many of them recognized him as the messiah, and looked forward to his taking over the temple and the nation.

What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?--Compare 7:11, where the Jews sought him at the feast of Tabernacles. It was known even then (7:25) that the leaders were seeking to kill him, and people wonder whether he will dare to appear.

57 Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees.--John's standard term for the Sanhedrin. This is an official offensive against the Lord.

had given a commandment.--This puts the people in a bind. To obey God's appointed leaders is to betray God's appointed Messiah. Under these conditions, "we must obey God rather than men," Acts 5:29.

if any man knew where he were, he should shew it.--This command puts Judas' betrayal in context. He has chosen to obey the Jewish hierarchy rather than Jesus.

Summary of People and their Responses

<i>Ref</i>	<i>Targets</i>	<i>Attitude to L.</i>	<i>Attitude to J.</i>	<i>Refs to Belief</i>
11:5-16	Disciples	Let him alone; stay away from Jerusalem	Grudging acquiescence	15 to the intent ye may believe
11:20-27	Martha	Try to help by sending for Jesus	Head knowledge	26 believest thou this?
11:28-37	Mary		Worship	
11:38-46	All		2x Division among the Jews	40 if thou wouldst believe 42 that they may believe 45 many of the Jews ... believed on him
11:47-53	Jewish Leaders	Antagonistic because of his influence	Jealousy and fear	48 all men will believe

Notes

Glory in John

Jesus' Glory

1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

2:11 This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

God's Glory

9:24 Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner.

12:28 Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, *saying*, I have both glorified *it*, and will glorify *it* again.

12:41 These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.

11:40 Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

21:19 This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

Jesus' Glory as Received from God

5:41 I receive not honour from men.

5:44 How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that *cometh* from God only?

7:18 He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

8:50 And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth.

8:54 Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God:

11:4 When Jesus heard *that*, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

12:23 And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.

12:43 For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

13:32 If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him.

14:13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

17:1 These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:

17:5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

17:22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

Jesus' Glory as Promoted by the Spirit

16:14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you.

17:24 Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

11:26 “shall never die”

The Greek phrase is *ou mh apoqanh eis ton aiwna*. Two interpretations have been advocated. They may be distinguished based on the phrase structure attributed to the verse.

1. (*ou mh apoqanh*) *eis ton aiwna*.--The believer will not die, and this freedom from death will persist eternally.
2. *Ou mh (apoqanh eis ton aiwna)*.--There is a kind of death that endures forever. The believer will not experience this kind of death.

Westcott insists that given John's persistent usage, the phrase must be understood in sense 1. Morris argues that since the life promised is eternal life, the death in the parallel phrase must be the distinctive death that endures forever.

Two issues need to be discussed: the linguistic data, and the relation of this phrase to broader doctrinal issues.

Linguistically, the expression *ou mh* <verb> *eis ton aiwna* appears 14x in the Greek Bible: Psa 29:7; Isa 14:20; Jer 27:39; Joe 2:26, 27; Joh 4:14; 8:51, 52; 10:28; 11:26; 13:8; 1Co 8:13; Wis 12:10; Tbs 6:8. It is instructive to consider where adjuncts (modifiers, subjects, objects) to <verb> fall. They are attested between <verb> and *eis ton aiwna* (Jer 27:39; Joe 2:26, 27; Joh 8:52; 13:8; 1Co 8:13; Wis 12:10; Tbs 6:8), but never after *eis ton aiwna*. This suggests that the closer binding is between the adjuncts and the verb than between the temporal phrase and the verb, and supports phrase structure #1.

Doctrinally, the question then comes in what sense we are to understand the promise. Believers do in fact die, and are explicitly promised a resurrection of their own in 1 Cor 15; 1 Thes 4; Rev 20. Two approaches can be taken.

1. Without insisting on phrase structure 2, one could still appeal to an ambiguity between the physical and spiritual sense of “die,” and argue from the parallelism that the verb must be understood here in the spiritual sense.
2. Or one can see this as the seed from which Paul derives his description of what happens at the Lord's return: dead believers rise, and those who are alive at that time never experience physical death, but are transformed. This seems the most straightforward approach, and I have adopted it in the exposition (where see table of texts). Alford objects to this association on the grounds that what is promised is specific to believers, and unbelievers also will be transformed at this time, but I do not see this taught in Scripture. Those who resist at the Lord's return are slain with the sword that proceeds out of the mouth of the returning Lord (Rev 19:21), and those who rebel after the millennium are destroyed by fire from God out of heaven (Rev 20:9). These suggest that all unbelievers will experience physical death before being raised for the last judgment.

Thus both halves of the Lord's promise are physical in their application. Those who have died at the time of his return will live again; those who live and believe at that time will never have to pass

through death.

The title didaskale for Christ

The vocative appears the following # of times in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John: 6, 10, 12, 3. As % of total # of words, these are .03, .09, .06, .02% of the total words in each book.

By comparison, *kurie* appears 34, 1, 27, 33 times, respectively, with %'s .18, .01, .14, .21.

The ratios of *didaskale/kurie* are .18, 10, .44, .09.

Thus *didaskale* is rarest in John, not only absolutely, but by percentage, and also in comparison with the title *kurie*. Conversely, Mark is remarkable in preferring this title for the Lord.

Chief Priests and xxx

- chief priests & scribes 22vv (MML)
- chief priests & pharisees 7x (5x J, 2x Mt)
- chief priests & elders 22x (MMLA)
- scribes & pharisees 22x (MMLA, 1xJ)
- cp, scribes, elders 11x (MML)
- cp 10x in J, paired only with pharisees