

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

JOHN 10-11

A familiar sight at the time of Jesus was a sheepfold.

Almost every green hill had a holding yard for sheep. They dotted the countryside all over the hills of Judea and Samaria. The shepherd would bring his flock in at night to shelter the sheep from weather and predators.

Sometimes the sheepfold was a cave. At other times it was a walled enclosure made of mud or thorn bushes. Most often the tall walls around the sheep were stacks of stone... The only way in or out of the sheepfold was a narrow passageway... And in John 10 Jesus uses this common scene from daily life to teach us lessons about His relationship with His followers...

Beginning in verse 1, "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." To scale the wall, or dig out underneath it, was an unauthorized entrance. It was the tactic of a rustler.

"But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice..." It was common for several shepherds to use one fold. *One pen corralled multiple flocks.* A designated shepherd would spend the night in the doorway to protect the sheep from intruders.

And sheep have acute hearing. They know their shepherd's voice. In the morning all he had to do to separate his flock

was to sound out his distinctive call. His sheep would start sorting and moving toward him.

And a Christian should respond to the voice of the Spirit of Jesus, as a sheep responds to their shepherd.

Jesus says, verse 3, “**And he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.**” Memory experts develop triggers that enable them to go out into a crowd, meet dozens of people for the first time; then instantly recall everyone’s name. It’s an impressive performance.

Yet Jesus puts the memory experts to shame! He knows billions of believers by name. *He even knows **your** name.* And his memory is fueled not by clever techniques, but by the deep love He has for each of us.

“**And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice...**” Remember the blind man in Chapter 9. He had never seen Jesus' face, but he recalled His voice.

Likewise, a Christian today has never seen Jesus face to face, but we’ve learned to recognize His voice.

We’ve walked with Him, and we know how He speaks to us. Sheep know the voice of their shepherd.

“**Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.**” They say the only time a sheep follows a stranger is if it’s sick. *The same is true for Christians.* Spiritually healthy sheep are attuned to their Shepherd!

I heard of a New York building fire. A blind, little girl was trapped on the fourth floor. At her particular apartment, there wasn't enough room for the firemen to use their ladders, so they stretched out a net and told her to jump. But she couldn't see the net and refused.

Just in the nick of time, her father drove up to his burning apartment. He raced to the base of the building and shouted to his little girl to jump. And she did... *But it was only because she heard her father's voice.*

From time to time, a Christian's faith demands that he or she take a leap of faith. Often we can't see where we'll land, but we too need to trust our Father's voice!

Verse 6, "Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them." Sheep aren't very bright. Maybe that's why Jesus compares us to them (video). I hate to admit it, but I've resembled a sheep on occasion... Yet He uses the analogy again.

Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door." An ancient sheepfold had no doors or gates. **The shepherd was its door.** His body was the barricade. Once the sheep were tucked in, the shepherd laid over the threshold and stayed between the sheep and potential danger.

Here Jesus is saying, "You'll harm the sheep over my dead body." There's only one entrance into God's sheepfold, and that's to come through Jesus Christ.

Jesus tells them, “If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.”

Pastures in Palestine aren't huge, flat grazing lands like out in Texas. Most of Israel - especially around Jerusalem - is rocky and mountainous. Tiny pockets of pasture lie in between steep slopes and rugged cliffs.

Ample supplies of grass are difficult to access. It takes a skilled, and caring, and experienced shepherd to find pasture for His flock... And likewise, we live in a barren world. Spiritual pasture is hard to come by, but our Good Shepherd knows our needs, and He is able to satisfy His sheep if we graze where He tells us.

Verse 10, “The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.” And this is Satan's motive.

The devil doesn't desire Your welfare. He's out to destroy you... Yet Jesus promises, “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” The original is actually “superabundance.”

There's no limit to the blessings Jesus offers us.

Once, an old man drove over the Rocky Mountains in a 1946 Ford. The steep grade took its toll on the motor. It overheated. He had to stop several times. The trip was stressful. He eventually made it, but he didn't enjoy the ride and he had little interest in the scenery.

But later, the same man made another trip over the Rockies - this time in a brand new Ford F-150 pick-up.

The motor purred like a kitten as it climbed the mountains and hugged the curves. This time there was no apprehension.

The man's trip was fun. Several times he even stopped to admire the panoramic views.

Without Jesus, life is like the man's first trip. With Jesus, life is like his second. The terrain doesn't change. Everyone's life is full of steep stretches and sharp curves, but with power under the hood of your life, you'll run better. The challenges remain, but when you're traveling with Jesus you can enjoy the journey!

For Jesus says, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep." A hired hand cares only about a paycheck. He has no investment in the sheep. He lacks commitment, and as a result, he splits at the first sign of hardship or danger. Whereas, a shepherd loves his sheep, and is willing to sacrifice for them. He'll put himself in harm's way to protect them.

And do you know what the term for "shepherd" is in Latin? It's pastor. For a good pastor is like a shepherd. He loves the sheep. He's responsible. He'll sacrifice for them and even endanger himself to protect them. He's accountable to Jesus for the welfare of the sheep.

Yet sadly, too many pastors are nothing but hired hands. They work only for a paycheck, and when the going gets rough they bolt and abandon the sheep.

Some pastors started out wanting to be shepherds, but when they're treated like hirelings for so long they act the part... If a congregation wants a real shepherd they should let their pastor lead. They need to trust him and treat him like a shepherd - not like a hired hand.

Jesus says it again in verse 14, "I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.

And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd."

The "*other sheep*" to which Jesus refers are the Gentiles (*most of us*) who eventually receive the Gospel and become "*one flock*" with Jewish believers. Jesus is the "*one shepherd*" of Jews and Gentiles.

"Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."

Realize, the crucified Christ was not a victim. Jesus was the Good Shepherd who willingly and voluntarily sacrificed His life for the sheep. It's ironic, "Under the Old Covenant the sheep were sacrificed for the shepherd, while under the New Covenant it's the Shepherd who becomes a sacrifice for the sheep."

Jesus, the Good Shepherd became the sacrifice who was *sheared* and *slain*, so His sheep could be saved.

Verse 19 sheds light on the discussions that followed the healing of the blind man in Chapter 9, “Therefore there was a division again among the Jews because of these sayings. And many of them said, “He has a demon and is mad. Why do you listen to Him?” Others said, “These are not the words of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”

The miracle left the Jews divided over what to make of Jesus. They debated *was He of God or of Satan?*

Verse 22, “Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter.” This feast was also called the “Festival of Lights.” It occurs in December.

This wasn’t one of the seven feasts instituted in the OT but was added between the testaments. It commemorated a miracle God worked after Jewish rebels had liberated Jerusalem and its Temple from pagan invaders. God caused a single day’s portion of sacred oil to burn for eight days. Hanukkah, as it’s called today, is still celebrated by Jews worldwide.

The rest of the dialogue in John 10 occurs during this feast or 2½ months after the healing of the blind man.

Verse 23, “And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch.” This was the long, roof-covered colonnade just south of the Temple’s Holy Place.

Winter in Jerusalem is usually drizzly and cold. It was definitely time to pull out the thermal robes.

I'm sure you know what the Apostle John was wearing? He had on his "long johns..." Solomon's porch provided Jesus a little shelter from the elements.

"Then the Jews surrounded Him..." or "hemmed Him in." They cornered Jesus. "And said to Him, 'How long do You keep us in doubt?'" Stop beating around the bush, "If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." *But he had!*

Recall in 8:58 Jesus had said, "Before Abraham was, I AM." Jesus had claimed to be the voice speaking from the burning bush. He didn't shy away from the question of who He was... He had boldly claimed to be God.

Here "Jesus answered them, 'I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me.'" But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone 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 My Father's hand." This verse reminds me of the Allstate insurance slogan, "You're in good hands." **You're in good hands with Jesus!** If Jesus has you in His grasp, no man can pluck you out. He never gets stripped sacked - never fumbles what's in His hands.

Notice too, Jesus says, "*no one can snatch you out of MY HAND.*" then, "*no one can snatch you out of MY FATHER'S*

HAND.” It’s as if *Jesus’ hands* and the *Father’s hands* are the same hands. *And they are.* He leaves no doubt in verse 30. He utters, what was a shocker to all who heard it, **“I and My Father are one.”**

The Jews wanted it straight - well, this is as straight and clear as it gets. The Father and the Son are two persons, but they are one substance. They are one.

The Bible reveals that there is one God who exists in three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Throughout the OT, God’s plural nature was clearly taught. As far back as the creation, God said, **“Let Us make man in Our image...”** The one true God had spoken of Himself with the use of plural pronouns.

Yet the Jews failed to recognize the Triune nature of God. They didn’t grasp His Sonship. Thus, they said Jesus was guilty of blasphemy and deserving of death.

Verse 31, **“Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, “Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?”** In other words, Jesus wants to know, *what have I done to deserve to be executed?*

“The Jews answered Him, saying, “For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God.” The Jews were blind to the OT revelation that Messiah would be the **“God-man.”** He would be *fully divine and fully human.*

This is why Jesus takes them back to Scripture, “Jesus answered them, “Is it not written in your law, ‘I said, “You are gods” ‘? Here He quotes Psalm 82:6...”

He continues, “If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken)...” Notice the parentheses. Obviously, Jesus' believed in the authority and reliability of the Bible. He said adamantly, “*The Scripture cannot be broken...*”

Ignore it - attack it - deny it - try to refute it - but the Bible eventually *wears you down or wins you over.*

It's been said, “The Bible is an anvil that has broken many hammers.” Yet why beat on the Bible like an anvil? Why not use it as a foundation? Build on what can't be broken and it'll last forever. The Bible is a rock.

But back to verse 35, “If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’?”

In the verse Jesus quotes, Psalm 82:1, God was rebuking Israel's judges. The next verse in Psalm 82 implies that “How long will you judge unjustly, and show partiality to the wicked?” In context, these judges were clearly human, yet they're called “gods” with a little “g” because they **represented** the one God with the capital “G.” These men were gods only in the sense of standing in His place and issuing His verdict.

Thus, Jesus is saying *if the psalmist ascribed the term “gods” to wicked men, why is it wrong when the real “Son of God” uses the term to describe Himself?*

I mention this because some cults take 10:35 out of context to justify the deification of believers - *that humans can be gods in the same way God is God*. That's a gross misinterpretation. If you're a little-g "god" in the Psalm 82 or John 10-sense you're a wicked judge, and you're in the crosshairs of God's judgment.

Remember, the cultist's coffee cup. It reads, "I can do all things through a verse taken out of context."

In verse 37 Jesus continues, "If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him." Don't just listen to *My words*, examine *My works*.

Jesus made claims the Jews saw as blasphemous, but had those claims not been validated by *His works*?

His works backed up *His words* and proved that He was God. Yet verse 39, "Therefore they sought again to seize Him, but He escaped out of their hand. And He went away again beyond the Jordan to the place where John was baptizing at first, and there He stayed."

Then many came to Him and said, "John performed no sign, but all the things that John spoke about this Man were true." And many believed in Him there." The location reminded folks of John's testimony of Jesus. Now they could see, that what John had said was true.

Jesus has just challenged His critics to examine *His words* by **His works**. In Chapter 11, Jesus does one of His greatest

works... “A certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.”

Bethany was a suburb of Jerusalem, on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives. Jewish pilgrims would pass through Bethany as they went up to Jerusalem.

And “It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.” John identifies this family by referring to an event that he hasn’t yet written about, but will. Chapter 12 shows the desperate and doubting Mary we find here, who gets transformed into a worshipper.

“Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, “Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick.” Notice, they didn’t say, “he who loves you,” though I’m sure Lazarus did love Jesus, but the women say, “*he whom You love.*”

The real distinctive trait about a Christian is not that he loves God, who wouldn't love God when God is so lovable! *The amazing thing is that God loves us!*

“When Jesus heard that, He said, “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” This was also what Jesus said of the man born blind. Jesus doesn’t cause suffering, but He uses tragedies to showcase His glory.

“Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister (Mary) and Lazarus. So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was.” *But is this any way for Jesus to show someone He loves them?* A friend is sick, and

it's within His power to do something about it, yet He drags His feet to respond?

Realize, human love and God's love act differently.

Human love coddles. It rushes in to alleviate any twinge of suffering. It's a pampering love, but God's love is a perfecting love. God doesn't shelter us. He forces us to face life head-on. *Faith doesn't get stretched without tension. Character isn't forged except through struggle. Courage doesn't grow apart from a challenge. Conviction doesn't crystallize unless there's pressure.* Jesus has lessons to teach those He loves.

This is why He waits.

“Then after this, He said to the disciples, “Let us go to Judea again.” The disciples said to Him, “Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone You, and are You going there again?” 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. But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.” Jesus isn't afraid of circumstances.

As long as you walk in God's light you won't stumble. It's God's will He visit Bethany, so God will guard Him.

Verse 11, “These things He said, and after that He said to them, “Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up. Then His disciples said, “Lord, if he sleeps he will get well.” They figured Lazarus was just ill. He could sleep it off. Get some rest. He'll be fine.

“However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep. Then Jesus said to them plainly, “Lazarus is dead.”

In both the Bible and secular literature, sleep is often used as an idiom for death. Recall when Jesus entered Jairus' house, He told the mourners, “The girl is not dead, but sleeping.” Of course, the Jews just laughed. She had no pulse, she was cold and blue, her eyes had rolled back in her head. “*She's just sleeping?*”

But Jesus knew the girl's condition was temporary.

Realize, sleep is a fitting analogy for death. In sleep and death, the body suspends activity while the inner man stays active. As a poet put it, “Sleep is but a short death; death is but a longer sleep.” The resurrection will be the “last wake-up call” - *where everybody gets a new body* - fit for eternal life or for eternal damnation.

And sleep was also a popular analogy for death among early Christians. Believers referred to the grave as “resting-houses.” Our English word “cemetery” means “sleeping place.” The grave has a door on the inner side. *Jesus uses this occasion to prove the point.*

Verse 15 “And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless, let us go to him. Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with Him.” This was “*Doubting Thomas*” living up to his nickname. Certainly, Thomas was devoted - *he's ready to die for Jesus.* He's a

sailor willing to go down with the ship, *but he lacks faith*. He's the ultimate pessimist.

Did you hear of the optimist who took the pessimist duck hunting? He wanted to show off his hound. The guy sees the dog, and shrugs, "Looks like a mutt to me."

But pretty soon a flock of geese fly overhead. *Bam, bam* - two fall in the middle of the lake. The dog runs over the top of the water, picks up both ducks in his mouth, and runs back across the surface of the lake.

The optimist sticks out his chest and asks his friend, "Now, *what do you think of my dog?*" The pessimist said, "Your dumb dog doesn't even know how to swim."

That was Thomas. His cup was always half empty, rather than half full. It's interesting, Thomas is called, "The Twin." Apparently, he had a sibling just like him...

And I wonder if he's you? How negative are you?

Do you awake and greet the day, "Good Lord, it's morning" or "Good morning, Lord"? Travel with Jesus and there's always a bright side. *Don't be a doubter...*

Verse 17 "So when Jesus came, He found that (Lazarus) had already been in the tomb four days."

Jesus' promise to the messenger four days earlier, that "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God" - now seemed like a wishful thought. Lazarus was no longer just sick, but he's dead as a doorknob.

"Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away. And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha

and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house. Then Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."

She accuses Jesus of a missed opportunity... Martha had a strong faith! She had no doubt if Jesus had come, in time He could've saved her brother's life, but He'd delayed. Martha is about to learn Jesus never misses an opportunity. He just has His own timetable.

Martha's faith was *strong* but *struggling*. She wants to believe Jesus can still perform a miracle, but this is no longer an illness - a feeble fever. The King of Death has choked the life out of her brother. Martha believes in healing. She's seen Jesus handle fevers, but is her faith *big enough, brave enough, bold enough* to tackle the Grim Reaper? She says to Jesus, "But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You."

Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die." Realize, Martha believed in a doctrine - **the doctrine of the resurrection**. Our bodies will one day live. She had correct theology, *but did she actually believe in Jesus?*

She makes a statement of faith in verse 24, *but real faith is more than words!* You can believe in the right doctrines and quote the correct creeds. But when was the last time the

power behind the doctrine jumped off the page and got a hold of your mind, heart, hands?

Like Martha, **you** believe in *the resurrection... one day... yet future*. But right now do you believe Jesus will resurrect a dead joy, or a dead dream, or a dead marriage, or a dead ministry? You believe that Jesus created the heavens and earth, but what about His creative power in the hopeless situation you face?

When Jesus said, "*I am the resurrection and the life,*" He was taking a truth off the page, and putting it in a person. He plucks truth out of the realm of doctrine and inserts it into the realm of relationship. He moves it from the future to the present. Real faith is more than a matter-of-fact declaration. *It's reliance on a friend.* Jesus asks Martha, and us, "*Do you believe Me?*"

"She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world." Martha tries to sidestep Jesus' real question.

"And when she had said these things, she went her way and secretly called Mary her sister, saying, "The Teacher has come and is calling for you." As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly and came to Him.

Now Jesus had not yet come into the town, but was in the place where Martha met Him. Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and comforting her, when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, followed her, saying, "She is going to the tomb to weep there." Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet,

saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died." Like Martha's, Mary's faith is also struggling.

"Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled." The phrase means "a deep-seated anger." More than just disappointed, Jesus was mad. "And He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to Him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus wept." Verse 35 is a monumental moment... **the day God cried.**

But why did God cry? There were various theories from the beginning... "Then the Jews said, "See how He loved him!" And some of them said, "Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?" Some folks thought Jesus was grieving a loved one. Others thought He was upset He had arrived late... *But neither reason is why He cried...*

Jesus wept, not because of what death had done to do to the person *inside* the tomb, but because of what it had done to His followers *outside* the tomb. They let the Grim Reaper waltz into their lives and strip them of what they had held precious - rip off their joy and faith.

They had handed over their hope and happiness without even a struggle. It was a pathetic scene. *Enough to make you cry. Enough to make God cry.*

Verse 38 "Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there is a stench,

for he has been dead four days.” I like the OKJV here. Martha says, “Lord, by this time he stinketh.” The corpse reeked with rigor-mortis.

Superstitious Jews believed a dead person’s spirit hovered over its body three days - but once the body deteriorated to a certain point it gave up any hope of returning. By Day Four all hope had been abandoned.

Verse 40 “Jesus said to her, “Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?”

Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me.” Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth!” And it’s been pointed out that if Jesus hadn’t specified, “*Lazarus*” - every corpse in every graveyard would’ve come bounding from their tomb...

Realize, though this was Lazarus' first funeral, it was not his last. He was resurrected, but he died again.

Yet in light of what happened this day, I'm sure his second funeral was much different. No one present for this miracle ever saw death the same. From now on, it was viewed as *transitional, not final - as a birth, not a burial - as a promotion, not a loss - as gladness, not sadness*. Here, **Jesus took the string out of death.**

Verse 44, “And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a

cloth.” Notice, Lazarus was alive but bound. He had new life, but he still wore grave clothes.

And this is the predicament of every believer. We’re resurrected spiritually. We’re a recipient of new life, but the attitudes, and habits, and thought patterns of the past remain. We’re alive but still wearing grave clothes.

And notice, though Jesus gave Lazarus new life, He didn’t free him from his shroud. *That wasn’t Jesus’ job.* He assigns that responsibility to Lazarus’ friends. “Jesus said to them, *“Loose him, and let him go.”*”

Today, it’s the church’s job to help a new believer shake free from bondage. Our role is to help him or her to see themselves in Christ, and shed their sinful habits, and renew their mind. We need to help our fellow believers swap *grave clothes* for *grace clothes*.

Verse 45, “Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him. But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, “What shall we do? For this Man works many signs.”

Trying to discredit Jesus’ miracles had become a full-time job for these jealous Jews. Damage control was getting more difficult. “*For this Man works many signs.*”

Remember, everyone Jesus healed succumbed to illness later. Everyone He raised from the dead died a second time. Jesus’ miracles weren’t intended to close hospitals or end the funeral business... *His power revealed His identity and illustrated His promises.*

The chapter ends by giving us a glimpse of what was going on behind closed doors - at the priestly politics...

In verse 48 they deliberate, "If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation."

Realize, the Jewish aristocracy had a deal with the Romans. Rome would prop up the Jews as long as the Jews did their bidding and helped keep the peace. Jewish cooperation is rewarded with power and profits.

Yet Jesus was a threat to this arrangement. He couldn't be controlled. Jesus shook up the status quo.

"And one of (the Jews), Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish." His words were an accidental prophecy.

John writes, "Now this he did not say on his own authority; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad."

Caiaphas was a wicked man *pronouncing a death sentence*, but God *used the High Priest to prophesy our salvation*. It's *ironic*. the Jews put Jesus to death to save their own skin, in reality, He was saving the world.

"Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death. Therefore Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews

(He knew their plans), but went from there into the country near the wilderness, to a city called Ephraim, and there remained with His disciples.

And the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went from the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves. Then they sought Jesus, and spoke among themselves as they stood in the temple, "What do you think - that He will not come to the feast?" Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a command, that if anyone knew where He was, he should report it, that they might seize Him." It seems the chief priests had gone so far as to put a bounty on Jesus' head. *It's sad that one of His own disciples would be the person to collect...*