

# THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

## Ch. 11

In this book John recaps seven of Jesus' "I am" sayings and seven miracles, like turning water into wine, feeding 5,000 people out of a lunch bucket, walking on water, healing the blind and lame.

The biggie in this chapter is the pinnacle of His "God-signs," showing His dominance over death and galvanizing His enemies' intent to do away with Him. **Let's read John 11:1-57.**

The village of Bethany lies east of the Mount of Olives, an easy, two-mile trek from Jerusalem. His pals Mary, Martha and their brother Lazarus saved the guest room for Him.

Weary of sparring with those testy Pharisees, the Master takes some comp time up in Perea, beyond the Dead Sea. Mary and Martha get word to Him there that Lazarus is deathly ill, pleading with Him to hurry to His buddy's aid. But, no, strangely Jesus remains hunkered down some 20 miles away. The Great Physician seems heartless, yet that's not His style.

Jesus is about to give His comrades a bigger-than-death reason to waive all doubts and believe that their fellow Traveler is for real, the Son of God.

**DISCUSS:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **"Martha, Martha"**

A busload of friends rolls into Bethany to comfort the girls. Martha is the Alpha-sis, Hillary. Mary, the shy, retiring Melania. Both sisters know Jesus can revive their brother. Jesus reassures Martha that her brother will live again, meaning Lazarus will forever live in God's presence, escaping eternal damnation in a very real, dark, fiery, violent pit the Bible calls hell.

Jesus tells Martha this gift of eternal life comes merely by placing her faith in Him. Then He asks her the same question He's posing to you: **"Do you believe this, Martha?"** Your eternal destiny rides solely on your answer. Ultimately, each of us *must* reply. **Let's read Philippians 2:5-11.**

**DISCUSS:** \_\_\_\_\_

Only Jesus, God's Son, can present you to His Father in heaven one day as holy, blameless, perfect and complete *because of* Christ! We can't do anything to earn it. The Bible says God's forgiveness isn't our reward for sacrifice, communion, church membership or good deeds. It comes only one way -- as a free, UNdeserved gift from God, through faith, offered to us because on the cross Jesus died to wipe out, once and for all, the total penalty for your sins and mine.

When Mary comes to greet Her hard-to-figure Friend, we find the Bible's shortest verse: "Jesus wept." The One who will, sooner than we think, reign for an endless eternity on heaven's throne as King of all earthly kings and Lord of all ordinary lords. The Creator in person. Weeping!

### **"That Great Gettin' Up Morning"**

Keeping His pledge that Lazarus would live again, and that God would get the credit for this death-defying act, Jesus orders the stone removed from the tomb. In a loud voice He shouts, "Lazarus, this way out!" No David Copperfield *abra cadabra*. Just the voice of God.

What were Lazarus' first words after he sat up straight his graveclothes had been peeled off. So with apologies to God. Maybe he said, "My dear sisters, the next time the Arafats invite us over, I'm busy, OK?"

There in Bethany Jesus had validated His "I am" statement, "I am the Resurrection and the Life." Only God, the Giver of life, has authority over death. One day soon, before we know it, our Lord will repeat this miracle on a cosmic scale. See if you can see yourself in the prophetic picture that Paul paints as we **read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**.

**DISCUSS:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **"Believe You Me" or "Believe Me, You?"**

As onlookers gawk at this incontrovertible proof of Christ's claim to be God, many *believe* Him. The Greek word here for "believe" is to "put one's faith in" and "entrust one's spiritual well-being to." What will it take for *you* to believe?

Talk about dead men walking, look what happened in Jerusalem the instant Jesus died on the cross! **Let's read Matt. 27:50-54**.

The cross looms larger and larger. The Jewish rulers pull an emergency session of their highest council composed of Pharisees who live by the letter of the law, and Sadducees who waffle over a literal God, and disbelieve miracles, angels or

life after death. They put out an A.P.B. on Jesus to, get this, kill their own Messiah!

It's April. The faithful stream in for Passover, the Jews' version of Cinco de Mayo. Jerusalem's population swells to three million, all curious about this Miracle-Man who would become the Lamb sacrificed for them.

**DISCUSS:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Build On The Rock**

In His "Sermon on the Mount" Jesus said, "The one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed, and its destruction was complete." **(Luke 6:49)**

If you haven't built that indestructible foundation for your present and future, right now is the time to whisper a simple prayer like this .... "God, I don't have all the answers. I accept Your amazing forgiveness. Father, I'm Yours because Jesus paid my death penalty for me. I'm ready to be who You designed me to be. And I'll thank You forever!"

His Deal

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