

Dr. David Turner, Gospel of John, Session 13, John 11:1-57

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This is Dr. David Turner in his teaching on the Gospel of John. This is session 13, Tense Times in Jerusalem, Jesus Raises Lazarus, John 11:1-57.

Hello, I'm David Turner. Welcome to our video on John chapter 11. We have been following Jesus in his ministry in Jerusalem ever since he arrived in John chapter 7 through the Feast of Sukkot, and then in chapter 10 with a bit of a hiatus between Sukkot in the fall and Hanukkah, Feast of Dedication in the winter. Unfortunately for us and particularly for Jesus, no one likes to be involved in growing tension and growing anger and growing disputes, but that's exactly the narrative that we have been following.

So, it's not a pleasant experience to follow the way the story is going at this point, but it is a dose of reality that we all need to understand and swallow as we look at the story of Jesus, not only in the Gospel of John but in the synoptic tradition as well. So, in John chapter 11, we come to probably the most amazing miracle of all the miracles of Jesus in John, the raising of Lazarus. So as has been our custom, we'll continue to just follow the narrative through and get the overall flow, and we'll come back and look at some specific matters that are noteworthy in the narrative itself.

So first, the narrative flows. The narrative of John 11 begins really at the end of John chapter 10 by saying that Jesus has left Jerusalem and has gone to Bethany on the other side of the Jordan. That would be a reference to some location east of the Jordan.

We're not sure exactly where. It is identified as the place across the Jordan in 1040 where Jesus had been baptizing, or excuse me, where John had been baptizing in the early days. So, we have an illusion in 1042 back to chapter 1 and verse 28 where it states, that this all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan where John was baptizing.

This is an obscure site and it's not exactly clear where this was. We'll have more to say about this in a moment. For the purpose of the plot of the story, it is basically this little hiatus in Bethany, wherever it is.

For the purpose of the story then, Jesus has left the tense dispute and opposition and, dare we say it, lynch mob that was operating against him in John 7 through 10 as it built up to even fever pitch. So, he leaves the city and goes out into the countryside to a place where it's much more calm. We're told in the end of chapter

10 that in this location many people came to him and they said, although John never performed a sign, everything John said about this man was true.

So, we have an interesting little affirmation of John the Baptist here way deep into the gospel of John chapter 10. We don't think we've heard much about John since Jesus mentioned him briefly in chapter 5 and since John himself gave his last testimony to Jesus in the latter half of John chapter 3. So, we're told once again in that place many believed in Jesus. The nature of their faith, however, somewhat ambiguous due to other texts we've already looked at.

So, then we get into the gospel of John itself. Meanwhile, back in the Jerusalem area, Jesus is having this short retreat, as it were, in Bethany, but bad things are happening in Jerusalem. We're told in chapter 11 verses 1 through 6 that Jesus learns about the illness of his friend Lazarus, who as we're going to find out if we don't recall was a person who lived in Bethany, a village evidently just on the other side of the Mount of Olives from Jerusalem just a couple of miles away.

So, Jesus finds out that Lazarus is ill, but he does not immediately go to do anything about it. So, the sisters who had anointed Jesus, one of them, at least Mary, is the one who had anointed Jesus with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair. So the sisters sent word to Jesus and said, Lord, the one you love is sick.

So, when Jesus hears this, he speaks in a rather cryptic way, this sickness will not end in death. No, it's for the glory of God so that God's Son may be glorified through it. We have a parenthetical note in verse 5 from the author, the editor, John, to explain this.

Now Jesus loved Mary and her sister and Lazarus, so when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was for two more days. Those two statements don't seem to work together, do they? He loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, so when he saw Lazarus, he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was for two days. Then he said to his disciples, let's go back to Judea.

As soon as Jesus proposes a trip back to Judea and tells the disciples that they should go back, immediately they say to him, Rabbi, Master, don't you realize that they were about to kill you there not long ago? In verse 8, yet you're going back? Are you sure we have to do this? And Jesus said, are there not 12, again a bit of cryptic language here in verse 9, are there not 12 hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not stumble, for they see by this world's light. It's when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light. So, Jesus seems to be describing himself and his disciples as those who have light, and even though they're going back into danger, they're going to be okay.

They're not like people in the night who have no light, and so they're going to stumble. So, we have language here in chapter 11 that takes us back to the entire teaching in John about light and darkness, the ethical dualism there going back all the way to John chapter 1, the prologue, and featured most recently with chapter 8, verse 12, I am the light of the world, and perhaps illustrated by Jesus healing the blind man who finally was able to see light in chapter 9. So, after he had said this, he went on to tell them and explain to them, that our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep. I'm going to go there to wake him up.

Speaking euphemistically of death, but misunderstood by the disciples in verse 12. Lord, if he sleeps, he'll get better. They thought, you know, Jesus is speaking of him really being asleep.

Jesus then told them plainly, in verse 14, that Lazarus is dead. For your sake, I'm glad I was not there, so that you might believe. Let's go to him.

So, Jesus now is basically disclosing to them that he's going to do something that will be noteworthy, and the fact that Lazarus has already passed will make it even all the more noteworthy. Thomas then says in response to this, to the rest of the disciples, let's also go that we may die with him. Now the most recent death that's been mentioned is that of Lazarus, but I don't think that's what Thomas is referring to here.

I think Thomas is referring in verse 16 back to what the disciples said to Jesus in verse 8. A short while ago, the Jews were trying to stone you, and you're going back. So when Thomas says, let's go that we might die with him, I think Thomas is just admitting that there will be danger in Jerusalem, and he and the rest of the disciples may end up dying if they go back. But if that's where Jesus is going, then that's where they're going to go as well.

So, all this then leads us up to verse 17, where Jesus does finally return to Jerusalem, and we have some conversations that ensue from that. First, he meets Martha, who finds out he is coming and goes to meet him. And the very first thing that Martha says to Jesus in verse 21 is, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

This shows an interesting amount of faith on her part, but perhaps her faith is limited to thinking that now that he has died, there's not anything you can do about it. So, when Jesus says to her, your brother will rise again in verse 23, Martha says, I know he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day. All that, of course, is true and factual and shows faith on her part.

She also said to Jesus in verse 22, if you had been here, my brother would not have died, yet I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask. So perhaps she wasn't in despair that her brother was lost to her, but she did acknowledge that

Lazarus had indeed died. When Jesus says, your brother will rise again, she doesn't pick up on the idea that perhaps even though she believes that God will do anything Jesus asks, Jesus is not going to ask God to bring Lazarus back immediately.

So, in any event, Martha has a bit of a combination of faith and lack of faith here, probably more faith than lack of it, but it's interesting to see her understanding of what she thinks Jesus will do. So, in response to Martha's comment, which we would call future eschatology, she believes in final judgment and resurrection to precede it, Jesus replies in verse 25, I am the resurrection and the life. One who believes in me will live even if they die, and even more interesting, whoever lives by believing in me will never die.

Then he says to Martha, do you believe this? Martha then gives a very good confession of faith in verse 27, I believe you're the Messiah, the Son of God who is to come into the world. She doesn't say anything specific about the resurrection in that, but she does affirm her belief in Lazarus. So, after this interchange, Martha goes back and summons Mary, and now Mary, her sister, comes to speak to Jesus in verse 28 and following.

Martha tells Mary, the teacher is here, he's asking for you. Mary hears this, she gets up quickly and goes to him. Still, Jesus had not entered the village according to verse 30, but people had heard he was coming and so they were eager to meet him.

So as Mary goes out there, those who were in the house think she's perhaps going to the tomb to pray, to weep, and so they follow her. So, when she reaches the place where Jesus was, according to verse 32, she falls at his feet and says the same exact thing that Martha had said in verse 21. So, 32 again repeating that Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

So, the conversation between Jesus and Mary doesn't go any further than that. The narrative now has Jesus near the tomb, near Bethany, and so things are going to start moving a little more rapidly. So, when Jesus sees her weeping and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, we have quite a scene here involving a great deal of emotion and I think we notice in scripture and even in modern Eastern cultures, not to mention ancient, weeping and mourning is a very public matter.

I think in the current Western world we tend to stifle our weeping and our mourning at the death of even our greatest loved ones and we tend to think there's something undignified about showing a huge amount of emotion at a funeral even if we are deeply in love with the person who has passed. Not so much in ancient times and even in modern times in the Near East. So, Jesus is deeply moved in spirit and troubled, deeply moved in spirit and troubled.

Another instance of the humanity of Jesus in the so-called spiritual gospel where some scholars have said Jesus' feet never really touch the ground. I think they're wrong about that. So deeply moved in spirit at the grief of Lazarus' sisters and those with them, Jesus says, where have you laid him? So, they say, come and see Lord and at that point, Jesus himself breaks down into tears.

John 11:35 is often billed as the shortest verse in the Bible. The Jews pick up on this, the observers, and note how much Jesus loved Lazarus. So everything is very warm and fuzzy and emotional at this point and so it's quite a weepy scene of great love and respect and intimacy between Jesus and these people who were his friends.

However, in the midst of all that beautiful scene of true love and mourning, we have this note of sort of unbelief or a snide remark being made in verse 37. Some of them said, could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying? In other words, if he is so great and so powerful, and if indeed his claims are true and he is the Messiah, why did he permit his dear friend to die? Having the benefit of the narrator's interpretive comments in the back story, those of us who are reading John 11 are aware that Jesus has purposely allowed this to happen and that he is sort of implicitly promised to do something about it. So, we can now see from this remark in verse 37 that these people are going to have a bit of a comeuppance.

Verse 38 then tells us about the actual raising of Lazarus. He arrives at the tomb itself and we're reminded once again in verse 38 that he is deeply moved, and came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance.

Take away the stone, he said. Of course, at this point in ancient times without having any embalming and in a hot climate, decomposition and the associated aroma would have been permeating the tomb. One reason why you cover the door with a stone.

Martha speaks up and says, Lord, by this time there is a bad odor. He's been in there four days. Jesus then reminds Martha in verse 40, did I not tell you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?

Jesus has said to her in verse 23, your brother will rise again. The one who believes in me will live even though he dies. Even those who live in me will never die.

Do you believe this? So here in verse 40, Jesus is reminding Martha of what he had told her before. So, they took away the stone, we're told in verse 41. I don't think that would have been a pleasant experience.

I think people would have begun to turn away from the stench that came boiling out of the tomb. At this point, Jesus prays, Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I

know that you always have heard me, but I say this for the benefit of people standing here that they may have believed that you sent me.

Isn't this the recurring theme that perhaps is most central to John that we have seen since that great favorite verse of everybody, John 3:16, and even before that, God so loved the world that he gave, the Father sent the Son. Time after time, Jesus is still centered on getting people to realize that the Father sent the Son. Once he had said this, Jesus said in a loud voice, Lazarus, come out.

And the dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen and the cloth about his face. Jesus says, take off the grave clothes, let him go. Unbind him from the wrappings and let him be free.

So, with this amazing text, then we come to what is often described as the seventh and the ultimate sign in the gospel of John. This is certainly a high point of the gospel and one that anticipates the very resurrection of Jesus himself. So, from this high point of drama, this amazing, most amazing of Jesus' miracles, we now have the denouement, the ensuing context that flows out of it in verse 45.

The first thing it says to us there in verse 45 is that many Jews who were around there believe in Jesus as we would expect. However, verse 46 sounds a note much like the previous note of verse 37. Remember back in 37, people were thinking, well, could not the one who opened the eyes of the blind have kept this from happening? And now that Jesus has actually raised Lazarus just as he opened the eyes of the blind man in chapter 9, so he actually even went further than that and raised the dead person in chapter 11.

Verse 46, some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. They, in effect, were forcing Jesus out to the Pharisees as the saying goes. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin.

We recall the last meeting of the Sanhedrin at the end of chapter 7. What are we accomplishing, they asked. This man is performing many signs. If we let him go on, everybody will believe in him.

They're thinking this will be like a popular uprising and it will involve destabilizing a Roman rule. And the Romans will come in and they will take away both our temple and our nation. Interesting that that is ultimately exactly what happened during the Jewish revolt in the mid-60s to AD 70, a generation away from this time.

Then we have the very political, shall we say, even Machiavellian counsel of Caiaphas in verse 49 and following. Caiaphas, who was a high priest that year, spoke up and said, you know nothing at all. In other words, you people don't really get it, do you?

You don't realize that it is better for you that one man should die for the people than that the whole nation perish.

These words of Caiaphas are often used in discussions of hermeneutics to say that the Bible often speaks better than it knows. Sometimes this is called *census plenior* and Caiaphas' counsel is applied to biblical narrators and biblical prophets, particularly in the Old Testament. I'm not so sure the validity of this or not, this way of using what Caiaphas says, but John quickly points out in verse 51 in an editorial comment, that he did not say this on his own, but despite his unbelief in Jesus, still he's speaking as one of God's functionaries, as high priest that year.

He prophesied, oh he did, did he? He prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation and not only for that nation but for the scattered children of God to bring them together and make them one. Verse 52 then picks back up to what Jesus said in chapter 10 about the shepherd wanting to bring people from other sheepfolds into one so that there would be one flock and one shepherd. So, the Machiavellian, shall we call it, the gritty counsel of Caiaphas was that they needed to plan to execute Jesus to save the rest of the nation, so that in that sense Jesus would die as a substitute for the whole nation because they conceived that if Jesus' movement was allowed to get bigger, it would lead to political upheaval and the Romans would come in and squash it and more and more people would die.

They would lose the temple and everything else. They took the counsel of Caiaphas, verse 53, so from that day on they plotted to take his life. Of course, they had already been plotting to arrest Jesus, to do away with him, so now evidently they plotted to do that all the more.

Verse 54 then says Jesus no longer moved publicly about the people of Judea. Instead, he withdrew to a region near the wilderness to a village called Ephraim where he stayed with his disciples. Just as Bethany beyond the Jordan is somewhat of an obscure place, so is this place Ephraim where Jesus goes and spends some time away from the danger that he was facing in Jerusalem.

So, this place Ephraim is in some people's minds identified with an Arab village called Et-Tell, 15 miles northeast of Jerusalem near Beth-in which is biblical Bethel. Of course, there was also the region of Ephraim, the tribe of Ephraim, going back to the allotment of the land in the Old Testament that I think would be further north than that up towards Samaria. In any event, we're not sure exactly where this was.

It's not important to the way the story is being told. So, what have we just seen here? Perhaps one way to look at the structure of the narrative as it flows is to see it in sort of a chiasmic structure centering around Jesus actually raising Lazarus. The background to the story of course is the transitional time east of the Jordan that

Jesus has spent, 10:40 to 42, taking us back to the early days of John the Baptist's ministry in 1:28.

So, Jesus has gone to trans-Jordan to avoid arrest as we begin the story and as we end the story of Lazarus, Jesus is essentially avoiding the murder plot once again, this time in a different place in Ephraim. Then we will move to Martha's grief and her belief and contrast that with the unbelief of the Pharisees. Martha says I believe you are the Messiah.

Clearly, the Pharisees did not believe Jesus was the Messiah. Martha's grief and, excuse me, Mary's grief and belief then right after Martha's would perhaps be tied to the belief of some of the Jewish bystanders after the resurrection or the raising of Lazarus. So, whether we accept all of these parallels as intentional or not, one thing is clear the story begins and ends with Jesus avoiding arrest.

So, the literary device of inclusion, sometimes called by its Latin term *inclusio*, is in operation here. Clearly, the story centers on the raising of Lazarus, whether or not the rest of these steps match up as neatly as this point that or not is an arguable point, but we would certainly be on the right track if we note the story begins and ends and that it centers on the resurrection of Lazarus, raising of Lazarus. Another point here that is, I think, interesting is the way in which the term Bethany is used.

We have this term Bethany beyond the Jordan and we have Bethany near Jerusalem. So, we have two different Bethany's. The one we're somewhat familiar with because it's a village near Jerusalem, evidently just east of Jerusalem.

This other place, Bethany beyond the Jordan, is a place that we're not exactly sure of. There is a place at the southern end of the Transjordan area near the Dead Sea, which has a tradition going back to roughly the fifth century, which identifies that as a place where Jesus was going and that's where John was originally baptizing. I think many people sort of have that as a popular understanding that John's ministry was carried out in the southern area of the Jordan River.

However, there are those who want to link Bethany sometimes by working etymologically with the consonants of the term Bethany, with a region known as Bethania, which is up the Jordan River considerably to an area sort of southeast of the Galilee region of Betania near the Yarmouk River there. To complicate things further, some of the manuscripts of John 1:28, to which 10:40 alludes, some of use the term Bethabara rather than Bethany. So that is another part of it that needs to be considered.

So, when we look at these two Bethanys, the one beyond the Jordan, a very unusual and difficult place to identify, we remind ourselves then topographically of the region of the land that Jesus inhabited. And so, from the standpoint of where commonly it's

viewed John was baptizing would be in this region here at the south. This is where the tradition going back to early medieval Byzantine times would locate John's baptism.

However, there is a theory that it was this region of Betania, and I think you can see the carved canyon here of the Yarmouk River somewhere in this region is also often posited today. So, looking at a more typical map than, Bethany beyond the Jordan, we're not sure exactly where it would be. Here's Jerusalem, but the Bethany beyond the Jordan is either somewhere up here, or as I think is more common in the popular understanding of scripture at least, down in the southern region.

So, when we look at the land from the standpoint of topographical maps, sort of a satellite approach to it here, this is probably a bit too dark, sorry. We're talking about either up here on the northeastern or the eastern side, the southeastern side actually of the Sea of Galilee. This is a nice map because it shows you the contours of the land here.

Very nice way we can see the Carmel Ridge and the Esdraelon Plain here into the Megiddo Valley. Further south with this same perspective, we see Jerusalem right up in here, and then the region where John is thought to have been baptizing, and we have the fifth-century tradition over here. But again, the Jordan Rift Valley proceeding to the north is quite interesting to see on this particular map.

If you are down near the Jordan River just to the east of Jerusalem, and you are looking toward Jerusalem to the west, you begin to understand why the expression is commonly people go up to Jerusalem, because as you are near the Jordan River, the Dead Sea there, you are around at least 1,000 feet, 1,200 feet or so, depending upon exactly where you are, below sea level, with Jerusalem being somewhere around 2,600, 2,700 feet above sea level. So, as you look up and look west, you see the country that you must traverse to get to Jerusalem, and it is rather foreboding. You pretty much take a telephoto lens and take the same view and see this perspective, roughly the same thing as we saw before, from a bit of a wider angle.

I'm not sure exactly, but I think we may be looking as far as the Mount of Olives here with this last ridge that just barely pokes up in the picture. So, this would have been the type of territory that Jesus would have traversed if indeed Bethany beyond the Jordan is the southern location. Even if he was in the northern location, he very likely would have come down the Jordan Valley and then made a right turn and turned west to go up to Jerusalem in this fashion.

Once you are up at Jerusalem and looking back over the territory that you have just covered, you're looking perhaps from the perspective of Al-Azharia, the Arab village, which is often today identified with Bethany, just east of the Mount of Olives. If we had a little better resolution here on our projector, you perhaps could see not only

the Jordan Valley here a bit but some of the ridges that are part of Jordan on the other side of the Jordan River. I think this little shadowy thing right here, this last little ridge that you can barely see in the clouds, is indeed that area.

So, you're looking about 15 miles to the east to see where the Jordan River would have been. So today this Arab village, Al-Azharia, is well known and you can see the general lay of the land and how it is quite near to Jerusalem. In fact, today it's a place of some dispute, unfortunately, because what is called the fence, which is actually a wall, is cutting off this Arab village from east Jerusalem due to the violence perpetrated on the Israelis by the Arabs.

They've built the wall. I hate to see the wall, but you can understand why they did it. There is a traditional tomb of Lazarus in this village, and whether or not it is authentic or not is anybody's guess.

There are first-century tombs nearby, so it is certainly not outlandish to think this could possibly be the place. I'm not familiar with whether professional archaeologists have evaluated this site. Perhaps they have, and I'm not familiar with it.

But you can go there today and see it, and it basically is this lower part here that you go into. There are various churches there as well today that commemorate the site. So, here's a schematic that attempts to give you some idea of what it would have been like to have been practicing the burial customs that were done in that day for Lazarus.

We are told in chapter 11 that there was a cave and a stone rolled in front of the door. Whether the cave was a natural cave or perhaps more likely one that was basically chiseled out of the rock, as in the case of the tomb of Joseph in which Jesus is going to be buried later on in this gospel, is not exactly clear. But you have some sort of arrangement like this with an opening with a channel sort of carved parallel to the face of the cave with a stone that rolls into that channel back and forth with putting some effort into it.

Typically right in front of the door, they would have a sort of a depression where the stone would sort of come down in and rest there, would sort of go boom, and gravity would hold it in the spot. So, there might be, once you go into the tomb, a separate chamber, a first chamber, a second chamber, niches would be cut into the walls vertically for the bodies to be put in. After the bodies had decomposed and space was at a premium, perhaps later, bones would be taken out, disarticulated from the skeleton, and put in a box.

If the people were wealthy enough to be able to afford a tomb, they probably would be able to afford a box to put the bones. In some cases not so much. So, here's just a general idea of what the tomb might have looked like.

If you go on a tour to Israel and you are up on Mount Carmel and you're in the Megiddo area there and you get on the bus and they take you down towards Megiddo in the valley, you'll be taken perhaps right by this rolling stone tomb right along the main highway as you go along that place. That's where this one is located. I don't think in ancient times, however, they were using this steel band to hold the disk together like someone had put it on there since that day.

So, this is just an example of a rolling stone tomb. There are many of them in Israel that you can see, which probably in some way or another approximate the tomb of Lazarus and more importantly the tomb of Jesus. More on the rolling stone tombs later.

We have some more slides to show about that when we get to chapter 19. So, some of the exegetical issues in John chapter 11. Some of the things that behoove our attention and cause us to think about it.

Just from the standpoint of the literary function of John 11 in light of everything else in the gospel, many people would refer to this as the climactic seventh sign. I think I spelled the word suspense wrong here, didn't I? I need an S there instead of a C. Uh-oh. So, suspense is the sort of building in the three-fold buildup to the miracle itself.

In other words, we have the dialogue between Jesus and the disciples. Essentially, Jesus is delaying here and permitting Lazarus to pass. Then Jesus has his dialogue with Mary and then with Martha.

I guess I got that backward. Martha and then Mary. And then finally he gets to the tomb and the way in which he miraculously heals, excuse me, raises Lazarus probably anticipates the way the passion is going to happen as well.

You can make an interesting comparison and parallel with that. The guarded cryptic language of Jesus in his early conversations with the disciples is also interesting in creating suspense and making you wonder what's going on when he speaks about the daylight and the night. The way in which the conversation that Jesus has in verses 21 through 27 with Martha is also interesting in light of the eschatology of the gospel of John.

We've discussed a bit already, primarily from the standpoint of chapter five, when Jesus said the hour is coming, yet it now is when the dead hear the voice of the son of God. In fact, people coming to faith in Jesus and hearing his voice brings them into a new life with God and is a resurrection of sorts, which Jesus says anticipates the resurrection on the last day. So, when Jesus is speaking with Martha, she affirms to him her belief in the resurrection on the last day.

Jesus then speaks to her more in terms of what we call realized eschatology, that the one who lives and believes in me will never die in one sense, and even those who are dead who believe in me are alive. So, this realized and future eschatology is sometimes subsumed under the title inaugurated eschatology, that it's not one or the other in the gospel of John and in the New Testament as a whole, it's both. Perhaps the most sobering thing about the miracle here is the antithetical response to it, not only by the immediate audience but by Caiaphas and the council as they reflect upon it.

So, imagine what it would have been like to have been standing there with Mary and Martha and their friends to see Jesus raise Lazarus, to have the stone rolled back and to be almost slapped in the face with the stench of his body, and then to see Jesus call him from the tomb and to actually see it unfold before your very eyes. Think of what that would have been like. It's not hard when you look at that to see what verse 45 is saying here.

Many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary and had seen what Jesus did believed in him. How could you have seen that and not believed in him? Well, how? According to verse 46, some of them who were standing there and who saw that, maybe even some who thought Jesus really was who he said he was, went and reported it to the Pharisees and told them what had happened. This caused them to call a meeting and instead of saying, we have numerous witnesses, not simply two, not simply three, we have numerous witnesses who can testify what Jesus has done.

So now it's finally time for us to come to our senses and acknowledge who he is. One would think that would be the rational thing that would have happened, but of course, that's not what happened. So, in light of all this, it's amazing to see Caiaphas and his somewhat enigmatic prophecy, which I think is essentially what political science would call *realpolitik*.

This is pretty much him saying this is the way this is going to go down, guys. In order for us to maintain our living standard our status and our position, this guy has to go down so that we can remain standing. Perhaps he really did think that the movement that Jesus was engendering would have been a popular revolt against Rome and would have brought the Romans down on them.

Perhaps that was the only way he could think of Jesus as a messianic figure. But John makes an interesting editorial comment here in verse 51, that this statement that Caiaphas intended as a political strategy, a way to maintain the status quo, is viewed as a prophecy. He didn't say this on his own, but as a theocratic individual, as a high priest that year, he spoke as a prophet.

And he said that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, not only for that nation but for the scattered children of God to bring them together and to make them one. This

is an amazing understanding of the ministry of Jesus from perhaps the most unlikely source in the whole Gospel of John. This person who was the high priest and had the most to lose, I guess you could say, if Jesus was right and they were wrong, has this comment, which he meant to say is the way that we'll get Jesus off our back.

But even in so doing in the providence of God, he gives glory to God and describes the theology that is really true and what's really going to happen in a way that he didn't even realize at the time. So what is the significance of the raising of Lazarus in light of the whole Gospel of John? I think I have perhaps misspoken even during this video by referring to it as a raising because Lazarus was not resurrected in the sense of the ultimate resurrection of God's people at the end, because his body was evidently a body that would be destined to die once again. He was not given what Paul might have called a glorified body or heavenly body at this time.

He was resuscitated. He was raised. He was not resurrected in the sense of being transformed with an entirely new kind of body.

So, this sense of raising needs to be, I think, clarified and made clear. As far as the way in which the sign of the raising of Lazarus is placed in the Gospel of John, it is certainly the climactic sign of John that demonstrates who Jesus is, his identity, and what Jesus wants to do, that is to say his mission. And we can say this for two reasons, not just the nature, but also the literary placement of the sign.

This is the most amazing thing that Jesus has done. He's done some amazing things, beginning with turning water into wine. But this makes that pale in significance, raising someone from the dead who had been dead for four days, who had begun to decompose.

To bring a person like that out of the grave is certainly the most amazing thing in this Gospel. It's also climactic, obviously, because of its literary placement. It is the last miracle, the last sign that Jesus is going to do before he enters Jerusalem has his farewell discourse with his disciples.

One might say that the appearance to them afterward in his resurrected body is a sign as well, and perhaps the end of John chapter 20 takes it that way. But as far as the signs building up to the highest point and their literary placement, this is certainly the climactic sign. We've been noticing how Jesus has been opposed all the way back to chapter 2 when he was asked by what authority he cleared the temple.

Opposition to him sort of was focused in chapter 5, and has been building from chapter 7 during this time. Pardon me. But here in chapter 11, I think the opposition to Jesus does come to its head, and there is a firm resolution of the council to get rid of Jesus, to execute Jesus, based on the council of Caiaphas.

Verse 53, from that day on, they plotted to take his life. As a piece of literature then, chapter 11 not only brings us this to a climax, this process that began all the way back in chapter 2 of opposition to Jesus, but it also takes us as readers from the public part of Jesus' ministry to the very end of that, that we'll find in the next chapter, transitioning us then into the farewell discourse and the passion narrative that begins in chapter 18. So, this is a pivotal chapter in many ways, a chapter that is one that is bringing us, showing us that the public ministry of Jesus is indeed coming to an end.

One more chapter and it will be over. But primarily, I guess we would want to say that this chapter is pivotal theologically, because in the story of John, the resurrection of Lazarus certainly emphasizes and anticipates the resurrection of Jesus. There is an even greater resurrection of Jesus that will come.

Jesus has said, *Ego eimi*, I am the resurrection and the life. Here we have a nice Latin version of that, evidently from the Vulgate in the church of St. Lazarus at Bethany today. I found this picture somewhat interesting because Lazarus is not in the picture.

But I think what the artist wanted us to see from this is that Lazarus is looking out of the tomb and seeing the one who is calling him from the tomb, and his sisters begging Jesus and praising him for taking care of their brother and the crowd standing around. So here perhaps are the mourners who are mourning with the sister. And over here are the bystanders, some of whom are looking sideways, perhaps already conspiring to take the news to the Pharisees.

In any event, I find this a very interesting way of looking at this story, and one that focuses us on the Lord, whom it is there to glorify.

This is Dr. David Turner in his teaching on the Gospel of John. This is session 13, Tense Times in Jerusalem, Jesus Raises Lazarus, John 11:1-57.