

Life Group Notes 1/22/2023  
Mark Warren John's Gospel Week 11

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If you have observations or questions feel free send me an email with your comment or observations at [tbeachhead@comcast.net](mailto:tbeachhead@comcast.net). -Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.

(This is written to give you good things to enjoy, because look again at what Paul told Timothy (1 Tim 6:17-18)! I think he was thinking of us at the time: **17 Instruct those who are rich in the present age not to be conceited and not to put their hope in the uncertainty of wealth, but in God, WHO RICHLY PROVIDES ALL THINGS TO ENJOY. 18 Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, and to be generous and ready to share...**)

Note: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP. The purpose is to unite, not divide; to proclaim fearlessly the freedom the gospel brings. Any part of these notes might be appropriate as a crowd breaker for your own group. The goal is to create memories from Sunday that will serve for a long time. BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study. This study is also a great devotion, taken slowly through the week.**

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Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions Pastor Mark has raised this week, 1/22, John 11. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.** Do not be daunted by the number of pages. As an editorial decision, I include each of the passages mentioned in full to facilitate the enjoyment of these notes, rather than having you, the reader, look up each reference. If your Bible is open beside you, you can transfer and annotate from these pages with ease.

At the end of the message notes, pages 7 to 11, I have made rather extensive notes on the remainder of the chapter and footnotes (\*) to help dig deeper into some of the principles, people and events in this passage. *These notes are offered to enhance understanding, and are not designed to complicate discussions in life group.* This week I covered:

1. On Lazarus.
2. On waiting two days.
3. On how many Marys and how many anointings of Jesus' feet with how much oil?
4. On Bethany.
5. On John the Evangelist.
6. On never dying
7. On the Sanhedrin

8. On being "High Priest that year."
  9. On God healing every time.
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Pastor Mark begins by recounting the tragic, sudden loss of two who died this week. ***How often has this been in the news lately? What have been your thoughts? (Please be very careful. Minister to one another.) Does each occurrence you've experienced make you, as Mark suggests, "...think about eternity a little more?"***

### **John 11 The Death of \*Lazarus**

**1**At this time a man named Lazarus was sick. He lived in Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. **2**(\*Mary, whose brother Lazarus was sick, was to anoint the Lord with perfume and wipe His feet with her hair.) **3**So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one You love is sick."

**4**When Jesus heard this, He said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

**5**Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. **6**So on hearing that Lazarus was sick, He stayed where He was for two days, **7**and then He said to the disciples, "Let us go back to Judea."

**8**"Rabbi," they replied, "the Jews just tried to stone You, and You are going back there?"

**9**Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? If anyone walks in the daytime, he will not stumble, because he sees by the light of this world. **10**But if anyone walks at night, he will stumble, because he has no light."

**11**After He had said this, He told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to wake him up."

**12**His disciples replied, "Lord, if he is sleeping, he will get better." **13**They thought that Jesus was talking about actual sleep, but He was speaking about the death of Lazarus.

**14**So Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, **15**and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."

**16**Then Thomas called Didymus [the twin] said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, so that we may die with Him."

1. How many personal friends or acquaintances of Jesus get sick in the gospels? Can you name them? How many die? (Scribe's note: I can think of one. Jesus' stepfather, Joseph.)
2. How many did Jesus let die? Why?
3. Why does Jesus say, "This sickness will not end in death," when Lazarus is already dead?
4. How is the Son of God glorified in Lazarus' death?
5. How is the Son of God glorified **through** Lazarus' death? What is the difference?
6. Why is it significant that Jesus loved Martha, her sister and Lazarus? What is Martha's sister's name?
7. Why did Pastor Mark say Jesus waited two days? (See footnote below) And why does John even mention Jesus' personal affection toward this family?
8. How is the tension building among the disciples? Are they becoming concerned? You've been traveling with Jesus for three years. How would you feel?

9. Look closely at what Jesus says in verses nine and ten. When was the light of the gospel at its most clear? What are we walking in today? Look back at what Jesus said in chapter 9: 4*While it is daytime, we must do the works of Him who sent Me. Night is coming, when no one can work.* 5*While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.* ...In chapter 9, Jesus healed the blind man "...so that the works of God would be displayed in Him." In this passage, and in chapter 9, with the blind man, what are the works of God? Why are you and I not doing those same "works of Him Who called US and sent US?" Should we be at this time of day? What time of day is it, according to what Jesus said above? Day or "night where no man can work?" Do you believe it is midnight? Or approaching dawn?
10. How many times in this gospel has John equated Jesus with the "light of the World?" Find the passages and share. What "dawned on" you when you understood?
11. Why does Jesus say Lazarus "has fallen asleep?" What does He mean by "Wake him up?" What does this tell you about life and death? Is this principle backed up anywhere else in scripture? Where? (Is our Father the God of the dead? Or of the living? Can you prove it like Jesus did?)
12. Did His disciples understand Him? Why not? How come you understand, and they didn't? What tool opened up your own understanding? (Can we take a moment to thank God for the gospel writers?)
13. Respond to Jesus' words in verse 14. When Jesus speaks plainly, is it easier to understand? Or do you have more questions after?
14. Look at Thomas the twin's comment. How prophetic is he being without knowing? (Remember, this is also "Doubting Thomas." We will remember this when we get to chapter 20.)

### **Jesus Comforts Martha and Mary**

17When Jesus arrived, He found that Lazarus had already spent four days in the tomb. 18Now \*Bethany was near Jerusalem, a little less than two miles away, 19and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them in the loss of their brother. 20So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet Him; but Mary stayed at home.

21Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. 22But even now I know that God will give You whatever You ask of Him."

1. What does this suggest, knowing that "...many of the Jews had come?" How well-known was Lazarus?
2. Knowing what you know of Martha and Mary, why did Martha come to Jesus and not Mary?
3. Look at Martha's statement. Is she correct? What is her faith telling her exactly?

23"Your brother will rise again," Jesus told her.

24Martha replied, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

25Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in Me will live, even though he dies. 26And everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?"

**27** “Yes, Lord,” she answered, “I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world.”

1. This passage is pivotal. What does Jesus mean by saying, “Your brother will rise again?”
2. What does Martha understand when she hears this statement? Was she “heavenly minded?” Did her thoughts do her any “earthly good?” Why not? Compare this to her declaration of faith in the previous section. Did she believe what she had declared? What made her say what she said, then? Compare Martha’s faith as she expresses it here to your own. What would you expect in this situation? Is she seeing through a glass clearly? Or darkly as Mark suggested?
3. What do Jesus’ words inspire when we know He is the resurrection? What proof do we have that He is the resurrection? Can this proof be found anywhere else in anyone else?
4. Name all the “I am’s” we’ve seen in this gospel so far. I’ll start: “I am the resurrection and the life.” What do you remember? Why are these “I am’s” so crucial to understanding the nature of Jesus? The nature of the Father? The nature and importance of these for grasping the concept of the Trinity Himself?
5. Look closely at Jesus’ words. Rephrase this statement in your own words: “And everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die.” Do you believe this? Answer Jesus for yourself. See the footnote on John below.

Pastor Mark says, “Jesus is the doorway to eternity.” Where have we heard that before? (See chapter 10, if you forgot.) He continues, “Even though we die, we live on. We aren’t looking to this place of death and thinking, ‘It’s all done.’ We look at death as the doorway to everlasting life.” **Explain.** He continues, “This means that this life is our preparation for everlasting life, which suggests that we’re **NOT** so heavenly minded that we’re **NO** earthly good...but that we **ARE** so heavenly minded that we **CAN BE** of earthly good.” **How will you explain this to Johnny Cash? Do you agree? Does this make sense? If we at Grace are making our life’s purpose to reach the lost, make room for the least and to train the found, how is that “heavenly minded?” How does it do any “earthly good?”** Pastor Mark points out that God has a very intentional plan that we get to join Him on. **What is that plan and if not we, then who?**

**Look up Revelation 21:** **1** Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. **2** I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

**3** And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying:

“Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man,  
and He will dwell with them.  
They will be His people,  
and God Himself will be with them as their God.

**4** ‘He will wipe away every tear from their eyes,’  
and there will be no more death  
or mourning or crying or pain,

for the former things have passed away.”<sup>5</sup>And the One seated on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.”

***Describe in your own words. Is it too heavenly minded to keep this day in mind? What earthly good does this knowledge do? Now look ahead to John 14: 2***In My Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ***3***And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and welcome you into My presence, so that you also may be where I am. ***What is in this promise that inspires hope? How alone will we be? How like from a shepherd is this promise? Now look up Isaiah 25:8*** ***8***He will swallow up death forever. The Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from every face and remove the disgrace of His people from the whole earth. For the LORD has spoken. ***Compare this with the promise from Revelation above. What do you see? These words were written five hundred years apart. How can you know they have the same author? Now look up 1 Corinthians 2:9*** ***9***Rather, as it is written: “ No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no heart has imagined, what God has prepared for those who love Him.” ***When you know that what you think you know doesn’t compare to what you know He knows, how does it help?***

**28**After Martha had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside to tell her, “The Teacher is here and is asking for you.” **29**And when Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to Him.

**30**Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met Him. **31**When the Jews who were in the house consoling Mary saw how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there. **32**When Mary came to Jesus and saw Him, she fell at His feet and said, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.”

**33**When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. **34**“Where have you put him?” He asked. “Come and see, Lord,” they answered.

**35**Jesus wept.

**36**Then the Jews said, “See how He loved him!”

**37**But some of them asked, “Could not this man who opened the eyes of the blind also have kept Lazarus from dying?”

1. Did the teacher ask for Mary? Why did Martha say that?
2. What was Mary’s response? How was that consistent with what we know of Mary?
3. When Mary fell in verse 32, this is not the word “worship”, but the word fell. The implication is that her emotions weakened her ability to stand. How does this speak of the deep grief Pastor Mark spoke of. How does this explain Jesus’ grief? What is He feeling?
4. Look at Mary’s words. Compare them to Martha’s. What did Mary not say?
5. Why did Jesus weep, knowing what was about to take place?
6. Why is it always so hard? How do we know God empathizes when we struggle through hard times? Pastor Mark says, “He wants to bring life back to that place that seems so desperate.” How does that work? Go back to John 10. If the thief comes to steal, kill and

destroy, why did Jesus come? What does "...and have life more abundantly..." actually mean? (See the footnote on "healing every time.")

7. Look at verse 37. Is the question reasonable? Answer them. How deep is the love the Father has for us?

Mark says, "Sometimes where difficulties arise, we feel like, 'Seeing is believing. Let me see it and I will believe it.' But in these cases, where difficulty come, it's actually believing is seeing." He goes on, "If you can't believe that God wants to be with you in your situation, God is not there. Why? It's not because He is not there, but because you have chosen not to see that He is. God is with you. Believing is seeing. You say, 'I'll believe it when I see it.' But can you believe the One who does the miracles before you see it?" He says, the goal is not the miracle, but to trust the outcome to Him. ***Explain. It's been said, "It's not what have to know to see the miracle. It's whom you have to know."*** ***Explain.*** Pastor Mark says, "I'm sure Lazarus was disappointed when he was brought back. 'You pulled me out of heaven for this? Come on. It was so much better there.'" ***Is this credible? What do you think? Put yourself in Lazarus' place. What does it do to know, as Mark said, "The power of God can bring dead things to life?"***

### ***Take the time to pray.***

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## **The rest of the story...**

### **Jesus Raises Lazarus**

***(Acts 9:36-43)***

***38*** Jesus, once again deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. ***39*** "Take away the stone," Jesus said.

"Lord, by now he stinks," said Martha, the sister of the dead man. "It has already been four days."

***40*** Jesus replied, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?"

***41*** So they took away the stone. Then Jesus lifted His eyes upward and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. ***42*** I knew that You always hear Me, but I say this for the benefit of the people standing here, so they may believe that You sent Me."

***43*** After Jesus had said this, He called out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"

***44*** The man who had been dead came out with his hands and feet bound in strips of linen, and his face wrapped in a cloth.

"Unwrap him and let him go," Jesus told them.

1. Narrate this story in your own words.
2. Who mentions the stink? Martha? Or Mary? What does this say of her faith? Why is that not surprising?
3. Look at Jesus' prayer in verse 41-42. Who heard Him speak the words of this prayer? For whose benefit did Jesus pray these words out loud? Look very closely: Is this a prayer of intercession, where Jesus is making a request? Or is this a prayer of thanksgiving? Why? If Jesus says, "You heard me..." when did that hearing happen if not here? What do we know that the Father must have heard? What resulted from the Father hearing Jesus? What do you learn from this? In Hebrews it is written, "Jesus ever lives to make

intercession for us.” How does that comfort you? How effective is Jesus intercession? Does this strengthen our own intercession?

4. Describe the emotions of the crowd watching Lazarus come forth.

### The Plot to Kill Jesus

[\(Matthew 26:1-5; Mark 14:1-2; Luke 22:1-2\)](#)

[45](#)Therefore many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in Him. [46](#)But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.

[47](#)Then the chief priests and Pharisees convened the \*Sanhedrin and said, “What are we to do? This man is performing many signs. [48](#)If we let Him go on like this, everyone will believe in Him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.”

[49](#)But one of them, named \*Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all! [50](#)You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish.”

[51](#)Caiaphas did not say this on his own. Instead, as high priest that year, he was prophesying that Jesus would die for the nation, [52](#)and not only for the nation, but also for the scattered children of God, to gather them together into one.

[53](#)So from that day on they plotted to kill Him. [54](#)As a result, Jesus no longer went about publicly among the Jews, but He withdrew to a town called Ephraim in an area near the wilderness. And He stayed there with the disciples.

[55](#)Now the Jewish Passover was near, and many people went up from the country to Jerusalem to purify themselves before the Passover. [56](#)They kept looking for Jesus and asking one another as they stood in the temple courts, “What do you think? Will He come to the feast at all?” [57](#)But the chief priests and Pharisees had given orders that anyone who knew where He was must report it, so that they could arrest Him.

1. Describe the reaction of the Jews. Remember Nicodemus’ words in chapter three, “We know you are a man sent by God, because no one can do these works unless the father be with Him.” How are the camps getting divided? Jesus said He came to bring division. How does that work?
2. Why is Jesus such a threat to the leaders? Looking at verse 48, what do they fear most?
3. Look at verse 50. John calls this declaration a prophecy. How is it a prophecy? On what authority does John say Caiaphas could prophesy? Do high priests prophesy, then? Are all that prophesy saved? Why not? Look at 1 Corinthians 13:2. *[2](#)If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have absolute faith so as to move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.* Who profits from a true prophecy, then, the prophet or the recipient? Did Caiaphas profit at all from his prophecy? Or did we? Restate Caiaphas’ prophecy in your own words.
4. Why does Jesus withdraw to Ephraim, “a city twelve miles north of Jerusalem, situated on a hill with an extensive view”?

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### Scribe’s notes:

1. **On Lazarus:** In religious circles, and among those who like to “know” the Bible well, there have been questions, indeed arguments, since the gospels were written and accepted concerning the identity of this Lazarus at whose home Jesus’ feet were anointed with oil

(in chapter 12). Is this a retelling of the account in Luke 7 where the man's name was Simon? John calls him Lazarus. Both were friends of Jesus who lived in Bethany. The convenience of the internet opens this controversy up in a way that will not answer the question, but highlights the possibilities. In the next footnote, I linked an excellent article about the women who washed Jesus' feet. We know that Lazarus and his family were dear friends of Jesus, and the mutual love and respect is evident in this chapter. We also know that Lazarus was well known in Jerusalem, because "Jews came to mourn." Was this Lazarus also "Simon the leper"? If so, Simon was no longer leper. Jesus could never, by law, have eaten with guests in the home of the unclean. A leper would be forced to live outside the camp. He'd been healed, and now is he also being raised from the dead? Was this Simon/Lazarus also the Pharisee? If so, Jesus healed whole families by loving Mary like He did, and highlighting her love and her faith. Details like this increase the wonder of the gospel stories, and research is rewarded with insights. Why would Mary be the sister sitting at Jesus' feet while Martha served at table, if this is the same Mary who was forgiven a life of sin?

2. **On waiting two days:** Pastor Mark mentioned the Jewish tradition that teaches that the soul (Hebrew: Nephesh) lingers by the body, waiting to see if the spirit (breath/ruach) of life returns from the Lord. Here is an explanation from the website "Jews for Jews" on this subject: *Let me begin by citing passages that appear to be the relevant to the general issue of the ensoulment of a body, death, and what follows (the specific sources are cited in parenthesis): Accompanied by divine messengers (or "holy angels"—Scribe) and conscious of its origins, the soul enters the womb at the time of conception (**Babylonian Talmud Berakhot 60b**). When people sleep, the soul ascends to heaven, returning renewed in the morning (**Genesis Rabbah 14:9**). Although the soul protests its birth into the world, it also protests the body's death. It lingers near the body for three days, hoping that it will return to life (**Tanhuma, Miqetz 4; Pequdei 3**). After three days, the soul returns to God to await the time of resurrection (**Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 90b-91a**). During the first twelve months after death, the soul remains in contact with the disintegrating body (**Babylonian Talmud Shabbat 152b-153a**). After this, the souls of the righteous go to paradise ( *gan eden*, the Garden of Eden) and the souls of the wicked, to purgatory ( *gehinnom* ). Yet, even there, the soul has a chance to be purified, with the exception of those guilty of heinous crime. [Jews for Judaism | Does the Talmud talk about a resurrection 3 days](https://www.jewsforjudaism.org/knowledge/articles/does-the-talmud-talk-about-a-ressurrection-3-days) (<https://www.jewsforjudaism.org/knowledge/articles/does-the-talmud-talk-about-a-ressurrection-3-days-after-the-end-of-the-world/>)*
3. **On how many Marys and how many anointings:** Folks who love the gospels well quickly recognize the fact that an account of a woman anointing Jesus' feet appears in all four gospels (Matthew 26, Mark 14, Luke 7, John 12), yet each account differs slightly. We do well to wonder how many women did this, representing how much expensive oil? There is an excellent blog online that responds better than I could to this question. I invite you to click here [How Many Women Anointed Christ – One, Two, or More? - livingwithfaith.org](http://www.livingwithfaith.org/blog/how-many-women-anointed-christ-one-two-or-more) or cut and paste the URL. (<http://www.livingwithfaith.org/blog/how-many-women-anointed-christ-one-two-or-more>)



4. **On Bethany:** Jerusalem faces the Mount of Olives from the Eastern Gate, also known as the Golden Gate and the Gate Beautiful (of Acts 3.) (Note: This gate of prophecy is that through which Messiah shall enter the city according to Ezekiel 44: *1The man then brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary that faced east, but it was shut. 2And the LORD said to me, "This gate is to remain shut. It shall not be opened, and no man shall enter through it, because the LORD, the God of Israel, has entered through it. Therefore it will remain shut. 3Only the prince himself may sit inside the gateway to eat in the presence of the LORD. He must enter by way of the portico of the gateway and go out the same way."* Ironically, because Messiah was to enter by this gate, and sit in it, the Muslims cemented the gateway around 500 A.D. and shut it to all who would enter by it, thus fulfilling the first half of this prophecy. Jesus rode through this gate on a donkey before it was shut, as Zechariah had prophesied.) The mount itself, from the Gate is as pristine and natural, easily and freely accessible, as it must have appeared in Jesus' day. Some olive trees there are two thousand years old, old enough to have seen Jesus and the company of apostles pass by. Over the top of the mount, the descent is made into Bethany, a distance of 15 furlongs (3 km or 1.8 miles) which was also called "a Sabbath day's journey". The walk from Bethany to Jerusalem would have been conveniently permissible on the high holy days of the feast of Passover. Lazarus' home in Bethany would have been a perfect place for Jesus and the disciples to hang out during the days of the feast.
5. **On John the Evangelist:** One of the many privileges of seminary is the encounter with mysterious information that is not generally known and rarely spread. In the end of this gospel, Chapter 21:22, we will hear Jesus make a very controversial declaration to Peter concerning John's longevity. I'll drop a footnote on that verse when we get there, but it is interesting to note that John is the only one of the twelve whose death was never recorded, reported or verified. It is surmised that he died of old age around Ephesus because there is some evidence that he was among the elders there early in the second century. John alone survived the turn of the century...and John alone, in the four gospels, penned this verse. ***Does this suggest anything to you?*** You'll have to await the appropriate footnote in that chapter, but remember this verse.
6. **On never dying:** Is it possible for a person to "never die." Can you name two Old Testament heroes who did not die? Does this verse possibly explain why they did not die? Look up Hebrews 11: *5By faith Enoch was taken up so that he did not see death: "He could not be found, because God had taken him away." For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. 6And without faith it is impossible to please God because anyone who approaches Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him. **Can you explain why Enoch was taken? Was that exclusively for Enoch? Or does Jesus open the possibility up for any who believe?*** Many modern evangelicals talk today about a "rapture." By definition, Enoch was "raptured." What made Enoch different from the people of his generation? Was "getting raptured" in his contract? What exactly did he do, according to the author of Hebrews and in Genesis? How, in a day by day, practical way? Does that

person exist today? **Look at what James says concerning Elijah, the only OT saint “raptured” in front of an eyewitness whose account we can read in 2 Kings 2. James 5: 17** *Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. 18* *Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth yielded its crops.* In what way are we any different from Elijah or Enoch? **What must our goal become, if we want to “please God” like Enoch and see answers to prayer like Elijah?**

7. **On the Sanhedrin:** The Sanhedrin, the high Jewish council, was made up of factions. There were Pharisees amongst them like Nicodemus and Gamaliel, and there were Sadducees, as the priests themselves often were. The gospels also mention a party called the Herodians, who, like Herod, were more inclined to enjoy the hedonistic lifestyle of the elites in favor with Rome. Like the US Congress in its best days, these parties rarely saw eye to eye. What is remarkable is the level of unity they enjoyed when they were deciding Jesus’ fate.
8. **On being “high priest” that year:** Caiaphas was son-in-law to Annas who was high priest when Jesus was twelve and stayed to discuss life with them in the temple. During the occupation, it was the Romans who installed the high priest, and not Jewish authorities. According to secular history, Annas served from 6 to 15 A.D. and was deposed and replaced by his son-in-law. Annas remained very influential as did his five sons along with his son-in-law who all served at some point as priest. One of his sons, called Ananias in most translations, presided over Paul’s trial, and ordered him struck. It’s not surprising that Paul did not know him as high priest.
9. **On God healing every time (or it’s our fault or the fault of our faith):** The question is often raised as to whether or not God heals every time we ask Him to, and if not, whose fault is the failure in prayer? The disciples even asked Jesus, “Why was he not healed,” and he responded “...because of your little faith.” **Why is this so debilitating for us who want to believe?** There are several helpful insights that can be gleaned from scripture concerning sickness and disease to prevent us from wallowing in weakness (it was in Paul’s weakness that God’s strength was made perfect), and raise up our level of hope to where faith can establish the substance. While it is true that Jesus turned no one away, and healed “all who came to Him,” it’s also a sustainable observation that his father had passed away before his ministry began. Jesus did NO miracles before the wine at Cana of Galilee. Timing, as we have learned, was key. Faith heroes of the Old Testament died of disease, and not all because of a sin they committed. In 2 Kings 13:14, Elisha was sick in bed with the disease “from which he would die,” and the king came to visit. None of this “excuses sickness.” We recognize the place of sickness in a fallen world. What of the apostles? Did they heal everyone? There is absolutely no doubt they saw more healing than the average Christian today. Paul healed everyone on Malta in the last chapter of Acts. Folks throughout Asia were healed by touching “handkerchiefs” that Paul had touched. But in Lystra (Acts 14:9), Paul looked at a single man who was listening to every word, and Paul “...saw that he had faith to be healed.” A single man. Do we

assume that no one else needed healing? No assumption is safe instruction. And finally, look at what Paul tells the Philippians in chapter 2 concerning their mutual friend, Epaphroditus: *27He was sick indeed, nearly unto death. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow. 28Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may rejoice, and I may be less anxious.* **Why would Paul be anxious? If they were the Philippians, Paul's first European friends, why would they be worried? Describe Paul's anxiety? Why would he have "sorrow upon sorrow if he was confident of Epaphroditus' healing? At what point DID Paul become confident in Epaphroditus' healing?** It is very safe to suggest that Christians have always experienced the thrill of uncertainty in our prayers. What James says concerning prayer for the sick leaves no room for doubt. Christians pray, believing. And yet, what Jesus said in chapter 10 about the "...night...coming where no man can work" leaves room for understandable doubt, and serves to make all Christians unite in longing for the day Isaiah speaks of in chapter sixty: *1Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you.*

*2For behold, darkness covers the earth, and thick darkness is over the peoples;* **How is this appropriate for 2023?**

*but the LORD will rise upon you, and His glory will appear over you.*

*3Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.* **Read this promise and then read it again. Nights pass, and the day comes where our own prayers become light to our family, God hears and answers according to His good Word, Who is Jesus Himself.**