

## Jesus-Centered Questions for more contemplation

- How does this passage reveal Jesus' character or mission?
- In what ways does this lesson align with or challenge Jesus' teachings, actions, or mission?
- How does this passage inspire me to embody Jesus' love more fully?
- What next steps can I take to better align my life with Jesus' way?



## a study of The Gospel According to John

Summer 2025

Lesson #12

John 11:1-54

***"The Spine, the Hinge, and the Binding"***

### Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup> David Barr's *New Testament Story*. Wadsworth, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Osvaldo Vena, Professor Emeritus of New Testament Interpretation, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Evanston, IL  
WorkingPreacher.org

<sup>3</sup> Meda Stamper, Ph.D. Leicestershire, England, Presbyterian Church  
USA, WorkingPreacher.org

## REVIEW:

### The I AM statements

1. (6:35, 48, 51) **I am** the \_\_\_\_\_
2. (8:12; 9:5) **I am** the \_\_\_\_\_
3. (10:7, 9) **I am** the \_\_\_\_\_
4. (10:11, 14) **I am** the \_\_\_\_\_

### The Signs:

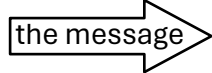
1. John 2:1-11 \_\_\_\_\_
2. John 4:46-54 \_\_\_\_\_
3. John 5:1-15 \_\_\_\_\_
4. John 6:1-15 \_\_\_\_\_
5. John 6:16-21 \_\_\_\_\_
6. John 9:1-41 \_\_\_\_\_

## BRIEF LITERARY CONTEXT: (see insert first)

*"John 11 stands as a hinge between Jesus' public ministry and his private ministry to the disciples. It represents a climax to Jesus' earlier actions (this is the ultimate sign, the last in a series of seven) and a foreshadowing of his own death and resurrection. It is also a moment of profound irony because the one who is the resurrection and the life, the light of the world, starts to walk the path of self-renunciation that will ultimately lead him through the narrow and dark alleys of death. But at the same time, Lazarus' raising foreshadows Jesus' own resurrection and glorification."*<sup>2</sup>

Of course there is a chiasm in chapter 11 to help us remember the story and its message, a chiasm within a chiasm, and the revelation of the central verses of the entire Gospel!

- A - Mary Anoints Jesus, referenced (11:1-2)
- B - Message Sent from Bethany To Jesus (11:3-16)
- C - Lazarus Dead 4 Days (11:17-19)
- D - Martha Comes To Jesus (11:20-24)

 **E - "I Am the Resurrection and the Life."  
"I believe you are the Christ" (11:22-27)**

- D' - Mary Comes To Jesus (11:28-32)
- C' - Lazarus Resurrected (11:33-45)
- B' - Message Sent from Bethany About Jesus (11:46-57)
- A' - Mary Anoints Jesus (12:1-3)

Of note: John's Book of Signs follows a pattern where a miracle is performed first, followed by discussion and explanation by Jesus. In this seventh and last sign the literary construct is reversed. Discussion first, sign last.

## Read John 11:1-16

1. What do you notice, what makes you wonder?
2. Note which sentences contain the word "love?"
3. What do you make of Jesus' comments in verse 4, vs. his comments in verse 14?
4. Compare what we know about Thomas' nature and his comment in v. 16.

## Read John 11:17-37

1. What do you notice, what makes you wonder?
2. Note which sentences contain the words of emotion, e.g. weep(ing), consoling, disturbed, etc. *"The [Greek] verbs for deeply moved and disturbed include an element of anger or indignation... [the words] describe the deepest sort of human emotion. Even the one who is himself the resurrection and the life is deeply unsettled by human grief and death."*<sup>3</sup>
3. Some early manuscripts eliminate "and the life" from Jesus' I AM statement in verse 25 as a repetition of the word "resurrection." What are your thoughts? Is there a difference between resurrection and life?

## Read John 11:38-44

1. What do you notice, what makes you wonder?
2. Note the climax of this story is not the center of its chiasm. Discuss why that might be. Things to consider: Mary and Martha have discussions with Jesus in Luke and John. Lazarus is only mentioned by name in this story, and he has no dialogue.
3. Compare verses 43-44 with John 10:27.

## Read John 11:45-54

1. What do you notice, what makes you wonder?
2. Discuss theological and spiritual implications in Caiaphas' prophecy. Was it accurate? In light of John's use of dualism, how would you equate Caiaphas' words to Jesus' mission?
3. John uses the Lazarus story as the incentive to kill Jesus once and for all. Do you recall which event is used to propel Jesus to his arrest in the Synoptic Gospels?