

Small Group Bible Study Questions

- A) John 11 is broken into three sections, each of which communicate something of God's ultimate purposes, and each of which carry a key encouragement to Christians. Can you recall (conveniently each concept was the content of the past three sermons) each, and how they apply?
- B) The first section of John 11 showed us that Jesus Christ's timing is sometimes different than our timing. Jesus Christ marched to God's timing, because ultimately, God's glory shines brightest when His timing is followed. In what ways has God's timing been replacing your timing in this past month?
- C) The second section of John 11 revealed Jesus' human heart and emotions for his friends and for all of us as He responded to the grip of death and sin on the people. Jesus Christ states that victory in Jesus (resurrection and eternal life) are not some far off concept, but a current reality (John 11:25). What "dead" areas of your life has Jesus been bringing great news of new life and hope?
- D) Finally, the final section of John 11 reminds us that even when those things which are our most bitter enemies attempt to destroy God's purposes, they cannot. In fact, God will even use the wicked and rebellious to show His glory to the world! Are there some difficult situations, some bitter opposition you are facing which you need to have Jesus give you "the resurrection and the life?" Share some of these things in your group, and ask them for prayer and accountability. Take some time to pray in your group together as you encounter personal issues which need Jesus!

The Ultimate Switch-A-Roo

Long Beach Alliance Church • April 17th, 2005 • Pastor Chris Lankford

**"YOU KNOW NOTHING AT ALL, NOR DO YOU TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THAT IT IS EXPEDIENT FOR YOU THAT ONE MAN DIE FOR THE PEOPLE, AND THAT THE WHOLE NATION NOT PERISH."
~JOHN 11:25B-26 (NASB)**

1) Fear & Loathing In Jerusalem...

- A) Hearing about the miracle of Lazarus' resurrection, "the chief priests and Pharisees convened a council" to figure out what they would do about Jesus (John 11:47).
- B) The panicky response of the Sanhedrin, their recognition that Jesus' miracles are authentic, and their fear that all men will eventually follow Jesus begins to spin out of control (11:48).
- C) Caiaphas, the High Priest (A.D. 18 - A.D. 36) that "fateful" year immediately asserts his authority to get control of the situation (11:49).
- D) His rude assertion (you know nothing - 11:49), was typical of the "rude and boorish" behavior of the ruling council (Note Josephus, *Antiquities*, 2.166).

2) Inspired Ignorance Is Still Ignorance...

- A) Caiaphas, showing the darkness of his own understanding and heart, calls for Christ's death on behalf of the people, and ultimately of the nation (11:50).

- B) We discover, in an explanatory aside* provided by John to assure no misinterpretation is made at Caiaphas' unusual statement, that he did not make his statement on his own, it was God speaking through him in a prophecy (11:51).

- C) Caiaphas believed God had given permission to kill Jesus Christ in order to preserve the current political system of the nation of Israel (11:49-52)! This is a reminder that "inspiration does not necessarily imply spiritual illumination†."

- D) Caiaphas' prophecy was not the first time (or last) God had chosen to speak prophetically through someone who was in opposition to His purposes. Note also Balaam (Numbers 22); King Saul & The Witch of En-dor (1st Samuel 28); Balaam's Ass (Numbers 22).

3) What Was God Really Saying?

- A) First, Jesus was going to die for the nation of Israel (11:50-51). Both Caiaphas and John saw Jesus' death as a substitution. "Either Jesus dies, or the nation dies. If Jesus dies, the nation lives -- His life for theirs" (D.A. Carson, 422).

* Dr. Tom Thatcher (Professor @ Cincinnati Bible College), *A New Look At Asides In The Fourth Gospel*, Bibliotheca Sacra, 151:604 (October 1994), Page 433.

† Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer (Founder of Dallas Theological Seminary), *Revelation*, Bibliotheca Sacra, 94:375 (July 1937), Page 269.

- B) Caiaphas saw the substitution as simply political. John invites the reader to consider that Jesus had come to be "the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies" (John 11:25).

- C) Second, Jesus would not die for just the nation, but also for all of those "scattered abroad" (11:52). Caiaphas was strictly referring to Jews scattered in the *diaspora* (Jews living outside of Israel as a result of the 6th century BC Babylonian (amongst others) captivity).

- D) John would have written this with Israel's diaspora community primarily in mind, but also looks forward to the "sheep from other pens coming under one Shepherd" (10:16) and ultimately, the Gentile mission (12:32) resulting in the 'holy nation' of the church (1st Peter 2:9).

4) The Next Move Is Yours...

- A) Caiaphas' perspective in the council is accepted as the final verdict -- Jesus must die for the sake of the people (11:53). From the Jewish leadership perspective, they were mercifully sparing the people from destruction.

- B) We know there were sympathizers within the Sanhedrin (19:38-39), so it is no surprise that Jesus finds out about His death sentence, and avoids public places, retreating about 10 miles to Ephraim as Passover nears and the Jews wait for Jesus to make the next move (11:54-57).