

## John Chapter 11.

## Introduction

For the benefit of those people who are visitors, or people who started attending OIC after the 24<sup>th</sup> May, I will up -date you on our Gospel of John series.

We began on the 1<sup>st</sup> March in chapter one and went through to Chapter 10 before we broke off to do a study on the subject of prayer.

We now return to John's Gospel and our series this time will take us up to and including chapter 17.

I would like to re-cap on the main points that we learnt in these 10 chapters.

1. The whole theme of and purpose of John's Gospel can be summed up in Chapter 20 verses 30-31.

<sup>30</sup> And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; <sup>31</sup> but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

2. John's Gospel deals with the signs that Jesus Christ gave during His earthly ministry which prove that He was God in human form. These signs were seen by dependable witnesses, His disciples and many other people. John wants the people who read and hear his gospel to believe in Jesus Christ as savior and Lord and to receive "New Life" in His name.
3. In the first 18 verses of John's Gospel we are given an advertisement of what is to come as we work through the Gospel. You might like to read through these verses again.?
4. We discovered in chapter 3 that "Religion" is not enough, you must be "Born Again" in order to enter into God's Kingdom.
5. In Chapter 4 we discovered that the New Birth was even available to women who have had 5 husbands and had led a sinful life.
6. In chapter 5 we learnt that we live in darkness and we need the light of God to show us our sin and deliver us from this darkness.
7. In Chapter 6 we found out that Jesus likened Himself to "Bread from Heaven" He called Himself the bread of life and the living bread. He said if anybody eats of the bread he will live forever.
8. In chapter 7 at the "Feast of Tabernacles" Jesus said "If anyone thirst, let him come to me and drink". Jesus promised if we believed in Him, then out of our hearts would flow rivers of living water. ( Future promise concerning the Holy Spirit )
9. In Chapter 8 we were told that if we wanted to be a disciple of Jesus Christ we needed to "Abide" in His word. ( stay true to God's word, the Bible )
10. Finally we were told in chapter 10 that Jesus is the "TRUE SHEPHERD" as opposed to all the false shepherds who offer religion that only leads to disappointment.

Jesus said

“My Sheep hear my voice, and I know them and they follow me.”

We left the series at the end of chapter 10 after Jesus declared Himself to be the same as God, having given many proofs through miracles.

The Jewish authorities tried to arrest Jesus but He escaped and moved away to beyond the Jordan where John was Baptizing at first. This was many miles away from Jerusalem.

We now come to chapter 11 of John’s Gospel. I will read out the entire chapter because that is the material we will cover today.

(Read John’s Gospel Chapter 11 in the N.K.J. version)

Now a certain *man* was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. <sup>2</sup> It was *that* Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. <sup>3</sup> Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, “Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick.”

<sup>4</sup> When Jesus heard *that*, He said, “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” <sup>5</sup> Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. <sup>6</sup> So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was.

<sup>7</sup> Then after this He said to *the* disciples, “Let us go to Judea again.” <sup>8</sup> *The* disciples said to Him, “Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone You, and are You going there again?” <sup>9</sup> Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours in the day?”

If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. <sup>10</sup> But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.” <sup>11</sup> These things He said, and after that He said to them, “Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up.”

<sup>12</sup> Then His disciples said, “Lord, if he sleeps he will get well.” <sup>13</sup> However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep. <sup>14</sup> Then Jesus said to them plainly, “Lazarus is dead.

<sup>15</sup> And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him.”

<sup>16</sup> Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with Him.”

<sup>17</sup> So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. <sup>18</sup> Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away. <sup>19</sup> And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.

<sup>20</sup> Now Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house. <sup>21</sup> Now Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.

<sup>22</sup> But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.”

<sup>23</sup> Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." <sup>24</sup> Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." <sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.

<sup>26</sup> And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" <sup>27</sup> She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world." <sup>28</sup> And when she had said these things, she went her way and secretly called Mary her sister, saying, "The Teacher has come and is calling for you."

<sup>29</sup> As soon as she heard *that*, she arose quickly and came to Him. <sup>30</sup> Now Jesus had not yet come into the town, but was in the place where Martha met Him. <sup>31</sup> Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and comforting her, when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, followed her, saying, "She is going to the tomb to weep there."

<sup>32</sup> Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died." <sup>33</sup> Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled.

<sup>34</sup> And He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to Him, "Lord, come and see." <sup>35</sup> Jesus wept. <sup>36</sup> Then the Jews said, "See how He loved him!" <sup>37</sup> And some of them said, "Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?"

<sup>38</sup> Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. <sup>39</sup> Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been *dead* four days."

<sup>40</sup> Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" <sup>41</sup> Then they took away the stone *from the place* where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up *His* eyes and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.

<sup>42</sup> And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said *this*, that they may believe that You sent Me." <sup>43</sup> Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!"

<sup>44</sup> And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go." <sup>45</sup> Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him.

<sup>46</sup> But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did. <sup>47</sup> Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, "What shall we do? For this Man works many signs.

<sup>48</sup> If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation." <sup>49</sup> And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all,

<sup>50</sup> nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.” <sup>51</sup> Now this he did not say on his own *authority*; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation,

<sup>52</sup> and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad. <sup>53</sup> Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death.

<sup>54</sup> Therefore Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there into the country near the wilderness, to a city called Ephraim, and there remained with His disciples. <sup>55</sup> And the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went from the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves.

<sup>56</sup> Then they sought Jesus, and spoke among themselves as they stood in the temple, “What do you think—that He will not come to the feast?” <sup>57</sup> Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a command, that if anyone knew where He was, he should report *it*, that they might seize Him.

Before we study this chapter it will be helpful to have two Old Testament references first so that we can clearly see how this chapter fits into the unfolding story of the Bible. The Bible is one book divided into 66 sections. It is like a puzzle, each piece fits together to provide us a clear picture of the book. The big picture in JESUS.

The passage before us in John Chapter 11 is all about DEATH and LIFE.

Ever since the book of Genesis chapter 3 death and life has been a major theme in the Old Testament.

However Isaiah looks forward to the day when “DEATH” will be swallowed up forever.

(Isaiah 25: v. 6-8)

The other thing in the Old Testament that we need to be reminded about and that is “Substitution”.

Lev. 16: v. 1-11

Now the LORD spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered *profane fire* before the LORD, and died; <sup>2</sup> and the LORD said to Moses: “Tell Aaron your brother not to come at *just* any time into the Holy *Place* inside the veil, before the mercy seat which *is* on the ark, lest he die;

for I will appear in the cloud above the mercy seat. <sup>3</sup> “Thus Aaron shall come into the Holy *Place*: with *the blood of* a young bull as a sin offering, and *of* a ram as a burnt offering. <sup>4</sup> He shall put the holy linen tunic and the linen trousers on his body; he shall be girded with a linen sash, and with the linen turban he shall be attired.

These *are* holy garments. Therefore he shall wash his body in water, and put them on. <sup>5</sup> And he shall take from the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats as a sin offering, and one ram as a burnt offering. <sup>6</sup> “Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering, which *is* for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house.

<sup>7</sup> He shall take the two goats and present them before the LORD *at* the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

<sup>8</sup> Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats: one lot for the LORD and the other lot for the scapegoat.

<sup>9</sup> And Aaron shall bring the goat on which the LORD's lot fell, and offer it *as* a sin offering.

<sup>10</sup> But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make atonement upon it, *and* to let it go as the scapegoat into the wilderness. <sup>11</sup> "And Aaron shall bring the bull of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house, and shall kill the bull as the sin offering which *is* for himself.

Lev. 17: v. 11.

<sup>11</sup> For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it *is* the blood *that* makes atonement for the soul.'

In order for sin and guilt to be taken away from God's people, something has to die in their place as a substitute for them. This is to satisfy God's just wrath for sin.

In Lev. 16 the sins of the Israelites was transferred to one of the sacrificial goats which is then killed. In Lev. 17: v. 11 it explains that it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.

(The word atonement means covering, our sin is covered so that God does not see it)

Later on the Prophet Isaiah in chapter 49 and 53 looks forward to God's servant coming into the world and dying on behalf of many.

With this in mind we come to study John Chapter 11.

I will divide the chapter into 4 sections.

The first section is John 11: v. 1-16.

### 1. The Purpose of Raising Lazarus from the dead. ( v. 1-16 )

There are two main purposes in raising Lazarus from the dead.

- a) The first is for God's Glory. If you read verse 4 you will discover that Jesus mentioned twice that the death of Lazarus was for the Glory of God.

How could the death of a person possibly bring Glory to God? Well the answer is simple as we will see later. The person who died was brought back to life. What could glorify more but life from the dead!!!

We live in a modern world where medical science can do wonderful things.

It can give you a hip replacement, a knee replacement, a heart bypass, sometimes a kidney transplant, and many other wonderful things.

Medical science can even keep a person alive on a life support system when they are clinically dead. If you switch the support system off the person will die.

However there is one thing that medical science cannot do and will never do and that is to raise people from the dead, when they have actually died.

In order to make sure that God would be truly glorified, Jesus remained in the place where he was for two more days when He heard that Lazarus was really sick.

God is most "Glorified" when man has nothing to do with the miracle or event.

God knows the heart of man, and God will not share His Glory with any other.

Through the raising of Lazarus, God would be glorified and Jesus would share God's glory because He is the same as God.

In essence, God's Glory is the revelation of God's Power.

The Jewish nation witnessed God's Glory as they were rescued from Egypt, provided for in the wilderness and brought into the Promised Land where God fought for them to conquer God's enemies who occupied the land.

- b) The second main purpose for the raising of Lazarus from the dead was to strengthen the faith of the disciples. ( v. 14-16 )

Although the disciples were already believers in Jesus, they had much more to learn and Jesus wanted their "Faith" to grow.

Miracles however small do act as a way to strengthen our "Faith" in Jesus.

Thomas was very negative in v. 16, he certainly needed his faith strengthened.

#### Example from the Old Testament

You will remember the story of Elijah in 1 Kings 18. V. 22-39. (Read story)

<sup>22</sup> Then Elijah said to the people, "I alone am left a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets *are* four hundred and fifty men. <sup>23</sup> Therefore let them give us two bulls; and let them choose one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and lay *it* on the wood, but put no fire *under it*;

and I will prepare the other bull, and lay *it* on the wood, but put no fire *under it*. <sup>24</sup> Then you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD; and the God who answers by fire, He is God." So all the people answered and said, "It is well spoken."

<sup>25</sup> Now Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, “Choose one bull for yourselves and prepare *it* first, for you *are* many; and call on the name of your god, but put no fire *under it*.” <sup>26</sup> So they took the bull which was given them, and they prepared *it*, and called on the name of Baal from morning even till noon, saying,

“O Baal, hear us!” But *there was* no voice; no one answered. Then they leaped about the altar which they had made. <sup>27</sup> And so it was, at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, “Cry aloud, for he *is* a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy, or he is on a journey,

*or perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened.*” <sup>28</sup> So they cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them. <sup>29</sup> And when midday was past, they prophesied until the *time* of the offering of the *evening* sacrifice. But *there was* no voice; no one answered, no one paid attention.

<sup>30</sup> Then Elijah said to all the people, “Come near to me.” So all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD *that was* broken down. <sup>31</sup> And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD had come, saying, “Israel shall be your name.”

<sup>32</sup> Then with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD; and he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold two seahs of seed. <sup>33</sup> And he put the wood in order, cut the bull in pieces, and laid *it* on the wood, and said, “Fill four waterpots with water, and pour *it* on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood.”

<sup>34</sup> Then he said, “Do *it* a second time,” and they did *it* a second time; and he said, “Do *it* a third time,” and they did *it* a third time. <sup>35</sup> So the water ran all around the altar; and he also filled the trench with water.

<sup>36</sup> And it came to pass, at *the time of* the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, “LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You *are* God in Israel and I *am* Your servant, and *that* I have done all these things at Your word.

<sup>37</sup> Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You *are* the LORD God, and *that* You have turned their hearts back *to You* again.” <sup>38</sup> Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that *was* in the trench.

<sup>39</sup> Now when all the people saw *it*, they fell on their faces; and they said, “The LORD, He *is* God! The LORD, He *is* God!”

## 2. The significance of the miracle – v. 17-37.

In these verses we see clearly the significance of the miracle. When Jesus finally arrived at Bethany near Jerusalem, He discovered that Lazarus had been dead for 4 days. There was a mourning part going on at the time. Many of Mary’s and Martha’s friends had gathered together to support them.

As soon as Jesus arrived Martha engaged in a conversation with Him.

Martha was very positive about the power of Jesus to heal had he been there when Lazarus was sick. Nevertheless in v. 22 we are told that she still trusted in Jesus that God would give Him whatever He asked.

In v. 23 we are told that Jesus said to Martha that her brother would rise again.

Martha replied that she had the assurance that her brother Lazarus would rise in the resurrection at the last day. She was right in her thinking but didn't expect the reply that she had from Jesus.

Jesus said to her "I am the resurrection and the life, he who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die."

Then He said to Martha "Do you believe this?"

She affirmed His statement in her reply in v. 27.

The question we must ask ourselves is

"Do we believe it?" I believe it but do you?

Jesus says here that He is God's answer to the biggest problem of mankind and that is DEATH.

You may be asking the question today – what exactly is the LIFE that Jesus gives, or how does Jesus give us this life, or how can He be the resurrection?

If you want to know the answers to these questions, keep coming to OIC for the next few months and you will discover them.

They will all unfold in chapters 12-21.

However we need to move on to the second significance of the miracle.

In v. 33-36 we see the righteous anger and grief displayed by Jesus at the death of Lazarus.

In these verses Jesus expressed His sadness, pain and suffering caused by death.

Here we have in these few verses the God Man identifying with people who have lost loved ones who have died.

In v. 35 it says "Jesus wept" This verse says it all.

In v. 33 it says that Jesus groaned in the Spirit and was troubled.

Jesus had to go through this experience, so that He could help and love people through the experience of "GRIEF".

When we know and love Jesus as our own personal Savior, we can come to Him intimately and express our grief, knowing that He fully understands what we are going through.

Jesus might well have been saying "Death should not be here, it is too horrible to bear"



The difference between Jesus and us is that Jesus could do something about it at the time for his family and Jesus can do something for us about our future death if we will only believe in Him.

3. This moves us on to the “Miracle” itself – v. 38-44.

The miracle was very dramatic because a dead man was raised to life. However the simple process involved first the faith of Martha and then the faith of Jesus and then the power of God to raise a dead man to life.

Lazarus was in a cave with a large stone covering the entrance. This was a normal burial place in those days. When Jesus asked Martha to take away the stone that covered the entrance she objected on the grounds of the smell because Lazarus had been dead for 4 days.

Jesus challenged Martha that if she “believed” she would see the glory of God.

The stone would have been too big for Martha to roll away by herself. I have been to Israel and seen these burial grounds and the large stones that would have covered the entrance. There would have been a team of people involved in rolling the stone away.

Well it was done, she arranged it and the stone was rolled away.

It appears that Jesus had an open time of audible prayer with God. He was about to perform His greatest miracle so far and He wanted the people to know that He was truly the “Son of God”.

Then Jesus cried out with a loud voice “Lazarus, come forth”

Lazarus came out of the cave wrapped up in his grave clothes. These were linen clothes used to wrap up a dead body.

Comments here?

4. The Outcome of the miracle – v. 45-54.

There were two outcomes from this great miracle. One was positive and the other was very negative. In v. 45 we are told that many of the Jews who witnessed this miracle believed in Jesus.

However in v. 46 some of the people went away and told the Pharisees about the resurrection of Lazarus.

Then the chief Priests and Pharisees had a meeting, they were concerned for their own position and power. In v. 53 it tells us that from that day onwards, they plotted to put Jesus to death.

Because of this we are told that Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews but left Jerusalem and went to a city called Ephraim where He remained with His disciples.

There is one thing worthy of notice in this passage and that is the prophecy of “Caiaphas” the “High Priest”. We are looking at verses 49-52.

On first reading of v. 49-50 it would appear that the remark of Caiaphas was no more than a politically motivated remark about the best way to deal with Jesus.

Caiaphas suggests that it would be better for Jesus to be killed than for the whole nation of Israel to go through political upheaval.

However in v. 51 John points out that Caiaphas's suggestion was in fact a prophecy of Jesus substitutionary death.

The plot that had now begun would result in Jesus, the Lamb of God, giving His life on behalf of many nations, not just the Jewish nation.

Q. What application can we draw from Chapter 11 ?

1. To the people at that time who witnessed the raising of Lazarus from the dead the application is clear. We are told in v. 1-15 that the miracle was for God's Glory and also that the faith of the Disciples might be strengthened.

Although the passage tells us that Martha believed that Jesus will bring life at the final resurrection on the last day, Jesus shows them that He has come to bring eternal life to those who believe in Him now. Through faith in Jesus the awfulness of death is reversed. Yes they will die, but they will also live forever in a place where there is no death.

2. The application to us today is very similar. We can rejoice in the fact that Jesus really is the only person who can deal with the effects of sin and the reversal of the awfulness of death. Jesus can bring life to us NOW because of His substitutionary death on the cross.

We should expect our faith to grow by studying this passage. If we put our faith and trust in Jesus, we no longer need to fear death. Our death is the gateway to eternal life and the effects of sin are completely reversed.

Thomas Henry Delaney an African-American blues and jazz composer wrote a song about 1947 with the famous title lyric "Everybody wants to go to heaven, but nobody wants to die"

However the only way to get to Heaven is through death.

Firstly by believing that the death of Jesus was a substitutionary death for your sins. He died in your place, taking the punishment that we deserve for our sins.

Secondly by being ready when the time comes for our death, to trust in the words of Jesus – "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die."