

**JOHN 11:45-57**  
**BLIND LEADERS!**

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to John chapter 11 as we continue our in-depth study of the Gospel of John.

In this chapter we have seen a friend of Jesus, Lazarus die. And his sisters, while he was still sick, send someone to tell Jesus about this very serious illness that Lazarus had.

And Jesus waits another two days before going to see Lazarus and by the time He gets there, Lazarus has been dead, in the tomb for four days!

As Jesus arrives in Bethany, the town of Mary, Martha and Lazarus, Martha goes out to meet him.

And, as you can imagine, she is overwhelmed with grief regarding her brother's death. Now, because Jesus didn't come sooner, she rebukes Him for being late and if He would have come on time, maybe He could have done something about it. But now it is too late!

And remember what 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. Do you believe this?’**”

Jesus wanted Martha to believe that He is Almighty God and even though a person may die physically, in Him you will live, spiritual life with Him.

And if you truly believe in Jesus, then you will never die, spiritually speaking, you again will be with the Lord. To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord! (II Corinthians 5:8)

And that question that Jesus asked Martha and He is asking all of us today is, **“Do you believe this?”**

Then Mary came out to Jesus, and she too is overwhelmed by what happened to her brother Lazarus.

And as they get to the tomb Jesus tells them to roll the stone away and poor Martha, practical Martha responds to what Jesus asked them to do.

She said to Jesus, *“Lord, are you kidding me? If we roll the stone away it is really going to stink badly. He has been in there four days and there is no air moving and thus, you don’t want to do that!”*

Now I am paraphrasing of course, but that is basically what she was saying to Jesus!

And once again Jesus is trying to draw out her faith and He said to Martha, “**...** **‘Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?’**” John 11:40.

It is after this that they did roll the stone away and Jesus called for Lazarus, and this is what we are told happened. **“Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come forth!’ 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.’”** John 11:43-44.

It is after all of this, the raising of Lazarus from the dead, a man who was in the tomb dead for four days has now been brought back to life! Incredible. This is not something that happened to people and yet, Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead!

And that is a hard one to deny. You couldn't say that maybe he was just sleeping in the tomb. He was there for four days and wrapped in burial cloths and spices, upwards of 100 pounds. There is no way he was sleeping for four days and there is no way he could move around very well or unloose the grave clothes. In fact, we are told that Jesus told the people to free him because he could not do it!

So here is this miracle and what should the response be to something like this?

People should have been shouting and screaming for joy! They should have been celebrating.

Now some were but not everyone was excited about this, and we will see that this morning.

I have called this study – ***BLIND LEADERS!*** And you will see why as we go through these verses.

I have also broken these verses down into three main points and they are as follows,

***SIGHT RESTORED – JOHN 11:45***

***BLINDED FROM THE LIGHT – JOHN 11:46-53***

***CONFUSION AND INDIFFERENCE – JOHN 11:54-57***

Isn't it amazing how we miss the obvious and hold onto things that are foolish?

Let me share this with you and you will see what I mean.

A man went to see his doctor in an acute state of anxiety.

*“Doctor,” he said, “you have to help me. I’m dying. Everywhere I touch it hurts. I touch my head and it hurts. I touch my leg and it hurts. I touch my stomach and it hurts. I touch my chest and it hurts. You have to help me, Doc, everything hurts.”*

The doctor gave him a complete examination. *“Mr. Smith,” he said, “I have good news and bad news for you. The good news is you are not dying. The bad news is you have a broken finger.”*

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That was the problem for these Jewish religious leaders. The truth was before them and yet they refused to see it even though it was so obvious!

Now keep in mind that Jesus has just raised Lazarus from the tomb, they took the grave clothes off of him and I am sure there is a lot of excitement over what happened. That is where we will pick up in our study this morning.

With that as our introduction, let’s begin reading in John chapter 11, beginning in verse 45 and let’s see what the Lord has for us this morning as we look at this topic –  
***BLIND LEADERS!***

**JOHN 11****VERSE 45**

I have called this verse – ***SIGHT RESTORED!***

Remember back in John chapter 9 as Jesus heals a man who was born blind, his physical eyes were opened. But Jesus did not come just to open this man's physical eyes so he could see again. He came to open his spiritual eyes, that he would come to saving faith by believing that Jesus is Almighty God, the Savior of the world!

Here in John chapter 11 we see this group of people that came to the side of Mary and Martha to comfort them in the loss of their brother, Lazarus.

And I am sure that many of them were sorrowful, grieving over what has happened. I don't think any of them thought that this sorrow that they had would be turned to joy.

And yet, that is exactly what happened here. The sorrow over the death of Lazarus turned to pure joy over his resuscitation, that he was brought back to life!

David wrote in Psalm 30:5, "**For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for life; Weeping may endure for a night, But joy comes in the morning.**"

Yes, God does chasten us, but He does it not out of anger but out of love. He desires to bless us and keep us safe and thus, as we go astray, like a good parent, He gets us back on track.

But bad things are not always a result of our sin or the chastening of God, it is just part of life.

We do suffer and we need to remember that suffering is not designed to last forever! And as we go through those tough times, as God sees us through them, there is that joy that comes in the morning. The darkness of the trial is over, and we find a new day dawning.

Now you may be thinking that you know someone who was a Christian and they got cancer, or some disease and it lasted a long time and then they died. So, in your mind you are thinking, ***“There was no joy in the morning for them! That suffering lasted a lifetime!”***

I understand what you are saying but you are missing the point. You see, that joy you said that they missed out on, they did not miss out on this, not at all!

As a Christian, the end of this life put them in the presence of God and thus, the darkness of the disease is over and for them, there truly is joy in the morning for them and for that matter, everyday throughout eternity!

For these people that saw Lazarus raised from the dead, it blew them away. They believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. They saw Him as the Savior, as Almighty God!

But think about this. How could you not believe?

Look at what they saw and then not believe in Jesus, that is a hard one to swallow and yet, some refuse to believe no matter what. And we will see that with these Jewish religious leaders in a minute.

First, I want you to see that every person had a choice to make here, to either believe or reject Jesus, just as every person does today!

Ray Stedman puts it like this. He wrote,

One of the great controversies that has raged in the church for many centuries is the disagreement between Christians about whether we really have free will or not, whether we are able to direct our destinies by our own choices or whether we are in the grip of an inexorable fate that determines what is going to happen to us whether we like it or not. . . .

In examining the miracle in the Gospel of John of the raising of Lazarus after he had been dead for four days, we are facing the greatest miracle that our Lord performed outside of his own resurrection.

This is the clearest testimony to the claims of Jesus, and as such it had tremendous impact upon the people who saw it occur.

John now traces the effects of that miracle in the closing section of Chapter 11. In this account he gives insights into this question of whether we really have free will or whether we are bound by the sovereignty of God.

- <https://bit.ly/3wMjaPj>

That is what we see here; that many believed in Him, that was a choice they made. As we read on, we will see another group of people who went away in unbelief.

I am not even sure why this is a debate, if we have a free will or not. It is really simple, if we did not have a free will, then there is no love because we are forced to be saved.

But, if we do have a free will, then we can choose if we want to come to that saving faith in Christ or reject Him.

Does God know what we will do?

Of course He does, He knows all things. But He does not force us to be saved.

Think about the Garden of Eden. Every tree, every tree in that garden was for Adam and Eve to partake of, except one. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God said not to eat of that tree, that one tree!

That was a choice that Adam had, and he disobeyed God and partook of that tree and the death process began with sin entering this world and it continues on today.

If God did not give Adam and Eve a choice, to obey or disobey, then where is the love. There is no choice. And how could God blame Adam if He made him do it? He couldn't!

And the same is true with our salvation. Joshua told the children of Israel in his farewell address to the nation, "**And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.**" Joshua 24:15.

Every person has a choice to make, as Joshua said to the children of Israel. And we see that throughout the Bible. God knows who will be saved but it is man's choice. If it wasn't man's choice to be saved or not be saved, then every person who went to Hell could blame God because He sent them there.

That is not what the Bible teaches. God has done everything possible to save man and thus, God does not send people to Hell, man goes there because he has rejected the free gift of life that is only found in Him, in Jesus!

I love the invitation that is given to us in Revelation 22:17, “**And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.**”

What a wonderful invitation we all have at the end of the Bible!

So with many of those who were there to comfort Mary and Martha at the death of their brother have now had their sorrow turned to joy as Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead!

Not only that, but we see them coming to saving faith – ***SIGHT RESTORED!***

Their spiritual eyes were open, and they could see Jesus as not just a man but the Son of God who has come to save them from their sins!

Now, as we read on, we will see another group of people who were – ***BLINDED FROM THE LIGHT!***

#### VERSES 46-53

Isn't it interesting how the words and works of Jesus divide humanity between those who believe and those who reject? And that is still the case today, never forget that. There will be the opposition and then there will also be those who receive that gift of life that is found in Jesus!

Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 10:34-36, “**Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's enemies will be those of his own household.**”

Again, we even see that today as people fight against the truth, they fight against Jesus and since they can't get to God, they go after those who follow Jesus. And that can be family and friends and many times that is exactly who it is.

And, sad to say, even religious people will come against true believers, and I am not just speaking of cults, but of those who claim to be Christians and yet, deny everything about Christ.

But think about this. How could you not believe? Many people saw Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead, they were eyewitnesses of this event. These religious leaders were told what happened. So the evidence was before them, they just refused to see!

For those who went to tell these religious leaders what they saw, I don't think they believed. I think they were more interested in their standing with the religious leaders, who were part of the walking dead, than they were with God.

Therefore, they go and tell these religious leaders that Jesus is back in town and what He just did, raising Lazarus from the dead, so they could arrest Jesus and put Him to death!

Do you see how crazy that is? I mean really. ***“Hey, we have to get this guy Jesus. He is raising people from the dead and we can't have that. We can't be seen as helping people!”***

These were the Jewish religious leaders! And they could not deny that Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead and how that authenticated that He is the Messiah, the Son of God!

But they did oppose it because they did not want to believe that Jesus was the Messiah!

You see, they had their traditions, they knew what they believed to be true and yet, it went against the evidence that was before them. Thus, their traditions, their jealousy, their whatever kept them from saving faith, they were – ***BLINDED FROM THE LIGHT!***

With all this information that was before them, this unbelief on their part was just plain irrational. They were close-minded to what they saw and what they knew. They had the information, they just refused to believe!

Look at the traditions that people hold onto today that keep them from saving faith. The big one and the one that every cult and religion has at its forefront is that of working your way into heaven. And this tradition keeps people out of heaven.

Let me share this with you because traditions can be dangerous, especially if they are not of God. And yet, we do hold onto traditions many times. Listen to this simple one and it is kind of funny. We are told,

Bayer Corporation has stopped putting the cotton wads in their Genuine Bayer bottles.

The company realized the aspirin would hold up fine without the maddening white clumps, which it had included since about 1914.

***“We concluded there really wasn’t any reason to keep the cotton except tradition,”*** said Chris Allen, Bayer’s vice president of technical operations. ***“Besides, it’s hard to get out.”***

Longstanding traditions in the church often create more hardship than help.

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So with their traditions, their understanding of the Law and their adding to the Law, their unwillingness to see the truth before them, they have this meeting, even though it was not an official meeting.

Trench puts it like this, *“It was a meeting of the Sanhedrin. John’s authority for the account of what passed here would be Joseph of Arimathea or Nicodemus or some other member of the Sanhedrin who later became a Christian.”*

And as you read this you can clearly see what they are concerned about, ***THEMSELVES!***

People are no different today; they reject Jesus because they don’t want to lose their positions, their friends, and their social status, whatever.

And for these Jewish religious leaders, they feared that the Romans would regard it as a significant threat as more and more people were following Jesus!

Also, wanting especially to keep their power and prestige, they wondered how to deal with the problem of Jesus.

Here was the problem for them, something that they could not deny. **“... ‘What shall we do? For this Man works many signs.’”** John 11:47.

And they were concerned, as I have said, that Rome would come down hard upon them. When John speaks of **“our place”** he is referring to the Temple. They were concerned that the Temple would be destroyed, and their position would be taken away and the nation might be taken away!

That was their problem, they thought if they let Jesus continue on their position and their nation would be taken away. The reality is, by their rejection of Jesus that is what will happen!

By 70 A. D. the Romans came in and destroyed the city of Jerusalem, the Temple was burned to the ground, it was destroyed, and millions of Jews died at the hands of the Romans!

It was not because of what Jesus had done but it was because of their rejection of Him!

F. B. Meyer put it this way, *“Christianity endangers businesses, undermines profitable but wicked trades, steals away customers from the devil’s shrines, attacks vested interests, and turns the world upside down. It is a tiresome, annoying, profit-destroying thing.”*

That is the way these religious leaders saw it.

And yet, as I have said, after all that they have seen Jesus say and do, here raising Lazarus from the dead, that they should have repented of their sin and received Jesus as their Messiah and their Savior.

But they refused to let go of their empty religious practices and follow the Lord!

Remember what Jesus said in John 5:39-40, **“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.”**

It wasn’t that they could not come to Jesus. It wasn’t that they did not have the evidence to prove that Jesus was the Messiah. They just were not **WILLING** to come to Jesus and again, let go of their dead religious practices!

It's amazing how blind these very religious men were, men who claimed to know God, who believed themselves to be righteous and yet, they had just enough "*self-righteousness*" that it had inoculated them to the true righteousness that came through Jesus Christ.

Also, listen to what Ryle said regarding what these men saw, the miracles that Jesus did.

He wrote, "*This is a marvelous admission. Even our Lord's worst enemies confess that our Lord did miracles, and many miracles. Can we doubt that they would have denied the truth of His miracles, if they could? But they do not seem to have attempted it. They were too many, too public, and too thoroughly witnessed for them to dare to deny them. How, in the face of this fact, modern infidels and skeptics can talk of our Lord's miracles as being impostures and delusions, they would do well to explain! If the Pharisees who lived in our Lord's time, and who moved heaven and earth to oppose His progress, never dared to dispute the fact that He worked miracles, it is absurd to begin denying His miracles now, after eighteen centuries have passed away.*"

How very true that is and yet people continue to deny the work of Jesus, trying to negate the miracles He has done. That is just foolish!

Remember the words that Jesus said to Martha, "**. . . '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. Do you believe this?'**" John 11:25-26.

That is a question that we all must answer "**Do you believe this?**"

As we read on, here in John 11:49-52, we see Caiaphas the High Priest speak forth this prophecy. And as you read it you can clearly see that this is an amazing prophecy, it did come to pass.

Now, in saying that, please understand that this prophecy of Caiaphas was not given because he was such a godly man, but because of his position as High Priest.

And what Caiaphas said is basically this, ***“You fools! If you had any intelligence at all, you would see that the answer is very simple. It is better that one die rather than a whole nation!”***

It is as Isaiah 53 tells us, that the Messiah would die for the sins of the nation and the world!

In Isaiah 53:4-6 we are told, **“Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”**

This is such a powerful statement showing that Jesus is the One that the Scriptures speak of regarding the Messiah. That the Messiah would not only pay for the sins of Israel but for the world!

In fact, this is so powerful that this portion of Isaiah is not read in the Synagogues any longer because they can't refute the fact that this is speaking of Jesus and they don't want to deal with that, so they ignore it or edited it out of their readings!

Sounds just like the Jewish religious leaders of Jesus' day!

And this is so important, especially if you understand how the Jews felt about Gentiles in that day. They despised them. And yet, John tells us that Jesus is going to bring not only the nation of Israel together, but both Jew and Gentile into one body and that is exactly what He did do. Jesus came to save the people of this world!

Paul put it this way in Ephesians 2:13-18, **“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.”**

What a powerful prophecy that this High Priest gave. How could he do that? We did touch on this but listen to what Ray Stedman has to say as he gives us this insight into what the High Priest was doing and how God can even use someone who is not walking with Him for His plans and purposes. He wrote,

Here in this passage we can see the sovereignty of God, the unseen hand of God in human history. Men could do their worst, but they could not alter the divine plan.

I once heard Richard Halverson, who is now Chaplain to the United States Senate, put it very exactly, in these words: “Nothing men can do will thwart or alter the will of God; and nothing God ever does sets aside the sovereign choice of man.”

That is a balanced statement of the truth. It is not a question of one or the other:  
Do we choose free will for man or the sovereignty of God?

The biblical position is, it is both . . .

That is why the exercise of free will only carries out what God has said will happen when a deformed and twisted will is allowed to make choices.

I do not think anything demonstrates that more clearly than this incident. . .

Although Caiaphas himself was a scalawag - an unprincipled, ruthless unbeliever - because he was the high priest, his office made him a prophet, and God spoke through him anyway.

- <https://bit.ly/3wMjaPj>

How true that is!

Here's the thing. God knows all things, He knows what every person is going to do, that is the sovereignty of God.

But man is doing what he wants, and he thinks he is going to do what he wants in spite of God. That is free will, man is choosing what to do.

But God knows and His plans and purposes will come to pass. Jesus was the Lamb slain before the foundations of the world were established because God saw into the future what would need to be done to save sinful man.

And man has a choice to make, to obey God or be in defiance of what God has said!

So, we see there that this division between Jesus and the religious leaders is growing.

How are they going to deal with this Jesus, they can't even say His name but call him "**this Man.**"

The Jewish religious council has decided that this man, Jesus, needs to be put to death.

Maclaren expressed the thinking of the council this way. He wrote, "*Never mind about His miracles, or His teaching, or the beauty of His character. His life is a perpetual danger to our prerogatives [rights]. I vote for death!*"

The One who came to bring light and life into this world they want to turn off, they want to kill Him!

And the end result of a nation, a society, a community, a family that turns God off, puts Him to death, in a sense, is death and destruction!

All you have to do is look at how far our nation has come by taking God out of the picture or getting people to go after a false Jesus, a false Gospel, and it is not pretty!

Let me give you one example and that is what has happened in our schools since prayer was removed. And keep in mind it did not mean that every child was a Christian, but they knew there was a creator, and they obeyed the rules and regulations. Not a perfect timeframe, but far better than what we see today!

We are told,

Prayer in schools has not always been such a controversial topic. In fact, public schools had prayer for nearly 200 years before the Supreme Court ruled that state mandated class prayers were unconstitutional in the landmark case of *Engle vs. Vital* in June 1962.

Religion aside, prayer should be implemented in schools simply because it has useful benefits on its own.

Our school systems aren't doing any better since the removal of prayer in schools. In fact, some may say that the situation has gotten much worse, especially in terms of school violence.

In 2007, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention found that 5.9 percent of students carry weapons to school with them, 7.8 percent have been threatened or injured on campuses nationwide and 12.4 percent of students have been in a physical fight on school grounds at least once. The most recent studies have found that 5.3 percent of students do not go to school because they do not feel safe.

Since the court outlawed prayer, the nation has been in steady moral decline. Former Secretary of Education, William Bennet, revealed in his cultural indexes that between 1960 and 1990 divorce doubled, teenage pregnancy went up 200 percent, teen suicide increased 300 percent, violent crime went up 500 percent and he maintains that there is a strong correlation between the expulsion of prayer from our schools and decline in morality.

It should be made clear that prayer has positive psychological, physical and emotional influences. Focusing on your emotions by praying can help relieve stress, calm fears and reduce anxiety.

When cardiologist Randolph Byrd, did his famous study on the effects of prayer in April 1982 through May 1983, he found that praying on a regular basis can have an enormous effect on the psyche of an individual by stabilizing their mood, giving them a feeling of well-being, improving how they interact with others and positively changing the way they conduct themselves.

When it comes to children and how they behave in school, prayer and all these positive effects that it holds can have enormous constructive effects on their outlook and those around them.

The establishment clause is a popular rebuttal for those who are against prayer in schools. It is the first of several pronouncements in the Constitution and it states that Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion.

When the families of New Hyde Park, New York, complained that the voluntary prayer in schools went against their religious beliefs, the prayer in question went as follows: “Almighty God we acknowledge our dependence upon thee, and we beg thy blessings on our parents, our teachers and our country. Amen.” They were most concern with who the God was that the children were praying to, who was never specified, nor was any distinction of religion ever made.

It is a paradox for the same government who has its grounds on religious principals from the very beginning to uphold prayer as being “unconstitutional.” The original purpose of the clause was to ensure that the government should not declare a state religion. If this is the case there should be no harm in leaving the decision to pray up to local districts rather than deeming it against the nature of the nation

Does it matter who you pray to?

It absolutely does because there is only One true God! And I think those who prayed in school understood who they were praying to, and it affected their lives, in a positive way.

Look at the school shootings that have taken place. The one in Texas at the elementary school and the number of children that were murdered by an 18-year-old boy!

Tragic and my heart goes out to the family and friends that were affected by this. But the problem is what our President wants to do, he sees this as a gun problem.

I am sorry, it is not a gun problem, it is a problem of the heart!

In the 1950's here in Manitowoc, they brought guns to school. Yes, they were locked up in the school but there were not these shootings. Why?

Maybe because back then God was in the school system and today, we have removed God and we see the consequences of that!

Not only that. But the Bible also has an influence upon our lives, in a positive way.

One of the most dramatic examples of the Bible's divine ability to transform men and women involved the famous *Mutiny on the Bounty*.

Following their rebellion against the notorious Captain Bligh, nine mutineers, along with the Tahitian men and women who accompanied them, found their way to Pitcairn Island, a tiny dot in the South Pacific only two miles long and a mile wide.

Ten years later, drink and fighting had left only one man alive - John Adams. Eleven women and 23 children made up the rest of the Island's population.

So far this is the familiar story made famous in the book and motion picture. But the rest of the story is even more remarkable.

About this time, Adams came across the “Bounty’s” Bible in the bottom of an old chest. He began to read it, and the divine power of God’s Word reached into the heart of that hardened murderer on a tiny volcanic speck in the vast Pacific Ocean - and changed his life forever.

The peace and love that Adams found in the Bible entirely replaced the old life of quarreling, brawling, and liquor. He began to teach the children from the Bible until every person on the island had experienced the same amazing change that he had found.

Today, with a population of slightly less than 100, nearly every person on Pitcairn Island is a Christian.

- From Signs of the Times, August 1988, p. 5

God’s Word is living, and it can change people’s lives as we have seen, and we do see in our own lives.

And it is not just living, but “**. . . the word of God is . . . powerful . . .**”

Books don’t have the power to change people’s lives as God’s Word does. Yes, books can affect our lives but God’s Word changes us from the inside out!

But if you don’t want to see the truth, it does not matter how much evidence is before you, you will be – ***BLINDED FROM THE LIGHT!***

As we read on, we are going to see – ***CONFUSION AND INDIFFERENCE!***

VERSES 54-57

As I have said, as you look at these verses what you see is – ***CONFUSION AND INDIFFERENCE!***

The Jewish religious leaders wanted to kill Jesus. The Jewish people didn't know what to think and thus, they stood around and talked about Jesus and that is as far as it went!

Because of all this opposition against Him, Jesus walked cautiously so that they would not put Him to death, at least not until the time the Father had proclaimed.

So He withdrew for a time from Jerusalem and he went to the area of Ephraim, which is about 15 miles to the north of Bethany and He will stay there until the appointed time of His arrival in Jerusalem.

The Jewish religious leaders thought they were in control. They were going to determine the fate of Jesus. But His fate, the work that He was sent to do was predetermined before the foundations of the world were formed.

We see this in Revelation 13:8 where we are told, “**All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.**”

This was the plan of God to save man from His sin, and it was something that was put together before man was ever created, before man sinned!

How can that be?

Because God knows all things and He had a plan to save man from His sin. And that would be through the atoning sacrifice made by Jesus on the cross of Calvary and at that appointed time, to the exact day!

Remember, it was 173,880 days from the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem to the coming Messiah and Jesus fulfilled that as He rode through Jerusalem as Messiah the Prince and die for the sins of the world! He was in control of the situation, they were not!

Now in John 11:55 we are told that “**... the Passover of the Jews was near ...**”

That means between John 11:53 and John 11:55 some three months have passed by, and we are about one week from the last Passover that Jesus will celebrate before He goes to the cross of Calvary!

What I want you to also notice is that John speaks of this Passover as “**... the Passover of the Jews ...**”

We talked about this in our study of John before but that is not what this feast was called. In Exodus 12:11 it is called the “**Lord’s Passover.**”

What changed?

It was no longer the Lord’s, but the Jewish religious leaders had changed it so much that the Lord did not associate Himself with it any longer!

Remember what Passover was all about. It was a feast that commemorated God delivering the children of Israel from their bondage in Egypt.

And it is a feast that looked forward to the Lamb of God coming to take away the sins of the world, as we saw in Isaiah 53!

You see, just as the angel of death passed over the homes in Egypt that had the blood of the lamb sprinkled upon them, we see that in our lives as we apply the blood of the Lamb upon our lives by faith, it causes the judgment of God to pass over our lives!

Paul put it like this in Romans 8:1, **“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”**

And Jesus reminds us in John 5:24, **“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.”**

The judgment is removed because Jesus took that punishment for us, and He gave to us His righteousness and we have moved from death to life in Him!

And look at what we see here in John, that the Jews were going up to Jerusalem to do what?

They were going to Jerusalem, before Passover, **“to purify themselves.”** John 11:55.

They were trying to make themselves clean for Passover and what else were they doing?

They were plotting to murder Jesus!

Go figure, but that is what religion does. It makes the person look good as they are plotting evil towards others, even murder!

And think about this. Lazarus is a painful sore in the eyes of the Jewish religious leaders. Jesus bringing him back to life was a witness to who Jesus is, Almighty God!

When we get to John chapter 12, in verses 9-11 we see the Jewish religious leaders plotting to kill Lazarus because he was a witness of Jesus, and many believed in Jesus because of him. Poor guy, he died once, Jesus brought him back and already these guys want to kill him! Again, that is what religion does, it puts to death true life!

So Passover is close, maybe a week away at this point. And as we will see, Jesus will be betrayed, arrested, condemned, and crucified.

Josephus tells us there were at least 250,000 sheep that were slaughtered in the Temple during the Passover of the time of Jesus.

And with one sheep per 10 people, that would mean Jerusalem swelled to well over 2.5 million people during this feast!

All those lambs and among them, the Lamb of God who has come to take away the sins of the world, Jesus!

Now word is out, Jesus is on their hit list, and you might say that His picture is hanging in the local post office so that if anyone sees Him, they need to report it to the religious leaders so they could arrest Him!

Do you know the biggest opposition to the church today?

No, it is not Islam!

No, it is not the humanists!

No, it is not those who deny there is a God!

No, it is not the politicians!

It is the church itself, fighting against those who are standing up for God! It is the religious people who have a form of godliness but deny its power.

We say that Jesus is the only way, they say He is one of the many ways.

We say the Bible is the Word of God, they say it contains the Words of God.

And the list goes on-and-on.

We need to stand strong in the Lord and not water down His Word.

Jude said, **“Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.”** Jude 3.

You see, we know the end of the story and the ungodly don't win. Thus, let's gather as many on our side, into the Kingdom of God through Jesus Christ as we can!

It is as Jesus said in Matthew 9:37-38, **“The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”**

And we read that, and we pray, *“Yes Lord, send in those who will labor.”*

But that is not all that Jesus is talking about, for as you continue on in Matthew, Jesus first prays for the laborers and then He told His men to go out into the fields and you know what, that is exactly what He is telling us. To pray for laborers and then you go out and do the work! Go forth and minister the things of God!

I don't think I have to tell you that there is a lot of confusion and indifference out in this world today and especially with the things of God.

And I truly believe that confusion leads to indifference.

The opposite of love is not hate, it's indifference. The opposite of art is not ugliness, it's indifference. The opposite of faith is not heresy, it's indifference. And the opposite of life is not death, it's indifference.

– Elie Wiesel

And here I am speaking of Christians that are indifferent to the things of God. It doesn't move them anymore. They don't seem to care. If they have the time maybe they will do something for the Lord, but they have to have time.

In regard to the Bible, it really doesn't matter, just be a good person.

And we see the ramifications of that lackluster faith, our children have departed from the faith at record numbers because so many don't live what they say they believe. They are indifferent!

How many Christians voted for a political candidate that was for abortion?

And they will have their reasons for doing so, but shame on you!

Sorry, but shame on you!

I am sure the children of Israel felt the same way, ***"What's the big deal, offering our children to the god Molech. We will benefit from it so why not offer them up!"***

Because it is murder!

For these Jewish religious leaders, they had the truth before them.

For these Jews, they had the truth before them.

But it did not move them and look at what it brought upon them, death and destruction.

It is time for us to wake from our spiritual sleep and stand firm in what we believe, what the Bible has to say!

Yes, all this – ***CONFUSION AND INDIFFERENCE!***

But as we will see next time – ***MARY WORSHIPS JESUS!***

May we be like Mary and worship the Lamb of God who has come to take away the sins of the world!