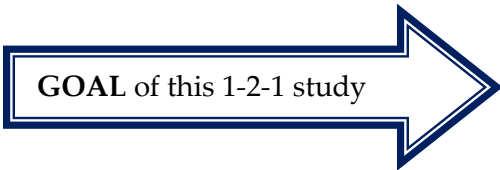


Summary Sheet for John 11

...to accompany Notes 20 & 21



GOAL of this 1-2-1 study

Believe in better! Jesus is bigger than we think. He is the one who reverses death and brings life now and in the future.

Context – how does this chapter fit in?

In line with his aim (stated in ch 20v31), John has showed us that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (chs 1-4), and what it means to truly believe in him (chs 5-10). In chs 11-21 we now see that Jesus really can give the life that he has been promising to give (10.10 & 10.28). The section begins with Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead (ch 11) and ends with his own resurrection in ch 20. Jesus really can give LIFE!

However, the section repeatedly emphasises the death of Jesus – the way that he will be able to give life is through his own death...

In ch 11 John introduces this key theme of 'life' by showing that those who already believe in Jesus still have much to learn about him. Martha may recognise him as 'the Christ, the Son of God', but she hasn't yet understood what it means for him to be 'the resurrection and the life.' The raising of Lazarus from the dead will reveal God's glory in that Jesus can deal with the greatest problem facing the human race – death...

Impact on us

Do we realise the magnitude of who Jesus is and what he has come to do, or is our view of him still rather limited..? He really is the one who can deal with death and reverse the effects of sin in a fallen world. This means that his claims of bringing life that will last forever aren't just a vague hope, but a concrete reality now and eternally...

How John writes to make his point

The raising of Lazarus from the dead is one of the most important 'signs' in John's gospel. It is given far more attention and space than any of the others so far. Also, while several previous signs brought Jesus into contact with someone 'as good as dead' (end of ch 4, ch 5), now Jesus is helping someone who really is dead... John also emphasises how much Jesus loved Lazarus and his sisters – he really is the Good Shepherd who cares deeply for those who follow him.

Structure

- 11: 1-16 Purpose of the sign – Lazarus will be raised for the glory of God, so that Jesus might be glorified & the disciples will grow in their belief in him.
- 11: 17-37 Significance of the sign – Martha, Mary and others are challenged to grow in their belief of Jesus – he isn't just able to heal people, but he is the very 'resurrection and the life'.
- 11: 38-44 The sign itself: Jesus speaks and Lazarus is raised to life.
- 11: 45-54 The outcome of the sign: divided responses – many believe in Jesus, but the Jews now actively plot his death. High Priest prophesies that Jesus must die on behalf of the people, unwittingly linking Jesus' life giving work with his death.

John's references to the Old Testament and why they matter

- Death and life

Ever since Adam and Eve were banished from God's presence and death entered human experience at the start of Genesis, the issue of life and death has been a major theme in the OT. The prophet Isaiah looked forward to a day when death would be swallowed up forever (Isaiah 25vs7-8). Jesus announced the arrival of his death-defeating kingdom in John chs 2-4 - now, for the first time, we actually see him overcome man's greatest enemy.

- Substitution

In Leviticus ch 16 the principle of substitution is established. In order for sin and guilt to be taken away from God's people, something has to die in their place to satisfy God's just wrath. Much later, the prophet Isaiah looks forward to God's Servant coming into the world and dying on behalf of many (Isaiah ch 53). John records Caiaphas' inadvertent comment to point out that Jesus' death will fulfil this.

Some questions to help guide someone else through ch 11 -

Opener: What are the different ways in which death presents a problem for humanity? Why does death exist?

Considering the text1: How do v4, v15 and vs25-26 and vs40-42 help us see what exactly we should learn from the sign of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead?

Considering the text2: Martha already believes in Jesus, but in vs17-27 how does Jesus want her to move on in her understanding of who he is in v25-26?

Considering the text3: Looking at vs28-44, what's striking about how Jesus responds in the face of death? What does this tell us about him?

Considering the text4: Many Jews witnessed this miracle of life and believed in Jesus, but what's the irony in how Caiaphas and other Jews respond in vs 45-57? What does this tell us about what needs to happen if Jesus is going to give life to many?

One to keep chewing on: How does this chapter give us more confidence that Jesus really is the Good Shepherd who said John 10v10 and John 10v28? How has this passage personally challenged our view of Jesus and his power over death?