

Yochanan ~ Part 24

Yeshua Shares the Sorrow of Death

11 ²⁸ After saying this, she went off and secretly called Miryam, her sister: "The Rabbi is here and is calling for you."

The **Rabbi** was a natural way for **talmidim** to refer to **Yeshua** before His resurrection.

²⁹ When she heard this, she jumped up and went to Him. ³⁰ Yeshua had not yet come into the village but was still where Marta had met Him; ³¹ so when the Judeans who had been with Miryam in the house comforting her saw her get up quickly and go out, they followed her, thinking she was going to the tomb to mourn there. ³² When Miryam came to where Yeshua was and saw him, she fell at His feet and said to Him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." ³³ When Yeshua saw her crying, and also the Judeans who came with her crying, He was deeply moved and also troubled.

According to **Jewish** oral tradition, the funeral custom indicated that even a poor family must hire at least two flute players and a professional wailing woman to mourn the dead. Because the family may have been well-to-do, a rather large group appears present. He was deeply moved in spirit and was troubled.

³⁴ He said, "Where have you buried him?" They said, "Lord, come and see." ³⁵ Yeshua cried; ³⁶ so the Judeans there said, "See how He loved Him!" ³⁷ But some of them said, "He opened the blind man's eyes. Couldn't He have kept this one from dying?"

His tears here were not generated out of mourning, since He was to raise **El'azar**, but out of grief for a fallen world entangled in sin-caused sorrow and death. He was "*a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief*" (Isaiah 53:3).

The Seventh Sign: Raising El'azar from the Dead

³⁸ Yeshua, again deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying in front of the entrance. ³⁹ Yeshua said, "Take the stone away!" Marta, the sister of the dead man, said to Yeshua, "By now his body must smell, for it has been four days since he died!"

While the **Jews** used spices at burials, this did not prevent decomposition of the body, as Marta pointed out.

⁴⁰ Yeshua said to her, "Didn't I tell you that if you keep trusting, you will see the glory of God?" ⁴¹ So they removed the stone. Yeshua looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴² I myself know that you always hear me, but I say this because of the crowd standing around, so that they may believe that you have sent me."

Yeshua's prayer finds a **Tanak** antecedent in **Elijah's** prayer (1 Kings 18:37). Compare Yochanan 6:11.

⁴³ Having said this, He shouted, "El'azar! Come out!" ⁴⁴ The man who had been dead came out, his hands and feet wrapped in strips of linen and his face covered with a cloth. Yeshua said to them, "Unwrap him, and let him go!"

Yeshua raised **El'azar** not by magic, incantations, or spells, but by the power of His word. **Yochanan** did not record **El'azar's** reaction or any of the aftermath of his raising. Instead, he immediately shifted his focus to the plot against **Yeshua**.

⁴⁵ At this, many of the Judeans who had come to visit Miryam, and had seen what Yeshua had done, trusted in Him.

The Plot to Kill Yeshua

⁴⁶ But some of them went off to the P'rushim and told them what he had done. ⁴⁷ So the head cohanim and the P'rushim called a meeting of the Sanhedrin and said, "What are we going to do?—for this man is performing many miracles.

The head **cohanim** and the **P'rushim**, the two foci of opposition to **Yeshua** in the **Judean** establishment, called a meeting of the **Sanhedrin**, the ruling council, but it was apparently an illegal meeting (Mark 14:55).

⁴⁸ If we let Him keep going on this way, everyone will trust in Him, and the Romans will come and destroy both the Temple and the nation."

The establishment maintained a working relationship with **Rome** despite **Rome** being an oppressive foreign power. This relationship was perceived as threatened by anyone whom **Rome** might regard as intending to lead a revolt and set up an independent government. Everyone will trust in him as the longed-for **Messianic King** who would restore **Isra'el's** national glory.

⁴⁹ But one of them, Kayafa, who was cohen gadol that year, said to them, "You people don't know anything!

That year need not imply that the high priestly office rotated annually. It simply indicates that **Kayafa** happened to serve in this role the year **Yeshua** was tried and crucified. In fact, **Kayafa** was high priest for 18 years (CD 18–36), longer than any other first-century high priest.

⁵⁰ You don't see that it's better for you if one man dies on behalf of the people, so that the whole nation won't be destroyed."⁵¹ Now he didn't speak this way on his own initiative; rather, since he was cohen gadol that year, he was prophesying that Yeshua was about to die on behalf of the nation,

Die for the people invokes memory of the **Maccabean** martyrs (2 Maccabees 7:37–38). In the typical double meaning used in **Yochanan's Gospel**, **Kayafa's** pronouncement anticipated the substitutionary atonement **Yeshua** was to render. As the **Jewish** high priest, **Kayafa** prophesied, speaking better than he knew.

⁵² and not for the nation alone, but so that He might gather into one the scattered children of God. ⁵³ From that day on, they made plans to have Him put to death. ⁵⁴ Therefore Yeshua no longer walked around openly among the Judeans but went away from there into the region near the desert, to a town called Efrayim, and stayed there with His talmidim.

From now on, “**Yeshua** is not to be arrested in order to be tried; he is to be tried because he has already been found guilty.”

⁵⁵ The Judean festival of Pesach was near, and many people went up from the country to Yerushalayim to perform the purification ceremony prior to Pesach. ⁵⁶ They were looking for Yeshua, and as they stood in the Temple courts they said to each other, "What do you think? that he simply won't come to the festival?"⁵⁷ Moreover, the head cohanim and the P'rushim had given orders that anyone knowing Yeshua's whereabouts should inform them, so that they could have him arrested. ¹

This is the third **Pasach** mentioned in **Yochanah** (see 2:13; 6:4) and the last in **Yeshua's** earthly ministry at which His sacrificial death occurred. **They were looking for Yeshua.** The **Jews** who filled Jerusalem for **Pasach** wondered whether **Yeshua** would appear at this time and were actively seeking Him. The plot of the chief priests and **P'rushim** (see v. 47; 7:12) was known widely enough to pique their curiosity as to whether **Yeshua** would dare show Himself in **Yerushalayim**. The plotters ensured that the whole city was filled with potential informants.

Consider reading Yochanan 11:28-57 together as a family and discuss how **Yeshua** responded to death and suffering. After reading, encourage each family member to share a time when they felt God's comfort in their grief. This practice can help create a supportive environment at home, reinforcing the idea that even in troubled times, we can lean on each other and on **Yeshua** for strength. This can be particularly helpful for those who may be experiencing anxiety or fear about the future, as it reaffirms **God's** presence in our distress.

In our next post, we will continue to explore the **Gospel of Yochanan.**

¹ Yochanan 11:28-57.