



# Chapter 11:44 - 12:8

Lazarus has died of an unspecified disease. It is the fourth day and his death is considered irreversible. Jesus comes as the funeral is taking place.

In those days and at that time because of the warm, Mediterranean climate in the region, and because the Jews never embalmed their dead, it was their practice to bury them the same day they died. Although Jews used aromatic spices, their custom was not to embalm the body, but to use the spices to counteract the repulsive odors from decomposition.

Lazarus has been dead and in the grave for four days. According to Jewish custom, mourning took place for a full month. The first seven days of those 30 days are intense mourning and intense grieving. Those seven days were typically very demonstrative.

The Jews would give full vent to their feelings with loud mourning, the ripping of clothes, the wearing of sackcloth, the throwing up of dust, and putting ashes on their head.

Professional mourners were hired who would keep the atmosphere going by loud mourning and wailing.

All the neighbors would know there was grieving in the house of the deceased because of the activity of those paid professional mourners.

<sup>35</sup> *Jesus wept (dakryō).*  
*John 11:35*

# δακρύω

STRONG'S NUMBER: **g1145**

## Dictionary Definition

**g1145.** δακρύω *dakryō*; from [1144](#); to shed tears: — weep. Compare [2799](#).

AV (1) - weep 1;

I. to weep, shed tears

# κλαίω

STRONG'S NUMBER: **g2799**

## Dictionary Definition

**g2799.** κλαίω *klaiō*; of uncertain affinity; to sob, i.e. wail aloud (whereas [1145](#) is rather to cry silently): — bewail, weep.

AV (40) - weep 39, bewail 1;



The Greek word for “wept” here (**dakryō**) has the connotation of silently bursting into tears in contrast to the loud lament of the group (**klaiō**). Jesus’ tears here were not generated out of mourning, since He would raise Lazarus, but out of grief for a fallen world entangled in sin-caused sorrow and death.



Jesus was also fully into this human experience. He was deity, but He was also humanity, fully God and fully man. He fully immersed Himself. He wept along with those who were weeping.

<sup>15</sup> *For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.  
Hebrews 4:15*

*<sup>36</sup> Then the Jews said, “See how He loved  
him!”*

*John 11:36*

*<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?”*

*John 11:37*

The Jews remember what happened a few months ago at the feast of dedication in Jerusalem. Jesus healed a blind man.

Healing the blind man made an impact on the people of Jerusalem. They're still remembering that. And they're thinking, if He could do that, why couldn't He keep a man from dying.

# ἐμβριμάομαι

STRONG'S NUMBER: **g1690**

## Dictionary Definition

**g1690.** ἐμβριμάομαι *embrimaomai*; from [1722](#) and βριμάομαι *brimaomai* (to snort with anger); to have indignation on, i.e. (transitively) to blame, (intransitively) to sigh with chagrin, (specially) to sternly enjoin: — straitly charge, groan, murmur against.

AV (5) - straitly charge 2, groan 2, murmur against 1;

- I. to charge with earnest admonition, sternly to charge, threatened to enjoin

**38** *Then Jesus, again groaning (embrimaomai) in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it.*  
**John 11:38**

**Jesus is angry at death, unbelief, etc.**



*<sup>39a</sup> Jesus said, “Take away the stone.”  
John 11:39a*

The tomb was sealed with a stone. It was a large two to three-ton stone. The stone was rolled into a little ledge that was carved into the stone. And it was rolled downward to keep grave robbers and animals out.

To move a stone out of the way took several people, and it took leverage. It also took tools to be able to do it.



*<sup>39b</sup> 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.”*

*John 11:39b*

Again, the Jews used aromatic spices to counteract the repulsive odors from decomposition because their custom was not to embalm the body.

The aromatic spices had since stopped doing their work.

Jesus raised others who were dead. But they were all different than this. When He raised the daughter of Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue up in Galilee, she had just died. When Jesus raised the son of the widow of Nain in Galilee, he had just died. In those days, the dead buried the same day as death.

But Lazarus has been in the tomb four days. The decomposition has already set in. That was Martha's complaint when Jesus will say roll away the stone. It's nasty business to open the tomb. The decomposition has done its work. And there is a mighty stench.

If there were those who would attempt to rule out the other raising of the dead miracles as some sort of parlor trick, they had no basis! Everybody knew Lazarus has been dead. He's been dead now for four days. Whereas, before they could say well maybe that child wasn't dead all the way, maybe he was just dying or on its last breath. But for Lazarus, the decomposition process had set in.

*40 Jesus said to her, “Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?”  
John 11:40*

*<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.*

*John 11:41*

*42 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.”*

*John 11:42*

Jesus' prayer was not a petition, but thanksgiving to the Father. Here, Jesus wanted the Jews to hear Him. He wanted the Jews to listen to what was going on because Jesus is authenticating the relationship He has with His Father.

*43 Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth!”*

*John 11:43*

Jesus had to specifically name Lazarus because He is in a graveyard setting and if He had not been specific, He would have had an army of risen dead come forth!



*44 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 11:44*

The Jews would wrap a dead body in linen cloth, adding spice in the layers and folds. They would wrap the body loosely with the head wrapped separately. This is indicated by the fact that Lazarus could move out of the tomb before he was unwrapped.

<sup>45</sup> *Then **many** of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, **believed** in Him.*

*John 11:45*

It should read "everyone" who saw Lazarus get out of the tomb. But no.

<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.*

*John 20:31*

*46 But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did.*

*John 11:46*

*“The heart is deceitful above all things,  
And desperately wicked;  
Who can know it?*

*Jeremiah 17:9*

Jesus' teaching and actions often divided the Jews. While some believed, others, apparently with malicious intent, informed the Pharisees of Jesus' action.

*47 Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, “What shall we do? For this Man works many signs.*

*John 11:47*

The chief priests belonged to a group called the Sadducees. Then under that is the group called the Pharisees.

So you have chief priests, Sadducees, and Pharisees meeting together. It’s interesting because they never met together. They hated each other.

The Sadducees were the theological liberals of the day. They really weren't religious. They were political. They wanted to appease Rome so that they could maintain their wealthy positions, paid for by the Jewish nation and the Roman government.

The Sadducees did not believe in a  
Resurrection.

That's why they were sad you see.  
They did not believe in the supernatural  
world.

They did not believe in life after death.

They also did not believe in the inerrancy of the Bible, that the Bible was the word of God. They only held to loosely the first five books of Moses, the Pentateuch.



The Pharisees, on the other hand, believed in miracles, believed in a Resurrection, believed in the afterlife, believed in spirits and demons, believed all of the Old Testament was the inspired word of God.

And they also believed that the oral law was to be considered almost on a par with scripture itself.

The Sadducees and the Pharisees were diametrically opposed, so they fought.

One was a highly legalistic religious group. One was very liberal and more political in nature. They hated each other with a passion but they hated Jesus more.

And their hatred for Jesus was the only thing they had in common, and that was the mutual element that brought them together.

So, alerted by the Pharisees, a Sanhedrin committee consisting of chief priests (former high priests and members of high priestly families) and Pharisees, called the Sanhedrin to session. The Pharisees could not, by themselves, take any judicial action against Jesus. Though subject to Roman control, the Sanhedrin was the highest judicial body in Israel and exercised judicial, legislative, and executive powers at that time.

In Jesus' day, the seventy members of the Sanhedrin were dominated by the chief priests, and virtually all the priests were Sadducees.

*48 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.”*

*John 11:48*

The Jews were not willing to believe in Jesus as the Son of God, even though Lazarus had been raised.

They feared that escalating expectation that Jesus was truly the Messiah, brought on by Jesus' miracles and the patriotism surrounding the Feast of Dedication, could start a movement against Roman oppression and occupation that would cause the Romans to come and take away all their rights and freedoms.

*49 And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all,  
John 11:49*

Caiaphas became high priest around 18AD, being appointed by the Roman prefect, Valerius Gratus. His father-in-law was Annas, who had previously functioned in that same position from A.D. 7–14 and who exercised great influence over the office even after his tenure. Caiaphas remained in office until A.D. 36 when, along with Pontius Pilate, he was removed by the Romans.



Caiaphas took a leading part in the trial and condemnation of Jesus.

*50 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.”*

*John 11:50*

Caiaphas was really a pragmatist. He was saying that it was better that Jesus dies than they die. Caiaphas is saying that if they didn't put an end to Jesus' ministry and find a way to kill Him, He's going to cause a riot.

If Jesus causes a riot and an insurrection, the Romans would come after them and kill them. It's much better if Jesus dies instead of them.

So, in their court, the chief priests (Sadducees) and Pharisees assembled and plotted to take Jesus by trickery and kill Him.

*<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,  
John 11:51*

But John is telling us that Caiaphas was unknowingly prophesying! God used his position as the high priest to give one of the clearest predictions of substitutionary atonement. One death is sufficient for all!

Caiaphas did not realize the implications of what he spoke. While he uttered blasphemy against Christ, God parodied his statement into truth. The responsibility for the wicked meaning of his words belonged to Caiaphas, but God's providence directed the choice of words so as to express the heart of God's glorious plan of salvation.

Caiaphas actually was used by God as a prophet because he was the high priest and originally the high priest was the means of God's will being revealed.

God can use anyone to speak His truth!

Caiaphas was an unbelieving, unrepentant person. Yet, as high priest that year, he speaks God's word, a clear declaration of substitutionary atonement.

<sup>28</sup> *Then the Lord opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, “What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?”*

*Numbers 22:28*

*<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.*

*John 11:52*

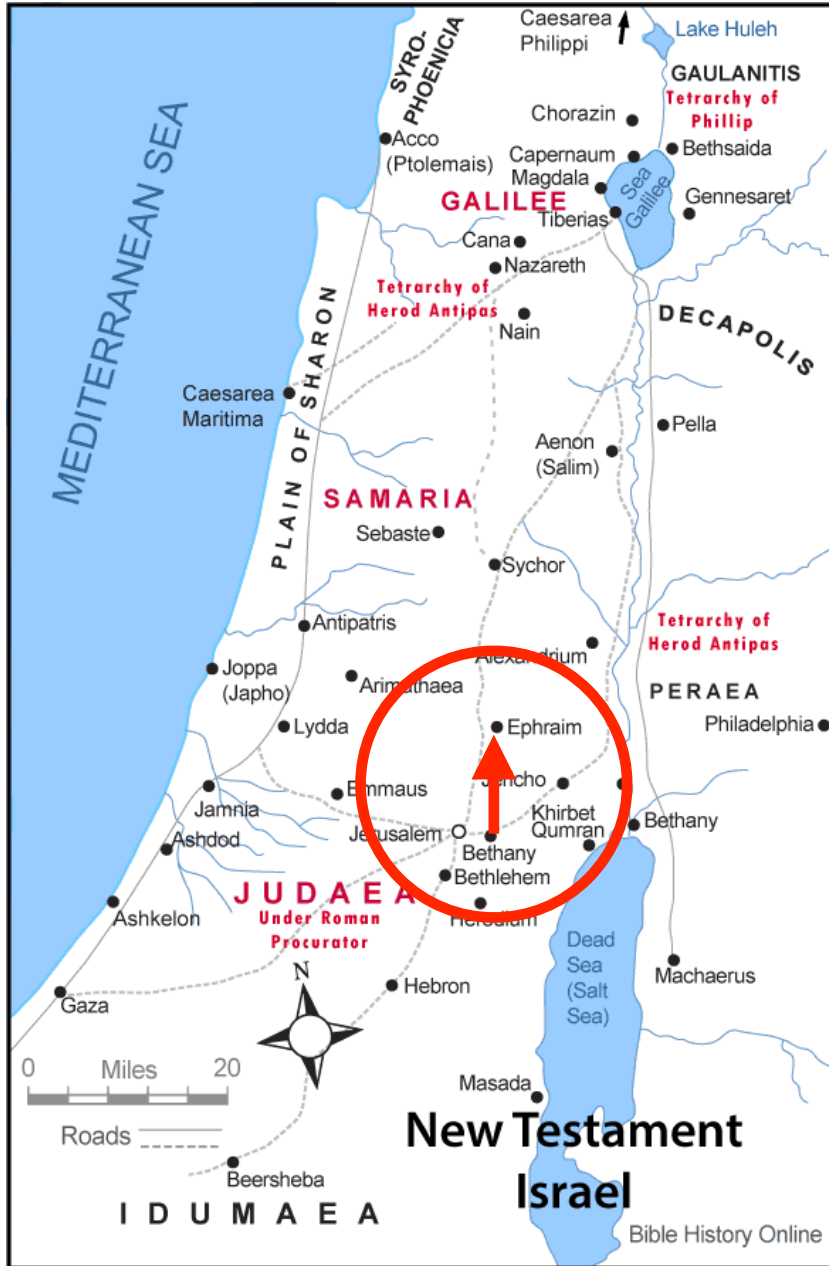
Referring to the Diaspora, but certainly anticipates Paul's Gentile mission. As a result of Christ's sacrificial death and Resurrection, both Jew and Gentile have been made into one group, the church.



*<sup>53</sup> Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death.*

*John 11:53*

Their course of action toward Jesus was now fixed. All that remained was to accomplish it. Jesus had already been judged guilty of blasphemy and the sentence was death.



54 *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.*  
*John 11:54*

*<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.*

*John 11:55*

This is the third Passover in John's Gospel and the last in Jesus' earthly ministry. It is at this Passover that His sacrificial death occurred.

*<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?”*

*John 11:56*

Jerusalem was filled with Jews for Passover. They wondered if Jesus would show Himself at this time and many were searching to find Him. The plot of the chief priests and Pharisees was probably widely known and many were curious as to whether Jesus would dare show Himself in Jerusalem.

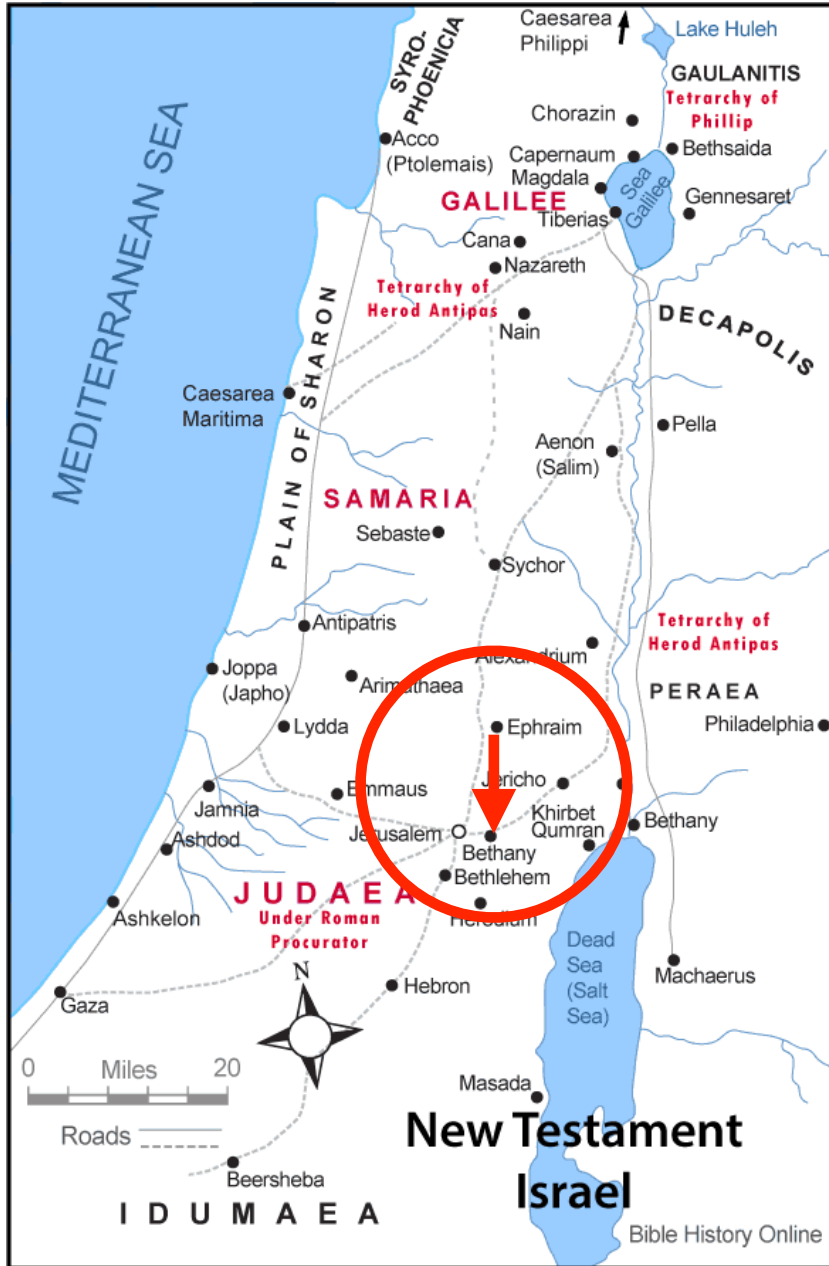
*<sup>57</sup> Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a command, that if anyone knew where He was, he should report it, that they might seize Him.*

*John 11:57*

The religious leaders desired that the entire city of Jerusalem be filled with potential informants.

William Barclay writes that all of the steps they took to save the nation would ensure that they ultimately destroyed the nation.

Jesus predicted that the Romans would come in 70 AD and destroy Jerusalem and that's exactly what happened. In seeking to save their own lives, the religious leaders destroyed their whole nation. But the machinery is set in place. This is now the final week of Jesus on the earth.



1 *Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead.*

*John 12:1*

Jesus is back in Bethany.

*2 There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him.*

*John 12:2*

The living Lazarus is a living witness to the power of Jesus Christ!

Note that Martha is again serving!



Hopefully, this time more joyfully.....

*<sup>38b</sup> and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. <sup>39</sup> And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. <sup>40</sup> But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me."*

*Luke 10:38b-40*

*3 Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.*

*John 12:3*

Scripture is not clear as to where Mary acquired the spikenard, but Judas Iscariot is well aware of its value. One commentator suggests it's about \$10,000 worth of ointment.

Oil of spikenard came from north India. It was the fruit of a fibrous plant. The fibrous roots were between three and 12 inches that anchored it to the ground.

Between 30 and 40 spikes from these plants shot out into the air. Extruded from these spikes was a very earthy, spicy, scented oil.

And because of it coming from such a distance and being so rare, it was of great value. Mary didn't care. She wanted to show Jesus how much she loved Him.

*4 But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said,  
5 "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?"*

*John 12:4-5*

What Judas said sounded so good. He spoke well but had a bad heart. He sounded so spiritual, and that's the way he wanted it to sound.

Judas wanted people to believe that he was concerned about expenses. He wants us to think that he is concerned about missions or the poor. So why is this being wasted on Jesus?

Judas had a bitter heart. His heart is wicked, and therefore his acts are wicked.

*6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.*

*John 12:6*

*7 But Jesus said, “Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. John 12:7*



*8 For the poor you have with you always,  
but Me you do not have always.”*

*John 12:8*

Jesus is quoting Deuteronomy here -

*11 For the poor will never cease from the  
land; therefore I command you, saying,  
‘You shall open your hand wide to your  
brother, to your poor and your needy, in  
your land.’*

*Deuteronomy 15:11*

Jesus words do not mean that alms should not be distributed to the poor as in Deuteronomy 15:11. This was a reminder that, while the poor would remain, Jesus would not always be with them.

Jesus is saying that generous activity is one thing, and it's good, but the priority is personal worship. They had an opportunity with Jesus. He was in their midst for a little while longer.

9 *Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead.*

*John 12:9*

*<sup>10</sup> But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, <sup>11</sup> because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.*

*John 12:10-11*

*“went away and believed in Jesus.”*

This phrase signaled both a conscious, deliberate move away from the religion of the authorities and a move toward genuine faith in Jesus as Messiah and Son of God.

The chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, because, on account of him many of the Jews believed in Jesus. The religious leaders saw Christ as a threat to their power. They saw Christ as a threat to their nation.

The high priest said that it was expedient for one man to die instead of all of them to die. But now they think it's expedient for two men to die. They've become the Jerusalem mafia at this point.

Let's kill them both.

Let's kill Jesus and exhibit A.