

John 11 — *STORM* Leadership Guide

I AM the Resurrection and the Life

5 PERSPECTIVES · VERIFIED SOURCES · TEACH-READY

John 11 is the seventh and climactic sign in John's Gospel — not only a miracle, but a declaration. Jesus does not merely perform resurrection; He claims to **be** it. And He makes that claim two miles from Jerusalem, with the cross already in view.

It is also the least deniable miracle before Jesus' own. Lazarus had been in the tomb four days, and Martha says out loud what everyone is thinking: "Lord, by this time there will be an odor" (John 11:39). Jairus' daughter had been dead hours; the widow of Nain's son was still on the bier. Lazarus is past the point where anyone could argue.

Purpose statement: "These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:31). Every sign in this Gospel, including this one, is aimed at that one end — and in John 11 it lands not in a temple courtyard but in a grieving sister's driveway.

AT A GLANCE

Sign	7 of 7 — the climax
Location	Bethany — about 2 miles from Jerusalem (11:18)
Key verse	John 11:25–26
Shortest verse	John 11:35 — “Jesus wept”
Greek pivot	embrimaomai (11:33, 38)
Outcome	Many believed — and the plot to kill Him begins (11:45, 53)

Four days is the whole argument. Jewish tradition of the period held that the soul lingered near the body three days and then departed (Leviticus Rabbah 18:1; Genesis Rabbah 100:7). On day four, hope was formally over. John gives us the number on purpose.

A NOTE ON THE METHOD

STORM is Stanford’s research method — *Synthesis of Topic Outlines through Retrieval and Multi-perspective Question asking*. Instead of asking one question from one angle, it interviews a topic from several expert perspectives at once, then synthesizes what they surface and cites where each claim came from.

This guide applies that discipline to a passage of Scripture. Five perspectives question John 11 independently — biblical scholar, Greek exegete, pastoral care, strategic leadership, and practitioner. The overlap is where the leadership lesson lives. **Every external link in the bibliography has been opened and verified.** Where a popular claim could not be verified, it was cut rather than repeated.

PERSPECTIVE 01

Biblical Scholar

Historical setting. Bethany sits on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, close enough to Jerusalem that mourners came out from the city (John 11:18–19). That nearness is not scenery — it is why this miracle triggers the plot. The seventh sign happens in the shadow of the cross.

Not a random healing. Lazarus, Martha and Mary are friends. Verse 3 uses *phileō* — “he whom you love” — and verse 5 shifts to *agapaō*: “Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.” Then verse 6: “**So** when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer.” The love explains the delay. It does not excuse it — it explains it.

A different category of miracle. Jairus’ daughter had just died; the widow of Nain’s son was being carried out the same day. Both are resuscitations. Lazarus is four days gone, with decay assumed (11:39). Only John records it, because only John builds his Gospel around seven signs climbing to this one.

Theological weight. Authority over death belongs to God alone — “I kill and I make alive” (Deuteronomy 32:39; cf. 1 Samuel 2:6). So when Jesus says *egō eimi*, “I AM the resurrection,” He is not describing a gift He was given. He is naming who He is.

Sources: BibleRef — John 11 overview · BibleHub — John 11:18 · Maclaren, “The Seventh Miracle in John’s Gospel”

PERSPECTIVE 02

Greek & Exegetical

John 11:33, 38 — ἐμβριμάομαι (embrimaomai). Lexicons define it as “to be moved with anger, to admonish sternly,” built on a root meaning *to snort with anger* — properly, to snort like an angry horse. Classical Greek used the cognate for a warhorse’s snort before battle. English translations soften it to “deeply moved.” The root is indignation.

He is not angry at Mary. He is angry at death — “the last enemy” (1 Corinthians 15:26). This is not a technician calmly setting up a sign. This is the Son of God with His jaw set at what sin has done to people He loves.

John 11:35 — ἔδάκρυσεν (edakrysen). *Dakryō* means to shed quiet tears; it appears exactly once in the New Testament, here. The crowd around Him is doing something else: *klaiō* (v33) is to wail aloud, the audible lament of a first-century funeral. John switches verbs deliberately. Jesus does not perform grief. He simply weeps.

John 11:25 — ἐγώ εἰμι (egō eimi). The fifth of seven “I AM” statements, echoing Exodus 3:14. Note the article: not a resurrection, but **the** resurrection, and **the** life. Martha believed in a resurrection on the last day. Jesus tells her it is standing in front of her.

John 11:43 — “Lazarus, come out.” Two words in Greek, and they run Genesis 3 backwards. The voice that said “let there be light” now says “come out.” One day He says it over every grave.

Sources: Strong's G1690 — embrimaomai · G1145 — dakryō · G2799 — klaiō

PERSPECTIVE 03

Pastoral & Emotional Intelligence

Why weep if you are about to raise him? Jesus knows how this ends — He said so in verse 11. He weeps anyway. He does not lecture the sisters on sovereignty, and He does not shortcut their sorrow with the good news He is holding.

Presence before solution. “Weep with those who weep” (Romans 12:15) is not a lesser ministry than fixing. In John 11 it comes first, and it comes from the one person in the story who could have skipped it.

Psychological safety. Martha and Mary both say the same hard sentence: “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died” (11:21, 32). That is a direct challenge to His leadership. He does not correct it, defend Himself, or explain His calendar. He absorbs it — and that honesty becomes the runway for the greatest revelation in the chapter (11:25).

Two people, two ministries. With Martha He talks theology. With Mary He cries. He gives each sister what she can actually receive. Leaders who only have one mode will serve half their people well and the other half badly.

Lament is not unbelief. Martha says both halves in one breath: “my brother would not have died — but even now I know” (11:21–22). You can be disappointed in God and devoted to God in the same sentence.

PERSPECTIVE 04

Strategic Leadership — The Theology of Delay

John 11:6. “So when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.” He heard. He loved them. He stayed. Commentators across traditions read this as deliberate, not indifferent — Matthew Henry: “God has gracious intentions, even when he seems to delay.”

Love and lateness can coexist. He had healed at a distance before, without traveling (John 4:50). Coming earlier would have made Him a healer. Coming later revealed Him as the resurrection. The delay was not the absence of the plan; it was the plan.

Twelve hours of daylight. When the disciples warn Him that Judea means stoning, He answers: “Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble” (11:9). Daylight is the assignment. Night is stepping outside it. He is not managed by the urgency of the message; He is governed by the Father’s timing.

Leader’s question: is your delay neglect — or is it curation?

Source: BibleHub — commentaries on John 11:6 (Matthew Henry, Jamieson-Fausset-Brown, Meyer, Poole)

PERSPECTIVE 05

The Practitioner — Three Voices in the Aftermath

Three voices decide what John 11 costs: **Thomas** the courageous, **Martha** the confessor, and **Caiaphas** the unwitting prophet. Together they answer the question every leader eventually faces — what happens *after* the breakthrough.

Thomas — courage before clarity. “Let us also go, that we may die with him” (11:16). This is usually read as gloom. It is loyalty. Thomas has done the math on Judea, reached the worst answer, and votes to go anyway. Faith-driven leaders move before the outcome is guaranteed.

Martha — confession as the peak. “Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God” (11:27). That is John’s stated purpose (20:31) fulfilled — not by a crowd after the miracle, but by a grieving woman *before* it. She confesses while her brother is still in the tomb.

Caiaphas — the opposition preaches the gospel. “It is better for you that one man should die for the people” (11:50). John adds that he did not say this on his own; as high priest that year he prophesied (11:51). The man organizing the execution states the doctrine of substitution without knowing it.

And then the bill arrives. “So from that day on they made plans to put him to death” (11:53), and Jesus withdraws from public movement (11:54). One man walks out of a tomb, and it costs the One who called him His life. Every real breakthrough has a cross attached, and it is rarely charged to the person who was raised.

The Four Movements

STRUCTURE · TEACH IN THIS ORDER

01 THE DELAY · V1–16

“So when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.” (11:6)

A messenger arrives: “Lord, he whom you love is ill” (v3). Jesus loves the family (v5) — and stays. He tells the disciples Lazarus is asleep; they take it literally, so He says it plainly: “Lazarus has died, and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe” (v14–15). The disciples are thinking about stones. Thomas is thinking about dying. Jesus is thinking about glory.

Leader takeaway: do not let someone else’s urgency overwrite your assignment.

02 MARTHA · THEOLOGY · V17–27

“I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.” (11:25)

Martha goes out to meet Him and leads with the hard sentence, then the hope: “but even now I know.” He says her brother will rise. She retreats to safe doctrine — the last day. He moves it from a future event to a present Person, and asks the question the whole chapter turns on: *Do you believe this?* She answers with the confession John wrote the book for.

Leader takeaway: move people from doctrine about the future to encounter with the Person who is the future.

03 MARY · HUMANITY · V28–37

“Jesus wept.” (11:35)

Mary says the identical words Martha said — but she says them on her face at His feet, and the response is completely different. He sees her wailing, and the crowd wailing, and He snorts with anger and troubles Himself (v33). Then He asks a question He does not need answered: “Where have you laid him?” He goes to the grave with them before He does anything about it. The crowd splits: “see how he loved him” — and “could he not have kept this man from dying?”

Leader takeaway: weep before you fix. Presence earns the right that power alone never does.

"Lazarus, come out... Unbind him, and let him go." (11:43-44)

Three commands, and only one of them is His alone. **"Take away the stone"** — work the community can do, and Martha objects because of the smell. **"Lazarus, come out"** — work only God can do, and He names one man so that only one grave empties. **"Unbind him"** — work the community must do, because the raised man is standing there still wrapped. He prays out loud on purpose, "for the sake of the people standing around" (v42).

Leader takeaway: do what only you can do, hand back what others can, and never call it finished at the miracle.

OPERATIONALIZED

The Playbook — 7 Rules from John 11

Not principles to admire. Rules to run this week. Each one is anchored in a verse, a tension, and a practice.



RULE 1 · JOHN 11:6

Do not confuse delay with denial

Timing is a leadership instrument, not a failure of one. The two days produced a four-day tomb, an undeniable miracle, and an arrival timed to the cross. **Practice:** the next time you are pressured to move fast, write the sentence “Is this delay neglect, or is it curation?” and answer it in writing before you respond.



RULE 2 · JOHN 11:9–10

Walk in the daylight

“Are there not twelve hours in the day?” Daylight is the work you were assigned. Night is work you borrowed from somebody else’s panic. **Practice:** name one urgent thing you will *not* do this week, and say out loud why it is not your daylight.



RULE 3 · JOHN 11:33–35

Weep before you fix

Embrimaomai and dakryō: anger at the brokenness, tenderness toward the broken. The order is troubled, then tears, then power — never reversed. Fix-first leadership saves time and loses trust. **Practice:** open your next hard meeting with five minutes of naming the loss honestly, before anyone proposes a solution.



RULE 4 · JOHN 11:39-41

Let the community move the stone

He could have vaporized it. He asked them to lift it, stench and all. What they can do, He will not do for them. **Practice:** find the thing you keep doing yourself because you are faster at it, and hand it to the person it actually belongs to this week.



RULE 5 · JOHN 11:43

Call people by name

“Lazarus, come out” — not “come out.” Augustine is traditionally credited with the observation that a general command would have emptied every grave. Specific calling produces specific movement. **Practice:** replace the word “team” with actual names in your next three requests.



RULE 6 · JOHN 11:44

Assign the unbinders

The miracle is instant; the grave clothes are not. Lazarus is alive and still cannot walk. Most leaders celebrate the breakthrough and skip the unwrapping — new believers in old habits, new hires in old systems, healed people in old identities. **Practice:** name one person who broke through but is still wrapped, and name who is helping them out of it.



RULE 7 · JOHN 11:53

Count the cross-cost

“From that day on they made plans to put him to death.” Many believed (v45) *and* the opposition organized. Growth provokes. Breakthrough bills someone. **Practice:** before your next big move, write down what it will cost and who will pay it — then decide if you are still willing.

Take It Into Your Week

SMALL GROUP · JOURNAL · EXECUTIVE REFLECTION

1. Delay inventory

Where does God feel late right now? Name one situation where you prayed, He heard, He loves you — and He stayed. What might this delay be preparing that speed would have cost you? (John 11:6; Ecclesiastes 3:11)

2. Daylight check

What are your twelve hours in this season — the work that is actually yours? What pressure is pulling you into night work? Name one urgent thing you will not do this week, and tell someone why.

3. Presence audit

When did you last weep before you fixed? Who on your team or in your family needs your presence and not your answer? Put thirty minutes on the calendar with no agenda. (Romans 12:15)

4. Stone and grave clothes

Name one stone only your community can move (v39). Then name one person who has broken through but is still wrapped — and who will help unbind them (v44).

5. Thomas courage, Martha confession

Thomas: “Let us also go” (v16). Where is God asking you to move before the outcome is clear?

Martha: “You are the Christ” (v27). What confession is God after inside your honest disappointment?

6. Cost counting

If raising Lazarus cost Jesus His life, what might your next breakthrough cost — and are you willing? Discuss it with your team before the moment arrives, not after.

JOURNAL PROMPT · 10 MINUTES

“Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life... Do you believe this?’” (11:25–26). Not: do you believe resurrection happens. Do you believe He is it — standing in your situation, right now, before anything has changed? Write your own verse 27 in your own words today.

Sources

EVERY LINK OPENED AND VERIFIED · SEPTEMBER 2026

1. **BibleHub — Commentaries on John 11:6 (the deliberate delay of love)**

<https://biblehub.com/commentaries/john/11-6.htm>

2. **BibleHub — Strong's G1690, embrimaomai (to snort with anger; indignation)**

<https://biblehub.com/greek/1690.htm>

3. **BibleHub — Strong's G1145, dakryō (to shed quiet tears)**

<https://biblehub.com/greek/1145.htm>

4. **BibleHub — Strong's G2799, klaiō (to wail aloud)**

<https://biblehub.com/greek/2799.htm>

5. **BibleHub — John 11:18 (Bethany about two miles from Jerusalem)**

<https://biblehub.com/john/11-18.htm>

6. **Alexander Maclaren — “The Seventh Miracle in John’s Gospel: The Raising of Lazarus”**

https://biblehub.com/library/maclaren/expositions_of_holy_scripture_i/the_seventh_miracle_in_johns.htm

7. **BibleRef — John 11 chapter overview**

<https://www.bibleref.com/John/11/John-chapter-11.html>

8. **BibleRef — John 11:25, the fifth “I AM” statement**

<https://www.bibleref.com/John/11/John-11-25.html>

9. **Blue Letter Bible — Septuagint concordance for G1690 (zero occurrences)**

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g1690/lxx/lxx/0-1/>

10. **Stanford STORM — the research method this guide’s structure is built on**

<https://storm-project.stanford.edu/research/storm/>

FURTHER READING (PRINT)

D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Pillar New Testament Commentary, Eerdmans).

Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 2 vols. (Hendrickson) — background on first-century Jewish mourning.

N. T. Wright, *John for Everyone, Part 2* (Westminster John Knox).

Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership* (Paulist Press) — presence before power.

Edwin H. Friedman, *A Failure of Nerve* (Seabury) — staying steady under urgency.

PRIMARY TEXT

John 11:1–57 (ESV). Key verses: v5–6 the delay; v9 twelve hours; v16 Thomas; v18 two miles; v21 and v32 the lament formula; v25–26 *egō eimi*; v33 and v38 *embrimaomai*; v35 *edakrysen*; v39 four days; v43–44 the call and the unbinding; v50 Caiaphas; v53 the plot.

A NOTE ON WHAT WAS CUT

Several claims that circulate widely with this passage did not survive checking, so they were removed rather than repeated. The most common one: that *embrimaomai* is used in the Septuagint for God's anger (Daniel 11:30; Lamentations 2:6). It is not — a standard Septuagint concordance records **zero** occurrences of the word in the Greek Old Testament; it appears five times, all in the New Testament. The warhorse sense is real and well attested in the lexicons; the Septuagint support offered for it is not. The rabbinic tradition about the soul lingering three days is cited to its sources (Leviticus Rabbah 18:1; Genesis Rabbah 100:7) and presented as tradition, not as Scripture. The observation about a general command emptying every grave is traditionally attributed to Augustine.

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JOHN 11:25 — I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE