

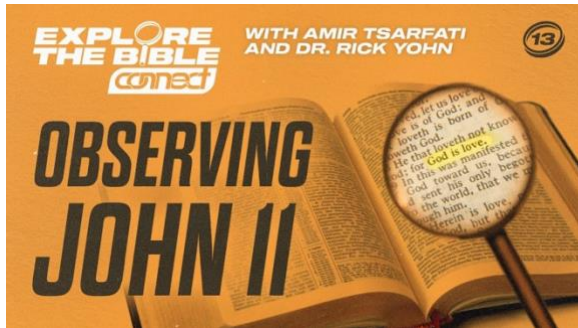


Amir Tsarfati

Explore the Bible: Dr. Rick Yohn

Why Did Jesus wait when He knew Lazarus was dying?

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AMIR: Hey, Shalom everyone. I'm Amir Tsarfati here from CONNECT in Galilee. And this is yet one more chapter of *Explore the Bible*, one of my favorite programs here. I'm here in Galilee, Israel. And with me is Dr. Rick Yohn from Parker,

Colorado. Shalom, Rick. How are you, my friend?

RICK: Shalom, Amir, I'm doing quite well. Thank you.

AMIR: Well, it's been a while since we've seen you.

A lot has happened ever since and we are thrilled once again to be able to look into the Word of God and try to help people to study the Word of God, and to glean as much as they can from a portion of Scripture. So,



Pastor Rick, let's start with a prayer, shall we? And then let's dive into this great program, this time, trying to analyze how to study John 11. So would you do us the honor and start with a prayer?

RICK: Lord God, we pray that You would give us understanding as we look into the Scriptures today. Your Scriptures are so powerful. And they tell us just who this Jesus is, the One who we have come to know in a personal way, the One who lives within us, the One who opens our eyes and helps us to understand through the Holy Spirit. And I pray that that's exactly what will happen

right now, that You would help us to see what You want us to see, hear what You want us to hear, so that we might do what You want us to do. We ask in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ, Amen.

AMIR: Amen, Amen. So again, thank you, Rick, for being with us today. And I think the last time when we started talking about how to study the Bible, you gave us an interesting story of a professor in your seminary, or was it a seminary that kind of gave you the impossible mission. Can you refresh our minds of who was he and what was the mission?

RICK: It was Dallas seminary. It was Dr. Howard G. Hendricks. He had a class called *Analysis of Bible Books*. And one of the first assignments that he gave us was to go to Acts 1 and verse 8. And he says, “Gentlemen, I would like you to come up with 50 observations on that one verse for next week.” And I thought, “How in the world am I going to come up with 50 observations on a verse?” But throughout that week, I looked, and I searched, and I finally came up, as the rest of the class came up with 50 observations and we were going, “Whew! Glad to get that assignment over with. Wonder what the next assignment is going to be?” And he said, “Well, gentlemen, you’ve done a very good job in getting 50 observations, and now for next week I want you to come up with 50 more observations on Acts 1:8.” Wow! So yeah, 100 observations on one verse. And so we’re not going to do that today, but we are going to make some observations and just asking ourselves a lot of questions and looking for some specific kinds of words as we look at John chapter 11. And one of the first things we have to do when we look at any kind of a verse or a passage is to look at the book. This is the Gospel of John and this Gospel differs from the other three Gospels. And well, it’s about 90% different than the other Gospels.

AMIR: You know, first of all, Hendricks reminds me of an IDF commander that is asking for the impossible, and then proves to the people that it is possible. But again, you’re right. A lot of pastors, whenever they are being asked, “If I have to read one book from the New Testament, what book

should I read?” And many, many pastors actually not just say that, but they give people the Gospel of John because it is different, as you said, from all the others. And as you just mentioned, 90% of it is different. What is it about the Gospel according to John that is so different from the other three?

RICK: Well, there are a number of differences. One thing is you have a lot of claims that Jesus makes in the Gospel of John. I counted over 51—about 51—claims that He makes about Himself. You know, when you think of the Epistles, the Epistles tell us who Jesus is and what He did. But here in the Gospel of John, *Jesus* is telling us who He is. And He says, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. I am the resurrection.” He goes through all these “I AMs.” In fact, He says, “I am...”

AMIR: ...Seven times “I AMs.”

RICK: Yeah, again and again. And it’s also different in the style of writing. In fact, when you take New Testament Greek, the first class I had was in college and we went to the Gospel of John. Because of the style of writing, it is easier to read the Greek in John’s Gospel than the Greek in Luke’s Gospel. And so it is a different Gospel. In fact, it really focuses so much on the deity of Christ, that Jesus is who He claims to be the very Son of God. In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, the Word was God, and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. So it’s a different slant on Jesus. It’s a good one-on-one course in Christology, the study of Jesus Christ.

AMIR: I agree with you. And you know, early in my years in walking with the Lord, a good friend of mine, a great teacher, he told me, “Amir, if you want to identify a cult within Christianity, a cult, something that is definitely not exactly what it should be, but it is disguised to be 100% Christian; always, always search for what they teach about the deity of Christ.” Because if this is where they start compromising, then it’s over. It’s over. You know, there are other religions that

say that Jesus was a prophet, such as Islam. There're other places and people that talk about Him as a good man, as a teacher. Even many Jews say that He was a good teacher and a good man. But in fact, they blame on Paul, the beginning of Christianity, not on Jesus. But when it comes to the deity, this is what He was blamed for with the accusation of blasphemy. This is why the Jewish people couldn't accept Him. And that is the blasphemy for which they brought Him before the Sanhedrin, and before later on the Roman governor. So the whole idea for which He was tried and then even crucified was because He claimed to be God. And so that's the anchor. The anchor. And that's why I think this is such a great thing about this Gospel that it emphasizes the deity. And so I've heard from you now that the book itself is very unique, very different. But now when we want to examine Chapter 11, and it starts with "now," I mean, we have to ask ourselves what happened in Chapter 10 that makes John write "now" in chapter 11. So that's another observation, isn't it?

RICK: It's another observation. Whenever you have a time factor, especially starting a new chapter, you have to go back to the chapter before. And chapter 10, in fact, what is interesting in chapter 10, Jesus is making some tremendous claims about who He is.

AMIR: Yeah, verses 7, 10, 11, 16, 28, 30, 36, 38, those are the verses.

RICK: All of them, He claims to be the good shepherd and the good shepherd that lays down His life for the sheep. And then He even claims to be able to give eternal life to people. He says, "My sheep hear My voice, they follow Me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish." No, never. And you think, how can a human come up with claims like this? So these claims that He is making is building from one chapter to the next. And by the time we get to chapter 11, He begins to, well, earlier, even back in chapter 9, He heals a blind man. And then in chapter 10, He's making more claims. And the Jews are watching this, and the Jews are hearing this. And by the time we get to chapter 11:1-3, it says, "¹ Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the

town of Mary and her sister Martha. ² It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. ³ Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, ‘Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick.’” Now, realize that in chapter 10 and verse 40, we are told that Jesus went away again beyond the Jordan to the place where John was baptizing. So now we have two different places. Jesus is at one place; the sisters and Lazarus are at another place. And there’s quite a distance. And when I think of you over the years leading tours, and you living in that area, you should know something about the geography also, about what you are reading. So, Amir, could you bring us up to date as to just give us an understanding of what this whole thing looks like? Geographically.

AMIR: Yeah, well, first of all, when you look at the topography of the land, it starts with the Mediterranean as the sea level, goes to the low hills, then the mountains of Judah. And then there is a sharp drop down to the Jordan Valley and the Dead Sea, which goes way below sea level. And Jesus at that time was down in the valley next to the baptismal site, where the place known as Al-Maghtas in the Arabic, but it’s called also Bethany, beyond the river. And that’s roughly 15-20 miles away from being on top of the mountains where Bethany near Jerusalem is, where it’s called today, *Al-Eizariya* in Arabic after Lazarus, because that’s where Mary, Martha and Lazarus lived, which is really a branch of Mount of Olives further towards the east. So one Bethany where they lived was on the mountains in the very eastern slopes of Mount of Olives. The other one was deep in the Jordan Valley, not far from the Dead Sea. And I know it may not feel like it’s too far, but that’s a quite a hike to go up from below the sea level, all the way up to the top to Jerusalem area. And so this is where we’re talking about, they live up here. He was down there and when Lazarus eventually died, they expected Him to be immediately back up here. And as we can read, He actually decided to stay two more days.

RICK: Yeah, and that when you first read that, you think, wait a minute, but when you look at verse 5, it says, “⁵ **Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.**” And yet He stays two more days where He is. And you can imagine these sisters up there in Bethany wondering, “Where is He? We sent word the other day and He hasn’t shown up.” And then suddenly we are told that Lazarus dies. In verse 9, “⁹ **Jesus answered, ‘Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. ¹⁰ But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.’ ¹¹ These things He said, and after that He said to them, ‘Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up.’ ¹² Then His disciples said, ‘Lord, if he sleeps he will get well.’ ¹³ However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep. ¹⁴ Then Jesus said to them plainly, ‘Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe.’” You know, another thing, Amir, you look for is words that are repeated. And the word “believe” is repeated constantly throughout the Gospel of John. In fact, he tells us in John chapter 20, “I have written this Gospel...”**

AMIR: So you may believe.

RICK: ...you may believe, and by believing you may have eternal life. And so...

AMIR: ... Yeah, and even here in this chapter, the word “believe” appears several times. And with some very strong proclamation of Jesus and asking, Martha, “Do you believe?” I mean, faith is the anchor in this chapter.

RICK: So when you look at the Scriptures, one of the things you’ll look for is repeated words, things that you see again and again. So, we’re going to find this...

AMIR: So Pastor Rick, before we continue, so first of all, we ask ourselves, “What is this book all about?” The uniqueness of the book. And then when we look into a specific chapter, specifically

when it starts with “now,” we want to know what happened that led to that “now.” So, we go back to the previous chapter, so we understand what the next scene is all about. And then when we look *into* the chapter, we want to identify things like repeated words, like that one. So that’s what we’ve studied so far on what to observe.

RICK: But the fourth thing that we study so far is the geography.

AMIR: Exactly.

RICK: Where is the place and what difference does it make? Well, the distance isn’t that far, but the topography is quite...

AMIR: ... Exactly. One is two miles from Jerusalem, one is on the mountains, one is down by the River Jordan, which is way below the sea level, and it’s right next to the Dead Sea.

RICK: And the next thing is the reaction of the different people. First, we have the reaction of Jesus.

AMIR: Especially two sisters. You’re right.

RICK: Yeah. But let’s look at the reaction of Jesus. He loved Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, and yet He stays there two more days. Now, from a human standpoint, that doesn’t make sense. “Lord, if You really love us, You’re going to come rushing up that hill, and You’re going to say whatever You say, or do whatever You do, and my brother is going to be made well.” That is their expectation.

AMIR: Yes.

RICK: And a lot of times when we have expectations and God doesn’t seem to meet our expectations, we wonder, “Does God still love us? Have we sinned or something that He is not meeting our expectations?” Well, this story tells us that no, He has a greater purpose. And His greater purpose is for the glory of God, and that you may believe. And so He now makes His way

up, and He's up there not in Bethany, but just on the outskirts of Bethany. And Martha hears about this. And between Mary and Martha, Martha was the activist. Remember Martha, when it came to Jesus coming to their house, she was doing all the cooking and saying, "Lord, don't You care that I'm doing all these things and my sister's just sitting there listening to You?" She's like, "What's wrong with my sister? She sits there and listens to You rather than helps me here in the kitchen." Well, Martha goes out and she sees Jesus. And in **verses 20–26** it says, **"²⁰ Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house. ²¹ Now Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.'"**

AMIR: Wow, that's faith.

RICK: So she had that great faith. Now, I don't know what she expected, but she just knew that "You're going to do something. I don't know what it is, but I know that when You ask God, God hears You. God will respond." Wouldn't that be great if people would tell us the same thing? That when you pray, you are such a prayer warrior, we know that God hears you. And there are people like that that I can look at and say, "When that person prays, heaven listens." And so, **"²³ Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' ²⁴ Martha said to Him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.' ²⁵ Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. ²⁶ And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?'"**

AMIR: Isn't that amazing? You know, I'm thinking, Pastor Rick, first of all, it's a Jewish pillar of faith to believe in the last day's resurrection. Every Jew believes that, and that is why it was obvious to her. There comes the time all the Jewish people, like everybody else, will rise. You know, some as Daniel says, some to everlasting life, some to everlasting damnation. I mean, as far

as the Jewish people are concerned, there will be at the very end resurrection from the dead. It's just that Jesus is adding here something that is *completely* new and different when it comes to His own. When it comes to who He is and who the people that are in Him are. And this is a new thing, a new thing that a Jew did not understand or know at that time. Although they should have known, they read Scriptures, but Jesus is saying, there is resurrection, there is life, but I'm the One. Apart from as Revelation 20 says, the second death and the second resurrection, apart from that, there is the first resurrection and it's about Me, and it's about anyone who is of Me. And if you believe in Me, you will live even if you die. And if you live and you haven't died yet, you will not die. So as far as I'm concerned, when I read that, I remember I circled that. I mean, you can clearly see on my Bible [Amir holds up his Bible] that part is circled right here. Because this is another proof to the rapture of the church. Because in 1 Thessalonians says the dead in Christ will rise and those that are alive will be caught up in the air. In other words, there's two groups of people that when Christ comes to take us will be there. There're those who have already died, and the Bible says they fell asleep. And there're those who are still alive at the time of the rapture, and they will not die anymore. That's it. Because that's it, their body will change, and they'll be taken. So it's a beautiful thing, and another proof of His deity as well.

RICK: And the other thing you look for when you look at the Scriptures is you look for peoples' reaction. And here is a reaction. Verse 27, **"²⁷ She said to Him, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.'"**

AMIR: Hmm, there you go.

RICK: So there is a fantastic reaction. I understand. Now, I don't believe she was looking for Lazarus to come alive at that point, but she knew who Jesus was. "You are the Son of God. You

are the Messiah. We've been looking for Messiah. You are the Messiah." But the rest of the Jews, they were looking for a Revelation 19 Messiah, not an Isaiah 53 Messiah.

AMIR: Yeah, yeah.

RICK: And she recognized...

AMIR: Yeah, so help me out here. So when we look at the Scripture here, first we asked what is different about John. Then we asked what happened before chapter 11. Then we went into chapter 11, and we discussed the different aspects of the timing, the location, the topography, the geography. And now we're seeing the different types of reactions. We see the reaction of the disciples that were with Him. We see the reaction of Martha and now we're about to see the reaction of Mary. So when people come to study, we see repeated words like faith, belief, and now we're here at the...

RICK: We look at their reactions and then the question is, what is our reaction? So Mary's reaction, I don't know how I would have reacted at that time, but it was almost like just too little too late. I mean, "It's nice You're here, but he's gone." But that's not how she responded. She goes out to Jesus. **"³² Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, 'Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.'** ³³ **Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping,..."** Here's Jesus' reaction, **"... He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. ³⁴ And He said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to Him, 'Lord, come and see.'** ³⁵ **Jesus wept."** And that word means He just moaned inside, and the sorrow was pouring out of Him, it was gushing out of Him. So here is Jesus who knows what He's going to do, but He sees this response, and He sees again what death does to those who are left behind.

AMIR: Yes. In other words, He identifies with us even in our sorrows and He weeps with us when we weep. And His heart is broken when our hearts are broken. The Bible says we have a high priest that knows what we are going through.

RICK: So He knows what He's going to do, but he is so hurting for Mary and Martha and those who are around, that He says, "Where have you laid him?" And so they go to the tomb, and He says, "³⁹ ... **'Take away the stone.'**" And I can imagine what is just going through the minds of the people, "What? Why take away the stone?" In fact, Martha says, "³⁹ ... **'Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days.'**" ⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, **'Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?'**" God's going to do something glorious, something that you've never heard of before, something you've not seen before. And so, "⁴¹ **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.'**" 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.'**" ⁴³ **Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, 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.'**" What a great statement. Loose him and let him go.

AMIR: Amazing.

RICK: It reminds me of the Bible tells us that we are bound in sin. And when we give our hearts to the Lord Jesus Christ, Jesus says, "Loose him, let him go. Be set free from the bondage of sin."

AMIR: Yeah, so Rick, we've reached the point where people saw it. They went, of course, and complained also to the Sanhedrin, the Pharisees, the high priest. And now everybody is afraid that this man is going to get the Jewish people in trouble. The Romans will destroy them. And so

Caiaphas concludes that it's better to sacrifice one man for the sake of a whole nation than the whole nation for the sake of one man. And it's very interesting because little did he know that Isaiah 53 spoke of that one man that has to die for the sake of a whole nation and the whole world. And it's super prophetic. He's saying something prophetic without even knowing that he's saying something prophetic. He speaks from political concern, whereas we know that God is just doing His plan. And I think that this is the beautiful thing. I mean, many are the thoughts or the plans in man's heart, but it's the counsel of God that shall be established. And so, if you had to take away something from this chapter, as something that you've, you know, part of your process of studying it... I mean, we've walked through ways of how to study that chapter. What are the questions that we need to ask? Now we've reached the point of what is the takeaway from it? What would you say your take away from it is?

RICK: I would say timing, the whole idea of timing. God's timing and our timing are two different levels. Our timing is more immediate. It's more now. And there are times that I found in my own life that I thought God was too late. Too late. He didn't show up when I needed Him. But then as time goes by, I look back and say, "No, He showed up at the right time because He accomplished something far greater than I could have imagined." I mean, I've experienced that numerous times in my life. One time in a church that was really going south, there were problems there and I resigned from the church. And I kept praying, "Lord, change us, change us, change us. Do something and intervene." And it's like He wasn't hearing my prayers. But out of that came a book that has blessed a lot of people in the past called *God's Waiting Room*. We all go into a waiting room through our lives. My wife was in a waiting room and I was in the hospital. I was in the waiting room. I didn't want to be there. I couldn't do anything about it. I didn't know what the outcome would be. And that's how we often feel when we're in God's waiting room. We don't

want to be there. We don't know what the outcome is. We don't have control over it. God's in control.

AMIR: That's true.

RICK: And so out of that, He brings a book that has blessed a lot of people. Other times I've prayed, and God answered one way and another time He answered another way. When Steve was—well, we didn't know if he was going to make it through the surgery that he had a while back. And God answered that prayer in a beautiful way. He made it through, and he's still writing with us. And when it came to my wife, Linda, two years ago, I prayed God would spare her life. And we saw to take her home to be with Him, which was certainly her desire. And I look and, "Well, Lord, you answered this way in one case and this way in another case." And yet when I look over these past two years, I can say that the Lord has taught me so much about Himself. I've just fallen in love with Lord Jesus Christ more and more. And the Scriptures have become so alive.

AMIR: I can see that. I can see that. You know, we've been friends for many years, but I can really, truly see that over the past two years, you've gotten even softer and softer towards that which God is doing in your life. And you've become so selfless and—You know, it's hard for us. I don't know if it's hard for us as men, it's hard for us as humans to be truly selfless. And I think that what I've seen in your case over the past two years is that you're growing so much closer and closer to the Lord that all you want to do is in the time that He has for you here with us is to just please Him and serve Him without—And that's wonderful.

So, Dr. Rick, Pastor Rick, Rick, my friend, God has a great timing and sometimes it's not our timing. Sometimes He's late according to how we view things, but as the Bible says, some count it as slackness, but He never slacks. And it's just that He is longsuffering. And when it comes to what we can draw from this passage is that we need to have faith, and then we need to remember

this is God, and we need to remember that even if it's not according to what we want, it's actually the perfect way that He does things.

I want to thank you for a wonderful time of looking into the Word of God. I'm looking forward to sitting with you again and diving into another way of teaching people how to study the Bible. Next time will be John chapter 12. I want to thank everyone for watching. Thank you, Dr. Rick from Parker. And I will say Shalom from the Jezreel Valley here in Galilee, Israel. God bless you and Shalom.

* Scripture is taken from the New King James Version unless noted otherwise.

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