

John 11

The Raising of Lazarus; The Plot Against Jesus

Day 1

Read John 11:1-17

The death of Lazarus

1. How does John identify Mary to his readers? 11:2 (See 12:1-8)

- From Luke 10:38-42, what adjectives would you use to describe Mary? Martha?

For Your Information: BETHANY "A village on the southeastern slopes of the MOUNT OF OLIVES about three kilometers (two miles) east of Jerusalem near the road to Jericho (Mark 11:1)." - Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary

2. On what basis did Mary and Martha make their appeal to Jesus? 11:3,5

3. What purposes did Jesus say would be accomplished through Lazarus' sickness and death? 11:4
(See the connection between "resurrection" and "glory" in Romans 6:4; 1 Corinthians 15:42-44)

4. How did Jesus respond to the news of Lazarus' illness? 11:6 Why do you think that Jesus' love for them is being emphasized?

For Your Information: "The delay of Jesus in replying to the urgent plea of the sisters is difficult to explain on any ground other than that of His complete mastery of death. Had He been only human, He would have hurried to the bedside of Lazarus to give what He could of aid and comfort. Knowing, however, that He was the resurrection and the life, it was just as easy to raise the dead as to cure the sick, and far more necessary to His purpose which was the creation of a fixed faith in the souls of the sisters and of His own disciples." - Merrill C. Tenney (172)

5. By returning to Judea, what danger were Jesus and the disciples putting themselves in?
11:7,8,16 (How would you describe Thomas' attitude?)

6. In 11:9,10 what do you think Jesus was saying about the opportunity to serve? (Compare John 12:35,36)

For Your Information: "*Are there not twelve hours in the day?*" (11:9) "[Jesus] felt that as long as He walked in the clear light of the commission which the Father had assigned to Him, He would not stumble." - Merrill Tenney (172)

7. What did Jesus know about Lazarus? 11:11-14 (Compare 11:4. What do you think He meant by: “*This sickness is not undo death?*”)

Optional Digging Deeper

For other references to death as “sleep” see Acts 7:60; 1 Cor. 15:6,18,51; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-15.

- Jesus didn’t have to be present to heal someone (4:46-54). Why didn’t He heal Lazarus from afar? 11:15 (Cf. 11:42)

For Your Information: “Jesus explanation, *‘I am glad for your sakes that I was not there to the intent ye may believe’* expressed His desire to educate them in a faith that would transcend death. If their belief could outreach their fears, and overleap the barrier which the supposed finality of death creates, they would be prepared adequately for the shock of His coming crucifixion and for the resurrection”
- Merrill C Tenney (173)

“By raising Lazarus from the dead, Jesus would demonstrate His deity in an undeniable way...Jesus was glad (vs. 15) for the opportunity the disciples would soon have to see an amazing miracle. The disciples had already believed (2:11) but each new trial offered an opportunity for their faith to grow.”
- Nelson Study Bible (1784,1785)

8. What was the result of Jesus delay? 11:17 (Compare 11:39)

For Your Information: “The messenger’s journey from Bethany to Perea (twenty miles) took about one day; then Jesus delayed two days; then Jesus’ journey to Bethany was one day. By the time Jesus arrived at Lazarus’ tomb, Lazarus had been entombed four days.”
- Irving Jensen (91)

Applying the Word: *When has God delayed in answering your prayers? How did you feel? What happened?*

Day 2

Read John 11:18-37

Martha, Mary and Jesus

9. How did the sisters respond to the news of Jesus’ coming? 11:20
10. List the steps that Martha took in sharing her concerns with Jesus:
- 11:20 - *Made herself available*
 - 11:21 -
 - 11:22 -

11. What hope did Jesus give Martha? 11:23

- How far was she able to go with His statement? 11:24 (Compare 6:39,40)

12. How did the Lord challenge Martha? 11:25,26 (Cf. John 5:24,25)

- How did she respond? 11:27 (Compare Matthew 16:16)

For Your Information: "While the message of the cross relieves our guilt and gives us assurance of where we will go when we die, it does not give us power to live here and now. It is through the **resurrection** of Christ than any man, woman, boy, or girl on the face of the earth who comes to Him in faith receives **His very life** through the indwelling Holy Spirit!" - Bob George (51)

"Martha is often remembered for her shortcoming recorded in Luke 10:40,41. But she was a woman of faith, as this magnificent declaration shows."
- The Nelson Study Bible (1786)

13. Why do you think Jesus called for Mary? 11:28-31 (Why do you think she hadn't come earlier?)

14. Compare Mary's statement in 11:32 to Martha's (Cf. 11:21). What did her statement convey about her feelings? (*Imagine the "if onlys" that the sisters had been experiencing for 4 days.*)

15. What emotions did Jesus have at this event and why?

- 11:33
- 11:35

Optional Digging Deeper

Fill out the 5th "I am" statement on the chart: *I am Statements in John.*

Optional Digging Deeper

What kind of life do we have through Christ?

John 10:10

John 14:19,20

Galatians 2:20

Ephesians 3:16-21

Philippians 4:13,19

IT'S GREEK TO ME "deeply moved" Strong's #1690 *embrimaomai*; from NT:1722 and brimaomai (to snort with anger); to have indignation on, i.e. to blame, to sigh with chagrin, to sternly enjoin: KJV - straitly charge, groan, murmur against.

"troubled" Strong's #5015 *tarasso*; to stir or agitate (roll water)

- Strong's Concordance

16. From the following, what do you learn about emotions Jesus had or things He struggled with?

- Isaiah 53:3,4
- Luke 19:41-42
- Luke 22:43-44
- John 13:21
- Hebrews 4:15; 5:7

17. How did the people interpret Jesus' weeping (literally: *shed tears*)? 11:36-37

Applying the Word: Are you ever hesitant to share your disappointments with the Lord? What do you learn through this account? Does knowing that Jesus struggled help you?

Day 3

Read John 11:38-53

The raising of Lazarus

18. How did Jesus react when he came to the tomb? 11:38

For Your Information: "Jesus is angry and troubled at the ravages of the great enemy of man: death." - David Guzik

"[Jesus] did not weep because the situation was hopeless, for He knew that He would raise Lazarus from the dead. He did so because He shares the emotions of those He loves."
- Africa Bible Commentary (1275,1276)

19. Why did Martha object to the stone being removed? 11:39

- How did Jesus answer that objection? 11:40

20. What did Jesus pray about *before* He raised Lazarus? 11:41,42 (Compare 8:29)

- For whose benefit did He pray?

21. What did it take for Jesus to raise Lazarus? 11:43 (Compare Genesis 1:3; John 5:25; I Thessalonians 4:16)

Food for Thought: "I once heard a country preacher say that if Jesus hadn't called Lazarus by name, every grave within earshot would have rumbled open and their long-dead inhabitants would have answered His call. One day, 'all who are in the tombs will hear His voice,' but on this day, only Lazarus had been summoned... Rather than being resurrected...his old body had been reanimated, but it was the same body that had fallen ill and stopped working. Sometime after Lazarus had been summoned from beyond, he went there again. He fell ill or suffered a fatal injury or simply grew feeble with age, and he died. He was buried and his body decayed. It awaits its resurrection (I Thessalonians 4:13-17)." - Charles Swindoll (202)

22. How did Lazarus appear? 11:44 (Note: How does this differ from Jesus' resurrection? John 20:6,7)

- Imagine yourself as an observer of this miracle. How do you think you may have reacted?

Optional Digging Deeper

For a description of our eternal, spiritual bodies read I Corinthians 15:42-54; 2 Corinthians 5:1-10

For Your Information: "The Jewish system of preparing a body for burial provided for swathing it in bandage-like wrappings from the armpits to the feet, leaving the shoulders bare, and with a cloth ('napkin') wrapped around the head. Such enswathement would effectively prevent any ordinary means of locomotion on the part of Lazarus. The only explanation of his appearance at the door of the tomb is that the power that galvanized him into life brought him forth to the door, so that Jesus could say, 'Loose him, and let him go' (44)." - Merrill Tenney (177)

23. What reactions did people have to this miracle? 11:45,46 (Note the word "but.")

Optional Digging Deeper

Fill in information about the 7th sign on the chart "Signs in the Gospel of John."

- How do you account for the unbelief of "some? (Compare Luke 16:31)

Plot to kill Jesus

24. What does the rulers' statement (11:47,48) indicate about their belief in the authenticity of Jesus' miracles? 11:47

- Why were Jesus' miracles so upsetting to the Pharisees? 11:47-48 What was motivating them?

For Your Information: "[Jesus] bore all the scriptural credentials and produced all the right 'signs' of the Messiah, yet He lacked an army. To side with Jesus (as they understood the role of the Christ) was to defy Rome. But to defy Rome without an army was to invite the worst kind of death." - Charles Swindoll (207)

25. What did Caiaphas think needed to be done to save the nation of Israel from Rome? 11:49,50

- How did God use his words to prophesy truth but with a different meaning? 11:51-52

26. What did the council decide? 11:53

For Your Information: "By the time of Jesus, the Jews had instituted what may be considered a provisional government in anticipation of the Messiah, who would rule as king. Until then, they vested the high priest with all the rights and privileges of a monarch...with the understanding that he should step aside when the Christ came to claim His rightful place on the throne... The 'Sanhedrin,' served as both parliament and Supreme Court. This ruling council of seventy learned men set Jewish policy (and ruled on civil and criminal court cases...For the high priest to attend a special meeting of the Sanhedrin was not unprecedented, but it did suggest something extraordinary was occurring, much like the President of the United States attending a special meeting of Congress. The high priest 'that year' was Caiaphas, the corrupt son-in-law and figurehead of the true power in the temple, Annas."
- Charles Swindoll (206,207)

"[Caiaphas'] advice focused on the interest of the council members. If the nation perished, the council would have no one to exercise authority over. But Jesus was only one man. They could handle whatever crisis His death might bring. For the sake of self-interest, the innocence of Jesus and true justice were thrown out the window."
- Africa Bible Commentary (1276)

"The words of Caiaphas, so far as he personally was concerned, were the expression of expediency and policy, but were nevertheless prophetic utterances that reach to the heart of Christian doctrine 'that one man should die for the people'...Strangely enough, what the Sanhedrin dreaded came to pass, in spite of all their treachery and desire to avoid it. Their 'place and nation' were lost to the Romans. The betrayal of Christ but hastened that dread day."
- Charles Welch (270)

27. Trace the growing hostility of the leaders:

- 5:16,18
- 7:1,30,32
- 8:6,59
- 9:22
- 10:31,39

For Your Information: "Unbelief cannot remain static any more than can belief. By nature it is progressive. The unbelief of the Jewish leaders had long ceased to be a polite incredulity of the claims of Jesus. His works were too numerous, too real, and too wonderful to be ignored or dismissed with contempt. Unbelief was compelled to declare its true nature which was selfishness...The enmity which had made previous sporadic attempts to trap Him in speech or to capture Him now settled upon a policy of exterminating Him."
- Merrill C. Tenney (177,178)

Applying the Word: Read Ephesians 1:19,20. How do you need to trust in God's power at work in your life?

Day 4

Read John 11:54-57

For Your Information:

Period of Crisis 11:54-12:36

"After the raising of Lazarus the severity of conflict had reached a point where decisive action was inevitable. Belief, if it were to remain belief, must become definite genuine commitment. Unbelief, on the other hand, could no longer tolerate Jesus' exposure and condemnation of its position. The twelfth chapter records the consequent turning point in the plot."

- Merrill C. Tenney (181)

Jesus withdraws

28. From 11:54:

- Why did Jesus retreat? (Compare 10:40)

- Where did He go?

- Who was with Him? (What ministry was He probably doing with them?)

- When was this happening? (See the chart: "The Life of Jesus")

Optional Digging Deeper

See Luke 17:11-19:22 for events that took place between John 11:54 and 11:55.

Growing hostility

29. What was the atmosphere in Jerusalem? 11:55,56

- What battle lines had been drawn? 11:57 (Note: What kind of search for evidence was going on?)

For Your Information: *"...if anyone found out where Jesus was, he should report it"* "This was not merely a request for assistance; it was an order from the Supreme Court of the day. They hoped that such total mobilization of the people would work. However, it was not their strategy but God's timing that mattered." - Africa Bible Commentary (1277)

30. In the following verses, underline the reasons for why Jesus hadn't been arrested earlier.

- Matthew 21:46 They looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that he was a prophet. NIV
- Luke 4:29-30 They got up, drove him out of the town, and took [Jesus] to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him down the cliff. But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way. NIV
- John 7:30 At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his time had not yet come. NIV
- John 8:59 At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds. NIV
- John 10:39 Again they tried to seize him, but he escaped their grasp. NIV

31. From Matthew 23:

- Why did Jesus warn the people about the teachers of the law and the Pharisees? 23:3
- What was their attitude toward others? 23:4,23
- What motivated them? 23:5-7
- What had happened to the ministry of the scribes and Pharisees? 23:13,15
- What were their hearts like? 23:25-28
- How did Jesus feel about what had happened with them? 23:37-39

32. From Matthew 12:38-42:

- What was the only sign left for the scribes and Pharisees? 12:38-40
- Why would their judgment be so great? 12:41,42

Optional Digging Deeper
Memorize John 11:25,26a

Applying the Word: *What truths, if any, do you find yourself resisting in order to keep Jesus in line with your personal philosophies or traditions? What are you afraid might happen if you change your point of view?*