

“A Preview Of The Future Resurrection: John 11:1-26

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Teaching Aim: To explore the circumstances surrounding the death and resurrection of Lazarus. To realize the special relationship Jesus had with Mary, Martha, and their brother Lazarus. To recognize the word “*sleep*” is often used as a metaphor for the “*death*” of a Christian in the New Testament. To understand what Jesus meant in saying, “*I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.*”

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)

Part I: The sickness of Lazarus and a two-day delay (John 11:1-10)

1. Well over two months had passed since the events of **John 7:1-10:21** had taken place at the Feast of Tabernacles. In **John 10:22**, we find Jesus returning to Jerusalem for the Feast of Dedication or Hanukkah. At the end of that visit, we find Jesus traveling approximately 20 miles to the place where John had earlier been baptizing on the east side of the Jordan River. (See **John 10:40**) There Jesus remained and many people came to faith in Him. It was during this time that Jesus received word that a close friend of His was sick. According to **verse 1**, who was this individual? What town was he from? Who were his sisters?

2. Is this the same Lazarus that we find in **Luke 16:26-31**? What, if any, connection is there between the two men? The name “*Lazarus*” means, “*God has helped.*” How did God help Lazarus? Is it possible the Lazarus in today’s story is a partial fulfillment of **Luke 16:27-31**?

3. **Verse 2** is not in chronological order. What can we learn about Mary’s devotion to Christ from this verse? The story of this anointing is found one chapter later in **John 12:1-8**. What can we learn about Mary and her act of devotion? Have you ever been grateful to God for something He’s done in your life? What? Who became angry when Mary used the costly oil spikenard to anoint the feet of Jesus? Why did this individual become angry?

4. Who do we find sending an urgent message to Jesus in **verse 3**? What was that message? Did the sisters ask Jesus to do anything, or just let Him know what was happening? Should we be quick to call on Jesus when we are in a crisis today? Why do you think so many people use prayer as a last resort instead of praying first? (See **Jer. 33:3; Matt. 7:7-8**) On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your prayer life?

5. How did Jesus respond when He heard the news of Lazarus' illness (**vs. 4**)? By the time Jesus received this message, Lazarus was most-likely dead. What did Jesus mean when He said, *"This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it?"* How would these words later be fulfilled?

6. We don't hear a lot about individuals who were close friends with Jesus in the Bible. What can we learn from **verse 5**? What made the relationship between Jesus, Lazarus, Mary and Martha so special? How far was Bethany from Jerusalem? Where was it located?

7. The response of Jesus must have been confusing. According to **verse 6**, what did Jesus do when He heard that Lazarus was sick? It is important to note Jesus was working on His Father's timetable, not the sisters. Why do you think Jesus remained on the eastern side of the Jordan River for two more days after hearing Lazarus was sick?

8. As of **verse 7**, Jesus was still in Perea and three days had passed since the messenger was sent. What instruction did Jesus give to His disciples in **verse 7**? How did His disciples react to the thought of going back to Judea (**vs. 8**)? Why?

9. What did Jesus mean when He said, *"Are there not twelve hours in the day?"* What did the daylight represent (**vs. 9**)? What did Jesus mean in **verse 10** when He said, *"But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him?"* Why should **Psalm 139:16** be an encouragement to every Christian going through difficult times?

Part II: The death of Lazarus and the Christ's journey to Bethany (John 11:11-16)

1. What did Jesus mean in **verse 11** when He said to His disciples, *"Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up?"* How do **Acts 7:60**; **1 Cor. 11:27-32**; **15:20** and **1 Thess. 4:13-18** all relate to **John 11:11**? Sleep in the New Testament is a metaphor often used to describe the death of a believer. How is sleep symbolic to both death and resurrection?

2. What did the disciples assume in **verse 12**? Why? What did Jesus clarify in **verses 13-14**? Was Jesus happy that Lazarus was dead (**vs. 15**)? What was He glad about? Why? Note: Nobody in the Bible is recorded to have died in the presence of Jesus. Lazarus most-likely would not have died if Jesus had been there.

3. Which disciple encouraged the other disciples to follow Jesus on the trip to Judea (**vs. 16**)? What is the nickname of this disciple? Why? (See **John 20:24-25**) Do you think Thomas was being pessimistic in **verse 16**, or was he demonstrating great courage?

Part III: A discussion between Jesus and Martha about the resurrection of the dead (John 11:17-26)

1. It took the messenger one day to reach Jesus, Jesus remained two extra days, then He and His disciples traveled one more day to reach the sisters in Bethany. According to **verse 17**, how long had Lazarus been dead and in the tomb? What can we learn about burial in New Testament times from this? Without embalmment, how quickly would Lazarus' body have begun decaying? What made this bodily resurrection different from any other that Jesus performed? The Jews believed the soul remained near the body for three days following death. Why is it significant that Jesus waited until the fourth day before arriving?

2. Why do you think John mentioned that Bethany was only two miles from Jerusalem (**vs. 18**)? Does **verse 18** imply that many of the Jews who came to mourn with the sisters were from Jerusalem? What can we learn about the prominence of this family from the reaction of the community?

3. What did Martha do as soon as she heard that Jesus was on His way (**vs. 20**)? What do we find Mary doing? What can we learn about the character of each sister from **Luke 10:38-42**? Why do you think Mary remained at the house?

4. What can we learn about Martha from **verses 21 & 22**? Do you think that Martha understood the deity of Christ at this point? What promise did Jesus give to Martha in **verse 23**?

5. Martha had a more accurate faith than the Sadducees who did not believe in the resurrection. (See **Matt. 22:23**) Which resurrection did Martha think Jesus was talking about? Have you ever done an investigation on the various resurrections in the Bible? Who performed the following resurrections in the Old Testament? (See **1 Kin. 17:17-24; 2 Kin. 4:20-37; 13:21**)

6. Who did God use to raise the dead in the New Testament? (See **Luke 7:11-17; Mark 5:35-40; John 11:1-44; Matt. 27:51-53; 28:1-8; Acts 9:36-41; 20:7-12**). Which of these rose from the dead not to die again?

7. What can we learn about the future resurrection from **Dan. 12:1-2** and **John 5:28-29**? Theologically, what is meant by “*a double resurrection*?” When will the resurrection of the righteous take place? (See **1 Thess. 4:16-18; 2 Cor. 5:10**) When will the resurrection of the unrighteous occur? (See **Rev. 20:11-15**) What are the three primary schools of eschatology and when does each believe the various future resurrections will occur?

8. **Verse 25** is the fifth of the seven great “*I Am*” statements in the Gospel of John. Who did Jesus say He was in **verse 25**? What can we learn about Jesus from this statement? What tremendous truth do we learn in **verse 26**? What did Jesus mean by this? What do we learn from **1 Cor. 15:53-57**?

MINER'S CORNER ~ Manna to live by!

- When trouble comes our way, we should immediately call out to Jesus in prayer.
- Times of difficulty are for our good and can bring glory to God. (See **Rom. 8:28**)
- Jesus lived obediently to His Father's will, no one could touch Him until the appointed time.
- Sleep is often used as a metaphor in the New Testament to describe the death of a believer.
- The drama of death and resurrection is played out every day of our lives.
- A true miracle is something that only God can do.
- Jesus is the resurrection and the life, there is no other way to everlasting life than by grace through faith in Him.
- The born-again Christian "*has*" eternal life right now, physical death does not take away the spiritual life he or she has received in Christ.
- There will be a double resurrection in the end times; some will be raised to everlasting life while others will be raised to everlasting condemnation.