

# JOHN

## Lesson 11 w/Answers

John 11:1-57

In this lesson, we are going to encounter a living witness who will attest to Jesus' power over death—clearly demonstrating that Jesus indeed is "the resurrection and the life." Once again, we will observe the importance of God's timing (vs. our own) and Jesus' power over all creation, including death. We will also expand beyond our study of John a little bit to examine Jesus' teaching about what happens when we die.

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### ***Read John 11:1-57 and consider the following:***

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1. As the story in John Chapter 11 unfolds, we are referred to a place called Bethany, a small village just east of the Mount of Olives and approximately two miles from Jerusalem. This key piece of geographical information will shed much light on the activities in this passage. Living there are friends and supporters of Jesus and his ministry: Lazarus and his two sisters Martha and Mary. We will encounter Mary again shortly; can you remember what she does that demonstrates her great love for Jesus? (see John 12:1-10)
  - a. ANSWER: These verses tell us that she is "the one who pours perfume on the Lord and wipes his feet with her hair."
2. The two sisters, realizing that Lazarus is sick and dying, send for Jesus. They knew that he had the power to heal him. Once again, we come across something in these opening verses that we do not expect: why was Lazarus ill? (see John 11:1-4)
  - a. ANSWER: It's amazing to consider, but we read that Lazarus was sick "for God's glory." Have you ever considered that God may be preparing to use a challenge in your life for His glory?
3. Jesus also tells the disciples that he knows that Lazarus will not die. How awesome is the power of Jesus that he knows who will die and not die, and when they will die? Martha and Mary were stressed over the thought of losing their brother Lazarus; little did they know that God had other plans. Re-read John 11:5-6. What is odd about verse 5 as opposed to verse 6? If verse 5 is true, then why did Jesus do what he did in verse 6?
  - a. ANSWER: Jesus clearly loved both sisters and their brother Lazarus. However, we again see that God's plans and timing dictate what Jesus will do, and when, in order to implement God's will. In fact, his love for the two sisters prods him to stay put for two more days before going to them, so that they can see the power of the resurrection through Him and their brother.
4. We read in John 11:7-15 Jesus' explanation to the confused disciples regarding why he lingered, and why it was now time to go. He told them that being in fear and walking in the dark are the times when we stumble; but if we walk in the light, as Jesus was, then we can go about doing the will of God without fear. You can note in verse 15 that his waiting the extra two days wasn't just for the sisters, but for the disciples as well: "...so that you may believe." In John 11:17-19, what do we find the situation to be when Jesus and his disciples arrive in Bethany? Who else beside the sisters are present there, and why?
  - a. ANSWER: Lazarus has been dead and buried for four days, and the sisters are in mourning. We also see that many mourners have come to comfort Martha and Mary. Since Jerusalem is only two miles away from Bethany, it would not have been a difficult trip for mourners to make in order to reach Lazarus' home in Bethany.
5. Because Lazarus has died, and because Bethany is so close to Jerusalem, many mourners have witnessed Lazarus' death and are now present to see the resurrection miracle that Jesus will perform. Both of these points are important to remember because of the future role the resurrection and these mourners will play on the day we call "Palm Sunday." We will examine this more closely in a future lesson, but for now read John 11:45-46 and describe what role the mourners played in God's great plan.
  - a. ANSWER: God was using Lazarus' death and resurrection to reveal Jesus' power over death and his ability to resurrect the dead. He was using the mourners as messengers, as they returned to Jerusalem and proclaimed what they saw and the power that Jesus exhibited in Bethany.
6. As we read through the story (John 11:17-44) and see how devastated everyone is with the death of Lazarus, we can recognize the real pain that death brings. It is a finality, there is no turning back, dead is dead; and following the death of someone, there is no hope—or is there? Although Mary and Martha both proclaim their faith in Jesus, one can nevertheless see the hopeless feeling that surrounds the small village, the mourners, and the sisters themselves as Jesus is led to the tomb of Lazarus. Even Jesus is moved by the sadness of all those around him. Death is an evil and unpleasant thing for all who experience the loss of a loved one. It even moved Jesus to tears, and it caused many to doubt Jesus (see John 11:37 in particular). How does Martha react when Jesus asked to have the stone covering the tomb removed, and why does she react this way?

- a. ANSWER: Martha, not realizing that Jesus would actually raise Lazarus, protests removal of the stone. In the heat of the day, for four days, Lazarus would have been quickly decomposing, and the smell from the tomb would have been awful if they moved the stone away. She was thinking logically, and not like someone who believed Jesus was about to raise her brother from the dead.
7. As recounted in John 11:41-42, why does Jesus thank God that He hears him, before raising Lazarus?
- a. ANSWER: He tells us that he did it for the benefit of the people standing there: the disciples, the sisters, and the mourners; so that they may believe that God sent Jesus into the world to save it, and them as well.
8. Lazarus is raised from the dead, but we don't read anything about his reaction to being resurrected. However, we do see the reaction of the mourners who go back to Jerusalem; some believing in Jesus, and others reporting to the Pharisees all that they had seen. What happens in Jerusalem, and where does Jesus go? (see John 11:43-57)
- a. ANSWER 1: The raising of the Lazarus amounts to the last straw for the Pharisees. In Jerusalem, the story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead is spread throughout the city. The Pharisees are now plotting to kill Jesus the first time that he steps into Jerusalem. They want to have him killed "before everyone will believe in him."
- b. ANSWER 2: With several months to go before Passover, Jesus withdraws from Bethany to a village called Ephraim.
- c. ANSWER 3: The next time that he will enter Jerusalem will be for the Passover.
9. Let's close this lesson with a quick look at a well-known parable that Jesus conveys to us in Luke 19:16-31. The parable concerns a rich man and a beggar named Lazarus (but not the Lazarus in our scripture in John). In our online lesson study of Luke, we dig deeper into this parable, this teaching from Jesus; but for now, simply read through the verses covering the parable and list all of things that you can learn regarding life, death, and what happens when we die, for both believers and non-believers.
- a. ANSWER 1: It doesn't matter what our station is in life—rich man, beggar, or somewhere in-between—we will all experience physical death.
- b. ANSWER 2: God is no respecter of persons. What matters is whether we decide to accept his son Jesus as our savior, or not.
- c. ANSWER 3: The instant that we are separated from our physical bodies at death, something happens to everyone. We are either carried by the angels to heaven to be with God (if we have placed our faith in Jesus); or we die alone, no angels, and find ourselves instantly in Hades, in torment—real physical torment as we see in the life of the rich man.
- d. ANSWER 4: The lost are keenly aware of their circumstance following death, while the saved are at rest and at peace with God.
- e. ANSWER 5: No one in heaven, except God, can see who is in Hades; nor could we do anything for those in Hades, even if we could see them.
- f. ANSWER 6: Death—physical death—did not change the attitude of the rich man. He still wants his physical needs met by the beggar, and he wants to warn his family not to come to Hades; but he never repents of his sins.
- g. ANSWER 7: Jesus tells him, as we have also witnessed, that even if someone was allowed to come back from the dead, it would not change the attitudes of non-believers. Jesus would go on to physically prove that point when he died and was resurrected.
- h. ANSWER 8: As followers of Jesus, we note that we will not die alone, because physically, the angels will be with us. Furthermore, we actually do not die; rather, we transition to our new life in heaven with Jesus at the point where we physically leave our earthly bodies. As Jesus said, we will not taste death; but the lost, like the rich man, will indeed taste death—permanent separation from God and an eternity in Hell in torment and anguish.

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This lesson demonstrates the victory over death that having faith in Jesus brings us. Jesus revealed both to the Jews of his day, as well as to us today, that he is "living water," "the light of the world," and "the resurrection and the life."

In our next lesson, we will travel with Jesus one last time, as he prepares to make the greatest sacrifice ever made for all of mankind.

So let's rejoice that we have Jesus as our Lord and master, our Savior, and our King!

In Christ,

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