

THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE



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APOSTLE JOHN (DISCIPLE WHOM HE LOVED)

The Apostle John was also known as the disciple whom Jesus loved. According to many biblical historians, he is believed to be the youngest of the 12 disciples (either a teenager or up to 25 years of age) when he was called into discipleship. Bible scholars and historians continue to debate the ages of the other disciples (whether they were teenagers, in their 20s, or middle-aged men, as depicted in today’s portrayals). John was one of the sons of Zebedee and was also called a son of thunder. He was the only one of the 12 disciples who was believed to have gone into the high priest’s courtyard with Jesus when Jesus was taken into

custody. Once inside, he later sent for Peter (**John 18:12-17**). John was the only one of the 12 disciples present at the cross. Jesus gave him alone charge to care for His mother Mary (**John 19:25-27**).

(John 18:15-17 AMP) 15 Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, so he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the [residence of the] high priest; **16** but Peter was standing outside at the door. So the other disciple (John), who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the doorkeeper, and brought Peter inside. **17** Then the servant girl who kept the door said to Peter, “You are not one of this Man’s disciples, are you?” He said, “I am not.”

(John 19:25-27 AMP) 25 So the soldiers did these things. But standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, His mother’s sister [Salome], [Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. **26** So Jesus, seeing His mother, and the disciple whom He loved (esteemed) standing near, said to His mother, “[Dear] woman, look, [here is] your son!” **27** Then He said to the disciple (John), “Look! [here is] your mother [protect and provide for her]!” From that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

The Apostle John witnessed and recorded some of the greatest miracles in the Bible. He was part of Jesus’ inner circle, which also included Peter and James (John’s brother). As part of this inner circle, John witnessed several events that the other 9 disciples were not allowed to see. Some of those events included the resurrection of Jairus’ daughter from the dead (**Luke 8:41-55**), the agony in Gethsemane (**Matt 26:36-46**), and Jesus’ glorious transfiguration on the mount (**Matt 17:1-9**).

Discuss the following:

1. Who were called the sons of thunder?
 - **Mark 3:17** – given the nickname
 - **Luke 9:54** – wanted to call fire from heaven to destroy a Samaritan village
 - **Acts 12:2** – the first and last of the apostles to die
2. John was known as the disciple whom Jesus loved.
 - Was the disciple with Jesus in the courtyard of the high priest.
 - Was the only one of the 12 disciples present at the cross.
 - Was given charge to care for His mother Mary.
3. Jesus had an inner circle (who were they)?
4. This inner circle witnessed several events that the other 9 disciples were not allowed to see. Why? Name some of them.

LAZARUS AND HIS SISTERS

There is one extraordinary event witnessed by all his disciples that was exclusively recorded in John's Gospel. The resurrection of Lazarus from the dead is one of the most amazing miracles in Scripture. It not only attests to Christ's deity as the Son of God, but it stands as the most extraordinary healing miracle recorded in the Bible. Lazarus lived in the town of Bethany with his two sisters (Martha and Mary). Luke states that Jesus had visited Martha's house previously, and some historians believe Jesus visited them frequently. **(Luke 10:38 KJV Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.)**

John says that Jesus loved this family very much and that Lazarus was a friend of Jesus and the 12 disciples. **(John 11 AMPC (5) Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. [They were His dear friends, and He held them in loving esteem.]...)** Little is known of Lazarus; Luke does not even mention his name

at Christ's visit to Martha's house. However, by comparing the Gospels of Luke and John, we can hopefully gain a better understanding of this family and the circumstances surrounding Lazarus' death and resurrection.

Before Lazarus' death, we find Martha distracted, upset, and concerned with much serving at the dinner. Out of frustration, she requests that Jesus make her sister Mary help her serve. As Mary sits at Jesus' feet, hearing His words, Christ informs Martha that Mary had chosen the one thing worth being concerned about **(Luke 10:38-42)**. After Lazarus' resurrection, we again see Martha serving at another dinner. While Martha is serving, Mary takes a pound of costly perfume (pure liquid nard), pours it on Jesus' feet, and wipes them with her hair **(John 12:1-3)**. Martha was a loyal servant and a diligent worker, as observed in Scripture. On the other hand, Mary can be regarded as a worshipper captivated by Christ's presence and His Word(s). Both sisters were faithful, devoted believers.

(Luke 10:38-42 KJV) (38) Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. **(39)** And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. **(40)** But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. **(41)** And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: **(42)** But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

(John 12:1-12 NLT) **1** Six days before the Passover celebration began, Jesus arrived in Bethany, the home of Lazarus—the man he had raised from the dead. **2** A dinner was prepared in Jesus’ honor. Martha served, and Lazarus was among those who ate with him. **3** Then Mary took a twelve-ounce jar of expensive perfume made from essence of nard, and she anointed Jesus’ feet with it, wiping his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance. **4** But Judas Iscariot, the disciple who would soon betray him, said, **5** “That perfume was worth a year’s wages. It should have been sold and the money given to the poor.” **6** Not that he cared for the poor—he was a thief, and since he was in charge of the disciples’ money, he often stole some for himself. **7** Jesus replied, “Leave her alone. She did this in preparation for my burial.” **8** You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me.” **9** When all the people heard of Jesus’ arrival, they flocked to see him and also to see Lazarus, the man Jesus had raised from the dead. **10** Then the leading priests decided to kill Lazarus, too, **11** for it was because of him that many of the people had deserted them and believed in Jesus.

Discuss the following:

5. Where did Lazarus live, and who did he live with?
6. What kind of relationship did Jesus and his disciples have with this family, according to **John 11:5**?
7. On several occasions, what do we see Martha doing in Scripture?
8. On several occasions, what do we see Mary doing in Scripture?
9. Why was Mary upset with Martha in **Luke 10:38-42**?
10. Why did Jesus state, “(41) ...Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: (42) But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

11. Why do you believe Mary anointed Jesus’ feet with such expensive perfume (perfume was worth a year’s wages)?
12. Who was upset by this? Why?
13. What was the purpose of this, according to Jesus?
14. What did the people flock to see at this dinner?
15. What were the leading priests upset with?
16. What were they planning to do?

LAZARUS BECOMES SICK AND DIES

One day, Lazarus became very sick. Martha and Mary knew where Jesus was and sent Him a message concerning Lazarus’ condition. Jesus willfully delayed Himself and remained an additional 2 days. He then goes to Bethany, which was approximately 2 miles (15 furlongs) away from Jerusalem. When Jesus arrived, Lazarus had already been dead for 4 days and had been placed in a tomb. The 4th day is very significant because of the Talmud (an extensive collection of ancient Jewish writings that form the basis of Jewish religious law).

SHEMIRA (WATCHING OR GUARDING)

Jews believed and practiced the ancient custom of Shemira (the guarding of a dead body). They protected the body from rodents but also believed that a deceased person’s spirit stayed near the body for three days after death and that it was possible the person could come back to life during that time. By the fourth day, however, there was no hope. Jesus would arrive at Bethany when all conceivable hope had appeared to be gone.

(John 11 NLT) **(1)** A man named Lazarus was sick. He lived in Bethany with his sisters, Mary and Martha. **(2)** This is the Mary who later poured the expensive perfume on the Lord’s

feet and wiped them with her hair. Her brother, Lazarus, was sick. (3) So the two sisters sent a message to Jesus telling him, "Lord, your dear friend is very sick." (4) But when Jesus heard about it he said, "Lazarus's sickness will not end in death. No, it happened for the glory of God so that the Son of God will receive glory from this." (5) So although Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, (6) he stayed where he was for the next two days... (17) When Jesus arrived at Bethany, he was told that Lazarus had already been in his grave for four days. (18) Bethany was only a few miles down the road from Jerusalem,

Discuss the following:

17. How did Jesus know that Lazarus was sick?
 18. Why didn't Jesus leave immediately? What was His reason?
 19. How much longer did Jesus stay where He was?
 20. When Jesus arrived, how long had Lazarus been dead?
 21. Why was the fourth day important according to Jewish tradition?
 22. What is the tradition of Shemira?
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JESUS MEETS MARTHA AND MARY

As Jesus nears the village, He is met by Martha. Martha says to Jesus that if He had shown up and been present, her brother would not have died. Martha had faith in Jesus' healing abilities by this statement, but her statement and faith both spoke in the *Past Tense*. Martha then states, "But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask." However, when Jesus answers Martha by saying, "Your brother will rise again." Martha's statement and faith then spoke in the *Future Tense*, "he will rise when everyone else rises, at the last day."

Jesus again responds to Martha by saying, "... I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. Everyone who lives in me and believes in me

will never ever die. Do you believe this, Martha?" "Yes, Lord," she told him. "I have always believed you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who has come into the world from God - **John 11:25-27**)"

Martha responds by answering a question that Jesus did not ask her. She acknowledges the fact that she believes that Jesus is the Son of God who can do all things. But she did not necessarily believe that He is the resurrection and life for her *Present* situation. Martha's faith was still wavering from *Past Tense* (if you had been here) to *Future Tense* (he will rise on the last day), but Christ was referring to *Present Tense* (I am the resurrection *at this moment* - not I will be the resurrection). Martha (just like us) must realize that when the presence of God is manifested, faith must shift to "now faith" (**Hebrews 11:1**) and not past or future faith.

(Hebrews 11:1 KJV) Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

(John 11:20-27 NLT) **20** When Martha got word that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him. But Mary stayed in the house. **21** Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died. **22** But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask." **23** Jesus told her, "Your brother will rise again." **24** "Yes," Martha said, "he will rise when everyone else rises, at the last day." **25** Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life.[a] Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. **26** Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die. Do you believe this, Martha?"

27 "Yes, Lord," she told him. "I have always believed you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who has come into the world from God."

Discuss the following:

23. How did Jesus know that Lazarus was sick?
24. The lesson states that Martha first spoke to Jesus in the past tense. "Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died".
25. The lesson then states that Martha spoke to Jesus in the future tense. "He will rise when everyone else rises, at the last day."
26. The lesson then states that Jesus reminds her that He is the resurrection and the life in her present situation.
27. The lesson states that when the presence of God is manifested, faith must shift to "now faith" (**Hebrews 11:1**) and not past or future faith.

Martha then leaves Jesus and returns with her sister Mary. When Mary (the worshipper) reaches Jesus, she immediately falls to His feet, weeps, and repeats the exact words as her sister Martha. "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw the weeping from Mary and the mourners, He became deeply troubled in spirit. Jesus then asks for the location of Lazarus' tomb. He follows them to the grave and publicly weeps.

Jesus also wept similarly during His triumphant entry into Jerusalem (**Luke 19:35-44**, **Mark 11:1-11**, **Matt 21:1-17**). During this triumphant entry into the city, the multitudes spread their garments and branches on the road, shouting Hosanna. However, while they were rejoicing, Jesus was weeping because of their lack of faith in Him, their outright rejection of Him (His crucifixion would occur days later), and the future ruin that would befall them and that city. Christ stated as He wept, "**...thou knewest not the time of thy visitation - Luke 19:44**".

(John 11 NLT) (28) Then she returned to Mary. She called Mary aside from the mourners and told her, "The Teacher is here and wants to see you."... (32) When Mary arrived and saw Jesus, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if only you

had been here, my brother would not have died." (33) When Jesus saw her weeping and saw the other people wailing with her, a deep anger welled up within him, and he was deeply troubled. (34) "Where have you put him?" he asked them. They told him, "Lord, come and see." (35) Then Jesus wept... (38) Jesus was still angry as he arrived at the tomb, a cave with a stone rolled across its entrance.

(Luke 19:44 KJV) And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

Discuss the following:

28. When Jesus saw the weeping from Mary and the mourners, He became deeply troubled in spirit.
29. Jesus follows them to the grave and publicly weeps.
30. Jesus wept during His triumphant entry into Jerusalem and stated, "**...thou knewest not the time of thy visitation - Luke 19:44**".

JESUS AT LAZARUS' TOMB

When Jesus reaches Lazarus' tomb, He tells the spectators to remove the stone that sealed the grave. Martha immediately protested because of the bad, decaying smell that would come from her brother's body. Because of the heat in that region, burials usually took place on the day of death. Bodies were wrapped in strips of cloth and some spices to cover the odor of decomposing flesh. Four days of decomposition had already taken place. Enzymes and bacteria had already begun breaking down the blood, brain, pancreas, heart, lungs, liver, stomach, kidneys, eyes, intestines, veins, glands, etc.... Martha's concerns would have been valid; putrefaction (the release of awful-smelling gas due to decomposition) would have been present.

Jesus again reminds Martha of His words He had spoken to her earlier, "Didn't I tell you that you would see God's glory if you believe?" The spectators removed the stone, and Jesus prayed to the Father aloud for the sake of the people (so they would believe). When Jesus finished praying, He shouted and commanded Lazarus to come forth. Lazarus (his body and spirit) immediately obeyed Christ's voice and came forth bound in grave clothes.

(John 11 NLT) (39) "Roll the stone aside," Jesus told them. But Martha, the dead man's sister, protested, "Lord, he has been dead for four days. The smell will be terrible." **(40)** Jesus responded, "Didn't I tell you that you would see God's glory if you believe?" **(41)** So they rolled the stone aside. Then Jesus looked up to heaven and said, "Father, thank you for hearing me. **(42)** You always hear me, but I said it out loud for the sake of all these people standing here, so that they will believe you sent me." **(43)** Then Jesus shouted, "Lazarus, come out!" **(44)** And the dead man came out, his hands and feet bound in graveclothes, his face wrapped in a headcloth. Jesus told them, "Unwrap him and let him go!"

This miracle was not just a restoration of a person who had just died and was brought back to life. This miracle was a complete regeneration of Lazarus' body. Every organ, tissue, vessel, cell, gland, and system (circulatory, nervous, muscular, lymphatic, respiratory, digestive, etc...) had to be renewed and restored from a decomposed state. This healing miracle is only paralleled to **Gen 2:7** (the creation of man from dust). Not only was this miracle a complete regeneration of Lazarus' body, but it was a command for Lazarus' spirit to come forth from his resting (peaceful) state in Abraham's bosom (paradise) and return into his body. Recall the stories of Lazarus the beggar (not believed to be the same Lazarus of Bethany) and the thief on the cross.

(Genesis 2:7 AMP) then the Lord God formed [that is, created the body of] man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being [an individual complete in body and spirit].

(Luke 16:20-31 AMP) ... (20) And a poor man named Lazarus, was laid at his gate, covered with sores... **(22)** Now it happened that the poor man died and his spirit was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom (paradise)...

(Luke 23:40-43 AMP) 42 And he was saying, "Jesus, [please] remember me when You come into Your kingdom!" **43** Jesus said to him, "I assure you and most solemnly say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

(John 5:25-29 AMP) (25) I assure you and most solemnly say to you, a time is coming and is [here] now, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear it will live. **(26)** For just as the Father has life in Himself [and is self-existent], even so He has given to the Son to have life in Himself [and be self-existent]. **(27)** And He has given Him authority to execute judgment, because He is a Son of Man [sinless humanity, qualifying Him to sit in judgment over mankind]. **(28)** Do not be surprised at this; for a time is coming when all those who are in the tombs will hear His voice, **(29)** and they will come out—those who did good things [will come out] to a resurrection of [new] life, but those who did evil things [will come out] to a resurrection of judgment [that is, to be sentenced].

This miracle unquestionably attests that Christ is truly the resurrection (the restorer and regenerator of every dead and hopeless situation in our lives) and the life (the life-giver, creator, and Lord of our bodies, spirits, and souls)!

Discuss the following:

31. When Jesus tells the spectators to remove the stone that sealed the grave. Why did Martha immediately protest?
32. Why did burials usually take place on the day of death in that region?
33. What was the condition of Lazarus's body after 4 days of decay?
34. Why did Jesus pray aloud to the Father?
35. Why did Jesus shout and command Lazarus (by name) to come forth?
36. Every organ, tissue, vessel, cell, gland, and system (circulatory, nervous, muscular, lymphatic, respiratory, digestive, etc...) had to be renewed and restored from a decomposed state. This healing miracle is only paralleled to **Gen 2:7** (the creation of man from dust).
37. Christ commanded Lazarus' spirit to return into his body.

