

SUNDAY MORNING STUDY

10:30 AM SERVICE

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John 11:1-57

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THE TITLE OF THE MESSAGE:

JESUS – THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

SUBJECT TOPICALLY REFERENCED UNDER:

Life, Death, Resurrection, Faith, Unbelief, Eternity

John 11:25-26

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?"

These words of Jesus are known as #5 of a total of 7 "I AM" Statements Jesus made in John's Gospel. They were spoken to Martha, sister of Lazarus & friend of Jesus, whom He was about raise up, in final of 7 miracles that John records in His Gospel, according to the structural outline that the Holy Spirit gave him. What Jesus touched on in that famous conversation with her, is the unsatiable hunger in every human heart to live forever; as Solomon said, God has set a craving for eternity in our hearts (Eccl. 3:11).

"EVERYBODY WANTS TO LIVE FOREVER."

INTRODUCTION 1: Jeff Bezos

And if you founded Amazon and own the Washington Post and your name is Jeff Bezos, you might have the financial means to give it a shot, to help lead Altos Labs, the ambitious new anti-ageing company with billions in investment.

INTRODUCTION 2: Cryonic Tubes

"Nestled in the picturesque landscape of the Arizona desert is an office park, in Scottsdale, where the Alcor Corporation says they may have found the secret to eternal life. Max More is the former president & CEO of Alcor, a non-profit that offers to cryogenically freeze your body upon your death, by placing you in a large stainless-steel tank in liquid nitrogen and keep you there for as long as it takes for "scientists of the future" to bring you back. Fees cost either \$200,000 for your entire body, or \$80,000 for just your head to be preserved.

I. The Delay of Jesus

I. A) Report of Lazarus' Death

John 11:1-3

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."

Map of Bethany

*Jesus had some beloved disciples and friends, three siblings, named Mary, Martha & Lazarus, who dwelt in Bethany, or Miriam, Marta & Eleazer in Hebrew.

*Lazarus is the Greek form of the Hebrew Eleazer = God is my help.

"Bethany" or "Beit-Anyah" = house of the poor, or house of poverty. Bethany & Beth-Ph'Age were 2 of 3 small villages east of Jerusalem where Essenes, lepers & others with impurities were allowed to settle. Bethany itself is about 2 miles from Jerusalem, on the eastern side of the Mt. of Olives, on a limestone ridge.

*The sisters had sent word that their brother whom Jesus loved (Phileo), was sick to the point of death.

*Greek: "Phileo" = to be a friend to fond of (an individual or an object), to have affection for (denoting personal attachment, as a matter of sentiment or feeling). Brotherly love. The love between close friends.

The message apparently did not even include a request of what Jesus should do; their confidence in their friendship with Jesus was assumed to be enough for Him to act. We can presume it is on a Sunday when Lazarus starts falling gravely ill, and the messenger who conveys the sister's words reaches Jesus the following day (Tuesday) in the region of Perea.

I. B) Response of Jesus

vs. 4-6

John 11:4-6

⁴ When Jesus heard *that*, He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

⁵ Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶ So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was.

Messenger & Jesus

*His delay was not because of a deficit of love for Lazarus, or human fear of the Jerusalem authorities, but He was waiting for the right moment that would be indicated to Him, by the Father. In dismissing the messenger with the words “This sickness is not unto death,” he may have unfortunately assumed that at Jesus word, Lazarus was being healed that very moment, & that he could return & find him whole.

But what Jesus actually meant is that Lazarus would not die for the sake of / or with the result of death being honored; instead, God would be glorified in it!! “God’s Delays are not God’s Denials.”

*So, Jesus may have received this messenger early in the day on Monday, but stayed that whole of that day & the following day (Tuesday), & in all this it is stated again that Jesus loved Lazarus & his sisters.

*Greek: “Ag-Ah-Paw-Oh” = to love, to be full of good-will and exhibit the same. To prefer another, to wish well to them, & have regard to their welfare. A sacrificial love given without conditions; we receive it from the One true God who is Himself Agape.

I. C) Reaction of the Disciples

vs. 7-13

John 11:7-13

⁷ Then after this He said to *the* disciples, “Let us go to Judea again.” ⁸ *The* disciples said to Him, “Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone You, and are You going there again?” 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.

Sunrise

*Verse 8 The Jews, “Ha Ewe-Dye-Us”; this verse has been tragically distorted in some quarters of church history to justify antisemitism, the hatred of God’s chosen people, Israel; but in this context its specifically referring to the Jerusalem religious establishment at that time.

*Verse 8 the disciples remind Jesus, that He was almost stoned last winter, in Jerusalem at the festival of Dedication; AKA Hanukkah (John 10).

*Verse 9 “Our friend Lazarus” - he was known to all the disciples - Bethany on the pilgrim route to Jerusalem via the Jericho Road.

***Verses 9-11: Jesus was in the world as a special light for a short time. Soon the world would lose this unique opportunity (Night was coming - of His betrayal & crucifixion) to respond to the Incarnate Jesus.**

***Application: Living by the will of God is safe. Living in evil is dangerous – but if one lives in God’s will they are safe from it.**

***Verse 11 - sleep is a metaphor for death in Scripture (Daniel 12:2; Acts 7:60; I Corinthians 5:20; I Thessalonians 4:13-18). Not the false belief of soul sleep.**

***Verse 12 disciples thought He was speaking solely in earthly terms of physical sleep. Rabbi's taught sleep was one of 5-6 signs of recovering from seriousness illness.**

John 11:14-16

¹⁴ Then Jesus said to them plainly, “Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵ And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him.” ¹⁶ Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with Him.”

Thomas is also known as Didymus (Greek for Twin). Church history says his physical appearance resembled Jesus.

***Verse 16 - Thomas was both a procrastinator, skeptic & realist.**

But in the end, Thomas transformed by an appearance of the Resurrected Jesus & empowered by the Holy Spirit, would glorify the Lord by his martyrdom in India. Today, there are a group of Eastern Christians, who call themselves the “Thomas’ Christians’ who consistently maintain that he landed on their shores, crisscrossed the Indian sub-continent with the Gospel & suffered martyrdom in Mai-Luh-Por, India, under an Indian king Gon-Doe-Phers.

II. The Despair of Lazarus’ Sisters

II. A) The Rebuke of Martha

vs. 17-27

John 11:17-27

¹⁷ So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸ Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away. ¹⁹ And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. 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.” 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?" 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."

*We see that Jesus & His disciples venture on the 2-day journey & thus arrive on the outskirts of the town (on a Thursday) and has a brief conversation with Martha.

*Now Martha was the hard-working, task orientated sister who loved to cook meals & entertain guests - Martha was kind of a 1st century Martha Stewart (But I don't think she ever served any jail time!)

*Verse 17 - Lazarus was buried the same day he died - In Israel's warm climate the body would have started to decompose right away.

*Many other Jews had come to console the bereaved sisters, as this was an essential act of Jewish piety (Neighbors would provide the first meal after the funeral).

*Verse 18-19 Many Jews from Jerusalem made the 2-mile journey up & over the Mt. of Olives to Bethany

*Verse 20 Mary sitting "Sheva" – Hebrew for "Seven"; a traditional 7-day mourning period, where family members sat w/o shoes on the floor or on a low stool. Mary who had diligently drank in Jesus' teachings (Luke 10:41-42), set the custom aside to go meet Him.

*Mourners abstained from adornment for the next 3 months & from common pleasure for the next year.

*Verses 20-22 – Martha's statement that God would grant Jesus whatever He asked was prob. not a statement of a belief in the immediate rising of Lazarus – but more of a general statement of the Father's blessing upon Jesus. *Verse 24 She affirmed that Lazarus would rise at the end of time; (in verse 39 she protested the moving away of the stone at his tomb.)

*Verse 23 "again" not in original Greek - Jesus was saying Lazarus was immanently about to rise.

*Verse 24 As a Jew she knew he would rise again, since she was brought up on OT Scriptures (such as Job 19:26, Isaiah 26, Dan. 12:2). *Verse 25 - 5th "I Am" statement of the 4th Gospel;

Hebrew "Asher Hai-yah" (Ex. 3:14) = Greek "Ego Ei-me" = "I AM".

*Verses 25-26 – believing in Jesus means if you die, you will live again. The paradoxical statement whoever lives & believes in Him shall never die, refers to the 2nd death. "If you've only been born once, you'll die twice; but if you've been born twice, you'll only have to die once.

*Verse 27 - Martha believed that Jesus was 1. the Messiah (I Samuel 2:10), 2. The Son of God (Psalm 2), 3. Who was to come into the world. (Daniel 7).

*Jesus then apparently instructs Martha to go have Mary come out to meet Him.

John 11:28-32

²⁸ And when she had said these things, she went her way and secretly called Mary her sister, saying, "The Teacher has come and is calling for you." ²⁹ As soon as she heard *that*, she arose quickly and came to Him. ³⁰(Now Jesus had not yet come into the town, but ^lwas in the place where Martha met Him.) ³¹ Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and comforting her, when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, followed her, saying, "She is going to the tomb to weep there."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."

Jesus Comforting Mary & Martha

*Verse 28 - "Teacher" (Rabbi), He was her teacher - usually Rabbi's did not have women disciples - she had earlier sat at His feet, another indication of formally being a disciple. *Verse 28 when Martha returned to the common home of the three siblings, it would at this point according to Jewish mourning rituals, would have been converted into a "House of Mourning" - all the furniture in the house would have been reversed or turned upside down to avoid an appearance of ease or frivolity. It was forbidden to wear shoes, anoint oneself, study, eat meat & usually neighbors came to prepare a simple meal for the family

*Martha would have found Mary sitting on the floor, mourning.

*Verse 29 Mary arises to go see Jesus, broke the custom of Shevah to hurry off to meet Jesus.

*Verses 30-31 tells us many of the Jews mourning with Mary followed her to where Jesus was - wrongly assuming she was going to further weep at the tomb, which was a custom during the "Shevah" mourning period.

*The purpose of Jesus in summoning her **was probably both to comfort her & instruct her.**

***Verse 31 Mary left, and the crowd followed Her- probably, thought she was going out to mourn – because local students & teachers of the Torah / Law would join in in funeral procession if they were able.**

III. The Duel with Death

III. A) The Mourning of the Multitude

vs. 33-34

John 11:33-34

³³ *Therefore*, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, 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."

***Verse 33 Jesus observed the “weeping” = “Klai-Oh” – the weeping aloud of Mary & the ostentatious wailing of the hired professional mourners:**

***He groaned in the spirit; Groaned = “Em-Brim-Ah-Ohm-Aye”**

-to have indignation; a groaning or feeling inner turmoil. A word usually reserved for anger. To sigh with chagrin or snort with anger, often used of a horse snorting. An array of negative emotions grips Jesus.

***And was “Troubled” = “Thar-Ah-So” a reflexive verb, meaning to be troubled or agitated; like the stirring of water at the pool of Bethesda (John 5:7).**

***In context, yes angered at the crowd’s unbelief, but also Anger at sin, through which death entered the world & Satan, who had the authority over death. At Lazarus’s death, the grief & unbelief of some of the mourners. *Like Gethsemane. Hebrews all points tempted as we are.**

III. B) The Mercy of the Master

vs. 35-37

John 11:35-37

³⁵ Jesus wept. ³⁶ Then the Jews said, “See how He loved him!”

³⁷ And some of them said, “Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?”

Jesus Wept

***Verse 35 Jesus wept - shortest verse in the whole Bible.**

***Those having trouble memorizing Bible verses – well, there you go!**

(Story from Bible College.)

The Greek here for wept differs from and is in contrast to the wailing of the multitude; it is the verb “Eh-Daw-Krew-Sen” and comes from a root meaning to shed tears; It refers to the quiet / silent weeping or shedding of tears. *One of 3x’s Jesus shed tears in the Gospels (over Jerusalem & Gethsemane)

***Would have shocked Greeks readers - their gods were described as being apathetic - “A” negation of “Pathos” emotion, sympathy or pity.**

***Isaiah 53 Man of Sorrows. (Hebrews - all points tempted as we are).**

***Verses 35-37 quiet shedding of tears contrasted with the wailing of the profession mourners.**

IV. The Defeat of Death

IV. A) The Miracle of Resuscitation

vs. 38-44

John 11:38-44

³⁸ Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. ³⁹ Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, "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?" 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."

Jesus Calling Forth Lazarus

*Verse 38 Again Jesus groaned within Himself - ("Em-Brim-Ah-Ohm-Aye") in the spirit & was troubled - groaning or becoming angry a feeling inner turmoil., that they failed to yet understand His mission.

*Verse 38 - tombs were fashioned out of caves on the limestone hillsides of Judea 50 cubits minimum from the city. with a disk-shaped stone rolled in front within a groove, to protect from weather, animals, & tomb robbers.

*White-washed to be visible so passersby could avoid ritual defilement & would have decorated with flowers by mourners during a funeral time like this.

*Verse 39 "Take away the stone"

*KJV "But he stinketh!"

*By now Rigor-mortis - the stiffening of the joints and muscles of a body would have fully set in, & there would be a fetid stench from Lazarus' decomposing corpse.

*Verse 39 - Body wrapped in grave cloths left on the floor of the tomb's antechamber. - a year later they collect the bones to store in an ossuary.

*Verse 39 Jewish practices attempted to eliminate the possibility of someone being merely comatose or having swooned – (S'machot 8:1).

*Additionally Rabbinic tradition held that the soul of a deceased person hovered over the body for 4 days, but then finally departed as the decay settling in reached a point of no return. (See Genesis Rabbah 50:10)

*Verse 40 Jesus in responding to Martha reminded her what He said earlier, but He uses the plural noun indicating He's addressing the whole multitude of mourners in saying " "Did I not say to you (all plural) that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?"

*Verse 41, in obedience to the Master, they lifted away the stone, risking ceremonial defilement.

*Verse 41 But Jesus lifted up His eyes, prayed with them open.

*Verses 41-42: Jesus lifted His face up to His Father in heaven, with His eyes open prayed in such a way for the benefit of those around Him, so they would not merely see Jesus as a wonder worker, but so that people would believe in His Sonship.

*Some usually comment while it was because of His great love for Lazarus & His sisters that He raised him – that is partially true, but Jesus specifically states here in His prayer – that they might believe that God has sent Jesus; which is also the whole purpose of why John wrote his Gospel.

*Verse 43 Jesus shouted loudly in a great (Grk. “Mega”) voice – Lazarus: “Dura Exo!” “Dura” is an adverb used as a verb in the imperative = “Here!” “Out!” The very One who said the dead would hear His voice & one day arise, whose voice His own sheep would know & obey, shouted “Lazarus, Come Forth!”

*Verse 44 a “And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth.” -In awesome display of power, air once again began circulating in the lungs of Lazarus & blood began to flow in his veins again as the recently departed soul of Lazarus was infused within his body reanimating him back to life!

*Doctors today have brought people who had been clinically dead for minutes or even hours, but nothing matches Jesus raising Lazarus who was dead for four days!

*Verse 44 b - additional miracle for Lazarus to arise & walk out of the tomb *Normally the dead were wrapped in strips linen cloth like bandages into which spices myrrh, aloes, rose water & hyssop were placed within the folds.

*Augustine stated if Jesus had said “Come forth!” then all the tombs on the hillside would have had all their occupants come back to life & step forward! *Lazarus would have been wrapped in these bandages from the neck down, binding his arms to his sides, and a large head covering 3-foot square would have been draped over his head.

*Lazarus come staggering out of the tomb like a mummy to the awe of the multitude surrounding the tomb.

*Verse 44b “Loose him and let him go”.

Doctors today have brought people who had been clinically dead for minutes or even hours, but nothing matches Jesus raising Lazarus who was dead for four days!

*Illustration: Salvation & Sanctification: “But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.” -Colossians 3:8.

IV. B) The Response of Faith

vs. 45

John 11:45

45 Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him.

The correct response. To believe in Him.

John 11:46-48

⁴⁶ But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did. ⁴⁷ Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, "What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. ⁴⁸ If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation."

*Verse 46-47 some believed, others did not & consulted with the Pharisees since they believed in resurrection.

*Jesus was making His final strike against the stronghold of unbelief among the Jerusalem priestly elite.

*Verses 45-46 highest manifestation of faith and unbelief - from here the two-part ways.

*Verse 47-48 chief priests (Sadducees) & Pharisees joined forces to plot against Jesus.

*Verse 47 – the sought by humans means to protect their place = probably refers to the Holy Place, the Temple, their position as rulers over the religious affairs of Israel, & the nation itself; yet they lost both when Titus's Roman legions destroyed in in 70 AD.

CONCLUSION:

Archaeology of Lazarus' Tomb

*Now this was technically NOT a resurrection, but more of a -

Resuscitation -for Lazarus latter died again of old age! Church history seems to indicate he lived another 30 years, so the inevitable was only delayed. *In 1873 a French archaeologist discovered a network of burial catacombs on the Eastern side of the Mount of Olives on the road to Bethany, which contained 30 stone ossuaries, aka bones boxes.

And 3 of these 30 boxes had Hebrew inscriptions with the names Mary, Martha & Lazarus! With a little sign of the cross etched upon them. Now these names were very common in 1st century Israel, but they are certainly remains of Jewish believers from the 1st century, so it's not completely ruled out, that is the same famous siblings of the Gospels.

*The point being again, that Lazarus died again!

But that's NOT the end of the story –

I Thessalonians 4:15-17

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be

caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

Jesus will return for His saints before a time of Tribulation coming upon the whole earth & He will again shout “Lazarus come forth”, & this time he will be resurrected to never die again! And not just Lazarus, but you too, if you have put your trust in Jesus. If you have not yet, please do so today!

“The Scriptures say that God has set eternity in our hearts – and history testifies to this truth. But this hope of life & immortality finds its exclusive fulfillment in Jesus Christ and His Resurrection.”

APPLICATION:

Life is full of difficulties & death will catch us all eventually if the Lord tarries (Job 14:1). 8 months ago, I lost my own mother, holding her hand in an ICU as she slipped into eternity.

#1 Physical death is effect & an illustration of what sin has done to all of us: it has spiritually polluted us & severed our relationship from God.

Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23.

But 2,000 yrs. Ago Jesus came to pay the death penalty for our sin, dying in our place & as our substitute, Romans 5:8.

John 3:16-17

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

It's not enough to give lip service to belief in God and check the box that you believe the Bible is true; You must believe that Jesus is the Christ / Messiah, (Knowledge, agreement, trust), and believing in Him gives you this hope of eternal life. Will you trust Him today if you never have?

The Proclamation of the Gospel. The Call to Repentance and Faith in Jesus.

End of Study