

C H A P T E R

◇ 11

Read the entire chapter. It is taken up with the raising of Lazarus from the dead and subsequently, with the increased opposition of the Jewish leaders when they observed the increasing popularity of Jesus as a result of this miracle.

Verses 1 and 2. These verses relate that Lazarus of Bethany, brother of Mary and Martha, was ill. It identifies Mary as the same one who anointed Jesus with ointment and wiped His feet with her hair.

226. Lazarus was the _____ of Mary and Martha of Bethany.

Verse 3. Jesus and His disciples heard the sad news from a messenger sent by Lazarus' sister. It is worth noting that the message was not "Lazarus is sick," but, "He whom thou lovest is sick." This is evidence of the intimate relationship between Jesus and this family.

227. Jesus _____ the brother of Mary and Martha.

Verse 4. Upon hearing this sad news, Jesus said to His disciples, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified." Two important facts are brought out in this statement. (1) Lazarus' sickness (and death) was for the purpose of bringing glory to God and (2) That which glorifies Jesus also glorifies God.

228. Jesus' statement showed that Lazarus' sickness was not unto death but for the _____ of God, and what glorifies the _____ glorifies the Father also.

Verses 5 through 7. Jesus' love for Mary and Martha is reaffirmed, and it seems strange that Jesus remained two days in the same place before leaving for Judea. Many things which Jesus did seem strange from the standpoint of human wisdom, but Jesus had divine wisdom and knew the end from the beginning. Jesus knew what He was going to do and delayed in order that God might receive the greater glory and that the faith of many might be strengthened.

229. Jesus' delay in going to the sick man was that God might receive greater _____ and that the _____ of believers might be strengthened.

Verses 8 through 10. When Jesus announced His intention to go again into Judea, his disciples were surprised. Evidently they had interpreted His failure to go immediately to the bedside of Lazarus to the opposition of the Jewish leaders who threatened His life, and they questioned whether His decision to go was wise. Compare the somewhat veiled expression in John 9:4, "I must work while it is day" with John 11:9. In both cases, day is the allotted time one has in which to do his

work. "The night cometh in which no man can work." Jesus' time had not yet come, so He had no fear of being killed at that time.

- 230.** True or False? Jesus feared that the Jewish leaders might kill him if He went into Judea at this time.

Verses 11 through 15. Jesus then said to His disciples, "Our friend Lazarus is asleep, and I am going that I may wake him." The disciples thought that Jesus meant resting in sleep and thought if he were sleeping, he must be well on the way to recovery. Jesus then told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, for your faith will be made stronger." That Jesus knew that Lazarus was dead was evidence of His supernatural power. That He was confident of His position of authority as the Son of God, is shown by His declaration to the disciples, "I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent that you may believe."

- 231.** True or False? When the disciples misunderstood Jesus' statement that Lazarus was sleeping, He told them plainly that Lazarus was dead and said, "I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent that you may believe."

Verse 16. When Thomas realized that in spite of personal danger, Jesus was determined to go into Judea, he said to the other disciples, "Let us also go that we may die with him." Although Thomas (Didymus/the Twin), at times, seemed to show a lack of faith, he certainly was not lacking in courage.

- 232.** Thomas felt certain that Jesus was risking His _____ by going into Judea,

but showed great _____ by his willingness to go with Him.

Verses 17 through 19. These verses are an explanation of the conditions Jesus found upon arriving in Bethany. Lazarus had been buried four days previously and many Jews from Jerusalem, which was only about two miles or fifteen furlongs distant, had come to comfort Mary and Martha.

- 233.** Lazarus had been dead _____ and many Jews had gathered at the home to _____ Mary and Martha.

Verse 20. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she arose and went to meet Him, but Mary remained at home. Martha was the active one and Mary the more reflective, so it was quite natural that she would remain at home and fulfill the obligations of a hostess.

- 234.** Mary did not go out on the road to meet Jesus, as she felt she should stay at home and fulfill her _____ as hostess.

Verses 21 and 22. When we think of these two sisters, we are inclined to think of Mary as the more spiritual and Martha as the more practical one, but here Martha's strong faith is evidenced by her remark, "Master, if you had been here, my brother would not have died, and even now I know that whatever you may ask God, He will give it to you."

235. Martha's strong _____ in Jesus is shown by her words to Him when she met Him on the way.

Verses 23 through 26. The conversation between Jesus and Martha continued and paraphrased, is as follows:

Jesus: "Your brother shall rise again."

Martha: "I believe in the resurrection of the dead in the last day."

Jesus: "I am the source of life; therefore, I have the power to raise from death to life. Whoever, while living, believes in me, shall never die."

These words of Jesus offer some difficulty in interpretation. That is to say, different commentators ascribe different meanings. One says Jesus is talking about the time of His second coming; the believer who is living at that time will never see death. That is true, but there is no reason to believe that Jesus was talking about any particular time. It is more reasonable to believe that this is a more general declaration of Jesus, of His power and authority over life and death, and is given to reassure Martha. This is indicated by His question to Martha, "Do you believe this?" For other references to "resurrection" and "eternal life" see the following: 1 Corinthians 15:35-55, 1 Thess. 4:15-18, John 3:16 and 36, 17:3, 1 John 1:2, and Revelation 20:4-6.

236. True or False? In this passage, Jesus taught that He has the source of all life, both physical and spiritual; which means that He can restore the physically dead to life and give eternal life to those who are spiritually dead. "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Verse 27. Martha answered, "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the promised Messiah." She did not answer Jesus' question directly. He said, "Do you believe this?" She said, "I believe in you." But Martha gave the right answer. If we believe that Jesus is the Son of God, we must also believe in what He says and does.

237. If we _____ that Jesus is the Son of God, we must also _____ what He says and does is righteous.

Verses 28 through 30. After this conversation, Martha returned to the home and told Mary that Jesus had come and wished to speak to her. Jesus, according to John's account, had said nothing like this, but Martha knew that it was true. It seems that up to this time, Mary had not known of Jesus' arrival and had not known why Martha had left. When Mary heard the news, she arose quickly and went to the spot where Jesus was still waiting. Undoubtedly Jesus had picked this spot because He wished to talk with the sisters privately.

238. When Mary heard that Jesus had come, she arose _____ and _____ to the place where He was waiting.

Verse 31. This verse simply recounts the fact that the Jews who were in the house with Mary, thinking that she was going to the tomb to weep, followed her, and though unwanted, were with her where she met Jesus.

239. The Jews who were in the house with Mary _____ her to the place where she met Jesus.

Verse 32. When Mary arrived where Jesus was, she greeted Him with the same words that Martha had used, "Lord, if you had been here my brother would not have died." But there was one notable difference. Mary, being more emotional, fell to her knees when she greeted the Master. The fact that both used the same answer seems to indicate that in their grief they had agreed that if Jesus had come while Lazarus was still alive, He would have healed him. There is somewhat a mild reproach in these words as the sisters could not understand why Jesus had not come immediately.

240. In greeting Jesus, Mary used the _____ as Martha, and there seems to be a mild _____ in these words.

Verse 33. Why was Jesus "moved with indignation and deeply troubled" when He saw Mary and the Jewish companions weeping? Anyone who has ever witnessed a heathen oriental funeral will never forget the terrible outcries and irrational behavior of many of the mourners. Some of this grief may be genuine, but much of it is hypocritical, just for the show. I believe this is what angered Jesus. The Jews should have known better. Many prophecies of the Old Testament hold forth the hope of eternal life, but the Jews were probably influenced by the customs of their heathen neighbors. Certainly the Christian is admonished in such circumstances, not to sorrow as those who have no hope. See 1 Thess 4:13,14.

241. True or False? Jesus was troubled in spirit (moved with indignation) because they had the hope of eternal life and they should not have wailed and carried on as the heathen do.

Verse 34. Jesus spoke no word of reproach but simply said, "Where have you laid him?" They replied, "Come and see." The time had come for Jesus to act, so He wished to be shown the tomb of Lazarus.

242. Jesus wished to be shown the tomb of Lazarus because it was _____ for Him to act.

Verse 35. Jesus wept. Only two words, but very meaningful Jesus did not wail. He shed tears of sympathy. He did not feel sorry for Mary and Martha, he shared their grief.

243. Jesus wept. He shed _____ of _____ for Mary and Martha.

Verses 36 and 37. The Jews who had accompanied Mary, when they saw Jesus' tears, said, "See how He loves him. Could not this man who caused the blind to see, have healed this man that he should not have died?"

244. The Jews accompanying Mary were convinced of the _____ power of Jesus but their use of the term "this man" showed that they did not believe He is the Son of God.

Verse 38. Jesus again troubled in spirit, went to the grave of Lazarus, which was a cave with a large circular stone closing the opening, a common method of burial in the region. We can only speculate why Jesus was again troubled and somewhat angered, but it probably was because of evident weakness of the people's faith.

245. True or False? The people talked only of what Jesus might have done, not of what He could still do.

Verses 39 and 40. Jesus said, "Roll away the stone." But Martha protested, "By this time the smell will be terrible for he has been dead four days." Jesus replied, "Did I not tell you that if you really believed you would see the glory of God?" Martha had previously said that she believed that God would do anything that Jesus asked of Him but confronted with the reality of the grave being opened where her brother's body had lain for four days, she instinctively reacted. Who of us can say that we would have done differently?

246. Martha reacted in a natural manner when she _____ the removal of the stone from the opening of the tomb.

Verses 41 and 42. After this, they rolled the stone from the entrance. Then Jesus looked heavenward and prayed, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me, and I know that you always hear me, but because of the people who are here I said it, that they may believe that you have sent me." Let us look at this prayer of our Lord. First, there is thanksgiving that the Father hears Him, and second, confidence that the prayer has already been answered; the purpose being to arouse and strengthen the faith of those who looked on.

247. The purpose of the prayer of Jesus was that the _____ of the onlookers might be strengthened.

Verses 43 and 44. After speaking these words, Jesus cried in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." And he who had been dead came out of the tomb, bound hand and foot with grave clothes, and his face bound with a napkin. Can you imagine yourself in the crowd of onlookers on that day, seeing that white shrouded figure, a man who had been dead four days, coming out of the darkness of the tomb and now standing in the bright sunlight? Would you have fallen to your knees praising God or would you have been among the scoffers saying, "He is a deceiver, it is only a trick?" Jesus knew the end from the beginning. When the word first came of Lazarus' illness, He had said that it was for the Glory of God. When the Son is recognized for who He is and is given glory, the Father is glorified also.

248. True or False? Jesus performed this great miracle of raising Lazarus back to life in order to make a great name for Himself.

Verse 44. (Latter half) Jesus said, "Loose him and let him go." Lazarus was restored to life and brought forth from the tomb by the power of God. Then men were told to take off the grave clothes and set him free. Also men were told to roll away the stone. The divine way is for man to do what he **can** do and then God (Jesus) steps in and does what man cannot do . . . Another lesson we may learn, or

it can be used as a parable, when a person is born again and issues forth from death to life, his old sins may still bind him. The Holy Spirit gives power to overcome those sins, but He often uses Spirit filled men (pastors, church leaders) to help in making this man truly free.

- 249.** True or False? Three important lessons are to be learned from this miracle. (1) The divine plan is for man to do what he can, then God steps in and does what man cannot do; (2) When Jesus is believed in and given the glory due Him as God's Son, God is glorified also; (3) When a person is "born again" (dying with Jesus, buried with Jesus, raised up with Jesus--see Romans 6:3-5) he is restored to the image in which God made him and God is glorified through his life and Spirit filled men have a part in freeing him from the grave clothes of sin.

Verses 45 and 46. The parable of the Sower is reenacted here. Praise God. Some seed fell on good ground. Some hard hearts were not changed, even by this great miracle. Those sought to win the favor of the Jewish leaders by rushing to them with the news. But there were many who believed.

- 250.** Many of the Jews who accompanied Mary and Martha were now convinced that Jesus was the Son of God and _____ on Him.

Verses 47 and 48. The Chief Priests and Pharisees called a council, probably a meeting of the Sanhedrin. They felt that they had to do something about Jesus. That He had performed a notable miracle, they could not deny; and if things continued on this course, He would soon have all the common people on His side. They attributed to Jesus the same greed for power that they themselves had. They, looking into the future, could see Him leading a popular revolution in which He would be crowned king. Then the Roman legions would come in, defeat Him, and take from the Jewish nation what little power they still had, which was largely in matters of their religion; but this was still important to them.

- 251.** The Jewish leaders called a meeting to decide what to do about Jesus, for if the Roman government became involved, they feared the loss of the _____ they still held.

Verses 49 and 50. Caiaphas addressed them scornfully, "You foolish people. Can you not see that the only thing to do is to get rid of this Jesus? It is much better that one man die than that the whole nation be destroyed."

- 252.** Caiaphas recommended that Jesus should die that the whole nation might escape _____.

Verses 51 and 52. Caiaphas was High Priest that year. In the beginning, the person holding the office of High Priest was to be the mediator between man and God, but it had degenerated until it had become largely a ceremonial office with political significance. McGarvey is probably right when he says that Caiaphas spoke the words but like the prophet Balaam of old, did not realize their true meaning. The

author, John, adds the words, "And not for that nation (the Jewish nation) only, but that He should gather together also in one body, all the children of God that were scattered abroad."

253. When Caiaphas was saying that it was expedient that Jesus should die to save that nation, he was _____ that Jesus would die for all people everywhere, but he did not realize this.

Verses 53 and 54. From that time on, the Jews plotted how they might kill Jesus. Therefore, He did not travel openly in Judea, but retired with His disciples to Ephraim on the border of the wilderness some 16 to 18 miles northeast of Jerusalem.

254. Now the Jews were plotting to kill Jesus, so He walked no more _____ among them.

Verses 55 through 57. These verses merely relate the fact that the Feast of the Passover was approaching and when there were many people arriving in Jerusalem for this feast and Jesus was not seen among them, the Chief Priests and the Pharisees commanded that if anybody saw Jesus, they should immediately inform them of His whereabouts that they might arrest Him.

255. True or False? The determination of the Jewish Leaders to kill Jesus was shown by their strong efforts to force the people to betray His whereabouts.

ANSWERS:

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| 226. Brother | 241. True |
| 227. Loved | 242. Time |
| 228. Glory, Son | 243. Tears, sympathy |
| 229. Glory, faith | 244. Healing |
| 230. False | 245. True |
| 231. True | 246. Protested |
| 232. Life, courage | 247. Faith |
| 233. Four days, comfort | 248. False |
| 234. Obligations | 249. True |
| 235. Faith | 250. Believed |
| 236. True | 251. Power |
| 237. Believe, believe | 252. Destruction |
| 238. Quickly, went | 253. Prophesying |
| 239. Followed | 254. Openly |
| 240. Same words, reproach | 255. True |