

REFLECTION GUIDE

JOHN 11:1-44 | THE RESURRECTION LIFE

KEY TERMS

Mary / Martha / Lazarus - Mary, Martha, and Lazarus are siblings who lived in Bethany, about two miles from Jerusalem. This story and others (see John 12:1-8 & Luke 10:38-41) reveal Jesus' special affection for this family. Interestingly, John notes that Mary is the one who anointed the Lord (v. 2), even though he doesn't tell that story until chapter 12, suggesting that this event was already well-known to his readers.

Resurrection - Many Jews—including the Pharisees but not Sadducees—believed in a final *resurrection* at the end of the age (vv. 24-25). By saying *I am the resurrection*, Jesus is claiming to be the one who brings this resurrection and makes it possible. When he raises Lazarus, it's a foretaste of the resurrection to come for those who believe in him.

DID YOU KNOW?

In first-century Jewish belief, it was thought that a person's "soul" lingered for three days after death, with hope that they might wake up again. John says Jesus performed his miracle after *four days* (v. 39), which highlights that what took place was resurrection not mere resuscitation.

SYNOPSIS

After an encounter with religious leaders which leads to many wanting to kill him, Jesus receives word that his friend Lazarus is ill (v. 3). Two days after hearing the news, Jesus wants to travel to Lazarus' hometown of Bethany, but his disciples are concerned about the potential danger of going back near to Jerusalem (vv. 7-8). As he's arriving in Bethany, Martha comes out to meet Jesus saying *Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died* (v. 22). Jesus responds to Martha telling her Lazarus *will rise again* (v. 23), but Martha assumes Jesus is referring to future resurrection. This interaction prompts Jesus to make the statement *I am the resurrection and the life* (v. 25), suggesting that he is the one through whom resurrection to eternal life can and will come. As Jesus approaches the tomb he weeps, an example of Jesus' humanity (v. 35). And, after calling *Lazarus, come out*, Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead, a powerful display of divinity (vv. 43-44). Old Testament prophets occasionally raised the dead (see 1 Kings 17:17-24 & 2 Kings 4:18-37), but only by invoking God's power and authority—Jesus raises Lazarus with his own power and authority because Jesus is God and has power and authority over even death itself.

GOING DEEPER

Read 1 Corinthians 15:20-26. Paul teaches that Jesus' resurrection is the first-fruits of what is to come for all who believe. How does Jesus raising Lazarus in John 11 point ahead to his own resurrection and our future hope? In what ways does this passage strengthen your trust in Jesus' power over death and give you hope for eternity?

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

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LEARNING THE WORD

1. Read John 11:1-8. Make 3-5 quick observations. How are relationships portrayed? What is the focus?
2. In verses 5-6, we are meant to feel some tension. If Jesus' loved them, why would he wait? From an earthly perspective, how would you feel if you were Mary and Martha and found this out? From an heavenly perspective, how would this look different?
3. Read John 11:32-45. What details catch your attention? What would it have been like to witness?
4. What words or phrases in these verses describe Jesus' humanity? What do you learn about *who* he is from this experience? What difference might this make in your trusting him?

LIVING THE WORD

5. Jesus says that he delays his visit until after Lazarus has died so that "you may believe" (v. 14) and that "they may believe" (v. 42). How do you feel about all that Mary, Martha, and Lazarus experience to achieve this goal? Does this trial and struggle seem worth it? Why or why not?
6. Read John 11:25-26, which is the fifth "I am" statement of Jesus in the Gospel of John. Consider the gospel presentation Jesus makes in these two verses, and answer the following:
 - Who does Jesus claim to be? _____
 - What is being offered by Jesus? _____
 - To whom is this available? _____
 - What must be done to receive this? _____
7. What difference does the resurrection make? If you believe this is the reality of life in Christ, how should resurrection speak to your current life situation? How would this inform your perspective on the events of your day-to-day living?