

Week 25

In Him is Life

When Martha saw Jesus she said that if He had been there earlier her brother would still be alive because she knew that whatever Jesus asked of God, God would give Him. This demonstrated that she had faith in Jesus as a miracle worker and teacher but did not understand that His divinity. Jesus told her that her brother would rise again and she agreed he would at the resurrection. Then Jesus made this startling claim "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, do you believe this?" Martha responded with Yes, Lord, I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God, even He who comes into the world."

John 11:28-30

Now Martha returned to her home to get Mary to come out to meet Jesus. She spoke secretly to Mary perhaps in hopes that the Jews who were there to comfort her would not realize He had returned.

John 11:31

This indicates that it must have been a custom to go to the tomb to mourn. Please remember that the Jews of Jesus time for the most part, believed that death was the end.

John 11:32

Mary said the same thing Martha had said; she too was convinced that Jesus could have prevented Lazarus death. She had no idea that death was reversible.

John 11:33

Even though I have been stressing the importance of knowing that Jesus is fully God all through this study, right here please note that this verse says also that He was fully man. He sympathized with their mourning and sorrow and was deeply moved, or agitated, angered. He has all the feelings, passions and affections of man, under perfect control. What was the cause of the agitation? I believe, as do many commentators that He was angered at the effect of death on His friends. The bible says even now He is touched by our suffering and sorrow. Friends, He did not leave His manhood behind when He ascended; in heaven we will see Him perfect man and perfect God.

I cannot explain how these two natures work or influence each other. One thing is clear; there is nothing wrong with sorrowing and mourning the death of a loved one, we are instructed not to mourn as one who has no hope when we mourn a believer.

John 11:34

Jesus knew where Lazarus was buried, He may have asked this to give proof to those standing there that there was no prearranged plan to this miracle.

And so Jesus, His disciples and a large crowd of mourners, including Mary and Martha went to the tomb.

John 11:35

And this proves His sympathy with us.

John 11:36

Apparently some of the Jews who came out from Jerusalem admired what a good friend Jesus was to Mary and Martha, Jesus love is obvious to those gathered there. Jesus loves you when you suffer, suffering is not a punishment. Some of them must have been present when He healed the blind beggar as they have referred to that miracle.

John 11:37

And here is the other crowd, the ones determined to never have anything good to say about Him. Remember John is quoting those standing around Who are essentially saying, "Can someone who can heal blindness prevent death?"

John 11:38-39

Typically a tomb was a cave and when a burial took place a stone was placed over the opening. This was a test of faith for Martha, she could not believe He would tell someone to open the tomb. He could have ordered the stone to move and it would have, however, He asked some standing there to remove the stone and I am sure the odor that came from that cave left no doubt that Lazarus was dead and decaying.

John 11:40

Here Jesus is telling us the purpose of this miracle, to bring glory to God by believing in the One He has sent.

John 11:41-42

John continues the narrative. I can imagine that as he was writing this and recalling the amazing experience that day, he still could hardly believe what he had seen and the excitement of it. Rather than make any request Jesus praises God His Father and lets everyone know that He is in constant communication and He always and only does what the Father wills. Jesus simply is saying for the sake of those standing around there that this miracle proves He is divine, He is Messiah.

John 11:43

Jesus cried out means He yelled or spoke loudly. Here in the presence of a large crowd of people a man dead 4 days is restored to life.

John 11:44

The effects of His words are seen immediately, as soon as Jesus called him, Lazarus came out. That a dead man could hear a voice, obey it, get up and walk out alive is

totally contrary to nature. God alone could cause such a thing to happen. How his decay could be reversed, heart could begin beating, his lungs begin breathing, is beyond explanation.

John 11:44

Can you imagine how this looked? Out he came wrapped like a mummy, maybe crawling on his knees, however he came, the slow shuffling movement of a man wrapped up in grave clothes would have been an unforgettable sight. His face was still covered so he was probably stumbling as well.

Jesus had to tell the stunned people to unwrap him so he could see and walk.

John 11:45

This astonishing event convinced many that Jesus was the Messiah, they believed, you will be able to ask them about this experience someday in heaven.

John 11:46

People always are divided about Jesus. Do you find yourself divided from your friends or family since you believed, it has always been this way?

While some believed, some had to run to the Pharisees and report this amazing miracle, they had to report this dangerous man. Instead of being softened they were hardened and angry to see more proof that Jesus is Messiah. Then there were those who knew who He was but didn't want Him to be their Messiah for multiple reasons. They didn't want to lose their own power, He was not rich and attractive, He was not corrupt as they were, and He interfered with their plans.

It's difficult to understand how eyewitnesses to this event could have any doubt. Friends, never suppose that seeing a miracle will convert some souls. I think of the Parable Jesus told about the Rich man and Lazarus; He said, "If they did not believe Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe though someone is raised from the dead". Isn't this like the 2 thieves on the on the crosses when Jesus was crucified? One believed to eternal life, one did not believe to eternal damnation.

John 11:47-48

Isn't this a horrible picture of human nature? Never was there more ignorant, short sightedness than this. They pursued their own ends while they pretended they were concerned about the people and leaders everywhere and for all time have been doing this very thing. It was Rome's practice to let conquered people practice their religions as long as it did not cause a disturbance. Of course the miracles of Jesus did cause disturbance, what if the people would recognize Jesus as their Messiah-King? These Jewish leaders were afraid of losing their power and privilege.

The very thing they were trying to avoid, that is, the Romans taking away their place and their nation happened around 40 years later. The Romans destroyed Jerusalem,

and the temple. After Jesus had made the one final and perfect sacrifice for sin, the Temple ceremonies for sacrifices would have been blasphemy, God did not allow that to happen. The Jews rejected their only salvation in favor of peace with Rome, but as a result they lost their temple and were expelled from their land. All this had already happened when John wrote these words.

John 11:49-50

This verse shows the disorderly state of the Jewish religion at this time. According to the Law of Moses, the High Priest should have been a descendent of Aaron, Moses brother, and held his office for life. At this time, it appears to have been an elected office, with all the corruption, which often accompanies such election.

In other words he is saying, "It is better for one man to die whether innocent or not, than the whole nation should be troubled or even perish". Get him out of the way before he gets us all in trouble with Rome. For political expediency Christ was crucified. And friends whatever is morally wrong can never be politically right.

John 11:51-52

This is John's commentary. God used this wicked man to prophesy Jesus' death. Jesus did die for the whole nation and not only the Jews but also for all mankind.

John 11:53-54

They had decided to kill Jesus, the only problem was finding a time and a way to do it. These men were under God's control, He permitted them to exercise power for a short time. The time God planned for Jesus to die was on Passover, at the very minute the Passover lamb was slain for sin on the altar in the temple our Perfect Lamb of God was dying on the cross.

It's difficult to say how much time elapsed between what is recorded in verse 53 and verse 54. We have more commentary now by John and this is the turning point in Jesus ministry. From here on He spent His time teaching His disciples privately in a village possibly near Bethel. So He spent His last days in Galilee where He had begun and stayed there until the time of the Passover, the time of His death.

John 11:55-57

This Passover probably occurred about 30 AD, the year Jesus died. These people would have come to Jerusalem a few days before the Feast for purification ceremonies. Everyone in Jerusalem during the Passover celebration knew that the chief priests and Pharisees wanted to arrest Jesus and the people were under strict orders to report Jesus whereabouts.

Even when confronted point-blank with the power of Jesus' deity, some refused to believe. These eyewitnesses not only rejected Jesus, they plotted His murder. They

were so hardened that they preferred to reject God's Son rather than admit they were wrong.

Where are you in this issue of Jesus Christ? Do you believe He is the Son of God, God incarnate?

Have you spent all your life believing it doesn't matter what you believe, as long as you are a good person? That simply is not true. God has provided a way for you to be forgiven and obtain eternal life. He will not accept your version of holiness.

Perhaps you have belonged to a religious group, who do not believe Jesus is divine, but just a good man or a teacher or prophet. The bible will not support that belief. If you reject God's provision for you, He will reject you.

But what a glorious, abundant life awaits all those who believe, who trust, who endure to the end. This life will seem so short as you enjoy all the wonderful benefits Christ won for you. Friends, because of Jesus we have hope and a future.

Chapters 12-21 in John's gospel cover the last week of Jesus life. The public ministry of Jesus had ended and teachings John recorded in those chapters were given in private. You can read Matthew chapters 20-25 to learn more of the teachings of Jesus to His disciples during this time.