

The Passion Week of Christ

Lesson 1

Raising of Lazarus

Read John 11:1-17

1. There are 6 Marys in the Gospels. This is Mary and Martha of Bethany from Luke 10:38-42 and John 12:2-3. Contrast Mary with Martha from the account in Luke 10. Good works are important, but what is more important: external work or an inner devotion and worship of Christ?
2. In John 11:4 and 11:14-15, we are given the reason for Lazarus' impending death. It is basically the same reason as the man's blindness in John 9:3. What is the reason? According to the way the author presents these miracles in John, did Jesus do these miracles because it is God's will for all people to be healed and happy, or did He have a teaching and revealing purpose in them?
3. In Jesus' previous miracles we have seen His authority over nature, His authority over illness, and His authority in meeting all human needs. We have also seen Him as the bread of life, our living water, and the light of the world. This miracle in John 11 will be the climaxing sign of His identity. In this miracle, Jesus is established as: Lord of _____ and Conqueror of _____.
4. Notice in v.5 and 6 there are seemingly contradictory statements made: (paraphrased) "I know that my beloved Lazarus is dying and needs me immediately, so therefore I will stay here." Do we have the capacity to always understand God's ways and His timing? Was there a higher purpose in what Jesus did beyond what Mary, Martha, and the disciples could understand (Psalm 147:5; Proverbs 3:5; Ecclesiastes 3:11; Isaiah 40:12, 55:8-9; I Corinthians 2:16)?
5. The religious leaders had rejected Jesus as their Messiah and accused Him of blasphemy. Many times, upon impulse they sought to kill Jesus, but it was not God's time. What is the disciples' objection to returning to the area of Jerusalem in v.8? What does Jesus' response in v.9-10 mean? See also John 9:4-5, 12:35.

6. Jesus refers to Lazarus' death as "fallen asleep" in v.11. What does this tell you about Jesus' attitude concerning physical death? What does Paul say about physical death and resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15:20-23, 53-54?

7. We tend to live our life in the same attitude as Thomas in John 11:16. We believe in God, but it doesn't seem to make a difference. We don't live like God has a purpose in what is going on. Sometimes we get very cynical, or have a gloomy outlook as did Thomas, who perhaps was feeling, "Nothing good can come of this. There is no hope, but I'm going to stumble along anyway because I have no choice." When we pray and God doesn't act, what should we conclude? Is the purpose of prayer to bend God's will to our own or to conform our will to His? What did Thomas learn through this miracle in John 11?

Read John 11:18-44

8. In vs.17-27, whose faith did Jesus challenge? In vs.28-35, whose grief did Jesus share? In vs.38-44, whose life did Jesus restore? What were the two reactions that the onlookers had to the same event (John 11:45-48)?

9. In vs.25-26, Jesus gave to Martha and all who hear and read His words the truth about eternal life. According to His statements in John 8:31-32, what is the truth about life here and now? What is truth (John 17:17)? What does "abide" mean (John 15:4-5, 10; 1 John 2:4-6)?

10. Notice in John 11:42 Jesus prayed aloud for the sake of the people watching. For whose benefit was this miracle done? For whose benefit does the author record it? What impact did this miracle have on Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday (John 12:9-11, 17-19)? What impact did this miracle have on the religious leaders (John 11:48-50, 57)? Therefore, would you say this miracle had a greater purpose than restoring Lazarus?