



That you may believe... **Leaders Guide for Week 10**

(Times are approximate) – start time: _____

Welcome

- Have people share something that has happened since last week that encouraged them about doing this Bible study.

(+7 min)

Opening prayer

- Praise, adoration, thanksgiving, and petition is a good pattern for prayer. You might even ask others to pray. If you've been doing that --- great!

(+2 min)

Opening Comments

- There are several Scriptural passage references in this lesson for your enjoyment if you have time to read them.
- In this chapter of John there are several people mentioned besides Jesus: Lazarus, Mary, Martha, and Thomas.
- Following are some interesting notes about each.
- **The person Lazarus:** He was the brother of Martha and Mary of Bethany.
- This account in the Gospel of John tells of his death and resurrection.
- A second account in John describes him as sitting with Jesus in the family home after the resurrection.
- Twice John's gospel records Jesus' love for Lazarus (**John 11:3, 5**).
- **The person Mary:** There are six Mary's in Scripture. The Mary in **John 11** is Martha and Lazarus' sister.
- There is nothing known about Mary's family background.
- Mary was probably younger than Martha since the house is referred to as Martha's.
- However, she could have inherited it from an unmentioned husband... scholars don't know for sure.
- It was Mary that sat at Jesus' feet to listen to Him teach.
- When Jesus comes after Lazarus dies, Mary is so distraught that she stays in the house.
- We will see in **John 12:3** that Mary shows her gratitude for Lazarus' resurrection by anointing Jesus' feet with "*a pound of very costly oil of spikenard.*"
- Judas called this anointing extravagant but Jesus rebuked him saying, "*Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial*" (**John 12:7**).
- **The person Martha:** Martha was Mary's and Lazarus' sister.
- All three were faithful followers of Jesus.
- Martha and Mary expressed their love for Jesus in different ways.
- The account in **Luke 10:39**, demonstrates they had clashes of temperaments.
- Mary sat at Jesus' feet while Martha "*was distracted with much serving*" (**Luke 10:40**)
- Jesus recognized that Martha was working for Him, but He reminded her that she was permitting her outward activities to hinder her spiritually.
- That is something we need to be careful of today.

(+7 min)

- **The person Thomas:** Thomas was one of the twelve apostles called *Didymus* which is Greek for *twin*.
- He is probably best known for his inability to believe Jesus' resurrection.
- Because of his unbelief, he became known as "doubting Thomas."
- When Thomas was invited by Jesus to touch the nail prints and put his hand in Jesus' side, he responded with "*My Lord and my God.*" (**John 20:28**)
- The great church father Augustine said, "He doubted so that we might believe."
- According to tradition, Thomas spread the gospel in Parthia and Persia, where he died.
- Later tradition places Thomas in India, where he was martyred.
- The Mar Thoma church in India traces its origins to Thomas.
- Biblical definitions for:
- **Resurrection** – being raised from the dead. Resurrection has three primary meaning in the Bible:
- 1) *Miraculous healings*. In this usage, resurrection refers to individuals who have been brought back to life (resuscitated) in this present world.
- Some examples in the Old Testament are Elijah performed such a resurrection in Zarephath with the widow's son (**1 Kings 17:20-24**), by Elisha did a similar resurrection with the Shunammite woman's son (**2 Kings 4:32-37**) and when a dead man touched Elisha's bones (**2 Kings 13:21**) the dead man stood up.
- Also, when Peter called to Tabitha (Dorcas) to get up she did (**Acts 9:40-41**), and when Paul brought the man Eutychus back after falling out a window (**Acts 20:9-12**).
- 2) *Our Lord's resurrection of Christ* is the basis for the doctrine of resurrection (**1 Cor. 15:12-19**).
- 3) *The hope of a general resurrection* as the New Testament consistently teaches.
- The hope in the resurrection of every true believer based upon the resurrection of Jesus Christ who was the "*firstborn from the dead*" (**1 Cor. 15:12-58; Col. 1:18; 1 Thess., 4:14-18; 1 Pet. 1:3-5**).
- **Tomb** – an elaborate burial place for the dead.
- In Palestine ordinary people were buried in shallow graves covered by stones or a stone slab.
- People of importance and wealth were placed in tombs.
- Tombs were of two types – natural caves and those hewn out of rock.
- Tombs were usually at a distance from the places where the living dwelt.
- In special cases, such as David and other kings, they might be situated within the city walls (**1 Kings 2:10**) or in a garden near a person's house (**2 Kings 21:18**).
- Usually they were outside the city or town (**Luke 8:27**), but they might be in a garden (**John 19:41**).
- **Grave clothes** – strips of cloth wrapped around a corpse in preparation for burial.
- When Lazarus was raised from the dead by Jesus, he emerged from the tomb "*bound hand and foot by grave clothes*" (**John 11:44**).
- The "Expositors Bible Commentary, the New Testament" introduces this chapter as follows:
- "*The account of the raising of Lazarus (John 11:1-16) is the climactic sign in the Gospel of John.*
- *Each of the seven signs illustrates some particular aspect of Jesus' divine authority, but this one exemplifies His power over the last and most irresistible enemy of humanity--death.*
- *For this reason it is given a prominent place in the Gospel.*
- *It is also extremely significant because it precipitated the decision of Jesus' enemies to do away with him.*
- *Furthermore, this episode contains a strong personal command to believe in Jesus in a crisis, when such belief would be most difficult.*
- *All that preceded is preparatory; all that follows it is the unfolding of a well-marked plot."*¹
- Hopefully this information will help you appreciate the people and situations taking place in this chapter of John.

(+7 min)

Discussion of the Study Lesson – (~31 min)

This week's title: The Resurrection and the Life - **John 11:1-44**

Highlighted verse: - *"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies."* **John 11:25**

Day 1: Read John 11:1-44

1. **Read John 11:1-44** at least once, jotting down initial observations.

- Try to have everyone share at least one or two observations.
- This tends to get people involved in the conversation quicker.

(+4 min)

Day 2: Read John 11:1-16

1. **Read verses 4-6:**

a) In **verse 4**, what does Jesus state about the purpose of Lazarus' sickness?

- Purpose is God's glory.
- God's glory is the purpose of everything.
- When we see things happening we often see ourselves or others at the center of these events.
- We should see things from the perspective of the glory of God.

(+2 min)

b) In **verse 5** Jesus expresses his love for Martha, Mary and Lazarus. In **verse 6**, after hearing Lazarus is ill he stays 2 days longer! Why do you think Jesus delayed?

- Jesus knew He was going to raise Lazarus from the dead.
- His delay was not a lack a love but part of His plan.
- The miracle of Lazarus is the 7th and last sign in the Gospel of John.
- This is the climatic sign.
- The signs are so that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God....
- Jesus understood he would raise Lazarus from the dead and that this story would point to His purpose.

(+3 min)

2. Jesus' disciples do not seem to fully understand what Jesus is teaching. What examples do you see of the disciple's limited understanding in **verses 1-16**? How does Jesus handle the disciple's lack of understanding?

- Jesus responds to the disciples questions
- Jesus teaches through his words and through events.
- Jesus is slowly moving the disciples to greater and clearer belief.

(+3 min)

Day 3: Read John 11:17-44

1. This chapter includes another 'I am' statement. What are the implications of Jesus' asserting, "I am the resurrection and the life" (vs. 25)?

- Jesus is moving Martha from abstract belief to personalized belief in Him.
- There is neither resurrection nor eternal life outside of Him.

(+2 min)

2. Jesus knew He was going to raise Lazarus from the dead. Why do you think He wept (vs.35)? What do we learn about Jesus from this short verse?

- We see Jesus' great love and compassion.
- It seems unlikely that Jesus' tears were for Lazarus since he would soon raise him from the dead.
- It seems his tears were for sin, death and unbelief.

(+3 min)

Day 4: Read John 20:31

Consider how **John 11:1-44** relates to John's purpose in writing this Gospel. "...that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name" (**John 20:31**).

1. In **John 25-26** Jesus stands before Martha and asks her a deeper question. What is He offering?

- Jesus wants Martha to believe in Him.
- Intellectual assent (creeds, theological assertions...) is part of true faith.
- There is a true content to what we believe.
- But Jesus wants us to move beyond mere intellectual assent to a personalized belief in Him.

(+3 min)

2. Examine references to life and death in **11:25-26**. What kind of life is Jesus referring to?

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(+3 min)

Day 5: Read John 11:1-42

1. How does the story of Lazarus provide a picture of our salvation?

- All of us were at one time spiritually dead.
- We were unable to do anything for our own salvation.
- God is deeply moved by our separation from Him due to our sin.
- Because of God's great love he sent Jesus.
- God gives new life to all of those He calls.

(+4 min)

2. The Gospel of John is repeatedly asking for a response. Jesus asked Martha, "Do you believe this?" Would you like to make a decision to believe? If so, please contact Pastor Malcolm . If you already believe, write a one paragraph testimony describing what you believe. Consider Martha's answer in **verse 27**.

(+4 min)

Closing Comments

- John's recording of this fantastic miracle might be called the final *sign* by which Jesus revealed Himself before the all-encompassing *sign* of His resurrection.
- It took place during the last winter of Jesus' earthly life.
- It marked the highest point of his ministry near Jerusalem and His concluding appeal to the people of Israel by means of performing miracles.
- The division crystallized between those who believed and those who did not believe following this final supreme *sign* of His divine power.
- Those who believed were confirmed in their faith.
- Those who did not believe reached the climax of their hostility when the Sanhedrin convened to make preparation to eliminate Jesus and His influence from their people. (**11:46-53** if you read the entire chapter).
- There is a threefold significance to the *sign* of Jesus raising Lazarus.
- 1) It demonstrates the truth of Jesus' claims to be the Lord and giver of life.
- It gives the most powerful commentary on **John 5:21, 25, and 28** and the greatest proof of any claim He had made.
- 2) Lazarus being raised gave a glimpse the truth of His resurrection at the last day of all who believe in Him.
- There is a difference though between Lazarus' raising and the resurrection of all believers.
- The difference is that Lazarus was raised in his perishable earthly body (which later died again) but believers will be raised with an imperishable body that has been substantially changed by God (**1 Cor. 6:14; 15:51-53; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 John 3:2-3**).
- 3) The resurrection of Lazarus from death to life on this earth symbolized Christian conversion.
- The pattern of every true Christian life is that of being "made alive" from the state of being "dead in transgressions and sins" (**Eph. 2:1,5**) and "raised" to live a new quality of life on earth in preparation for the full redemption from all sin in heaven (**Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12; 3:1**).
- Lazarus' death was for God's glory and His Son Jesus Christ's glory. (**11:4**)
- Through Lazarus' death Jesus was able to save this little family of two sisters and a brother.
- All three were saved during this experience.
- Salvation through death and resurrection – the same is true for us today but our salvation is through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- Lazarus eventually died again but Christ lives for eternity and all believers are heirs to Him and saints by the washing of His blood.
- To God is the glory forever!

(+5 min)

Closing Prayer

- Again, it is always good to share something that has been said during the discussion as the Holy Spirit leads you in the closing prayer. However, He may not lead you to do that this time, always be open to His leading.

(+1 min)

¹“Expositor’s Bible Commentary, New Testament,” Frank E. Gaebelin and J. D. Douglas, 1992, Zondervan Reference Software, Version 2.6.