

The Death and Resurrection of Lazarus

Part 2

John 11:20-32

Martha Went To Meet Jesus

John 11:20 Martha therefore, when she heard that Jesus was coming, went to meet Him, but Mary stayed at the house.

- “stayed” is literally “sat in the house.” It comes from the Greek “kathzomai” [kah **theh** zah mi] meaning “to sit down, seat one’s self, sit.” The ESV has “remained seated in the house.”
 - This was a common posture of those who were mourning. (Job 2:12, 13).
1. Martha had great faith in Jesus and was anxious to see Him.
 2. She left the house upon hearing Jesus was coming and went out to meet Him before He arrived in Bethany.
 3. Mary remained in the house mourning the death of her brother and receiving the consolation of friends.
 4. From John 11:28 it appears Mary did not know Jesus was near Bethany, but Martha had received the good news.
 5. Some, it would seem, were watching for Jesus and hoping He would come.

John 11:21 Martha then said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.

1. Some understand the words of Martha as a rebuke to Jesus for not being there sooner.
 - a. She knew where Jesus had been and knew there had been a two day delay. John 11:6.
 - b. This is possible, but her words were more likely words expressing regret Jesus had not been there sooner rather than a rebuke.
2. Martha was sure Jesus could have saved her brother from dying if He had been present.
3. She still had confidence Jesus could do something as indicated by the following verse. (Jn. 11:22).
4. Though she had great faith in Jesus, she did not seem to have the same faith as the nobleman. (Jn. 4:49, 50).
 - a. She believed her brother would have been healed if Jesus had been present.
 - b. The nobleman believed Jesus could heal his child without being present.

John 11:22 "Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You."

- “Even now” is from “nun” [noon] meaning “now,” but “even now” fits the context.
1. Martha here demonstrated great faith in Jesus.

2. She was confident God would grant whatever Jesus would ask of Him.
3. It is hard to know what she had in mind, but it seems she was not expecting Jesus to raise her brother from the dead. (Jn. 11:24).
4. It is very probable she knew of the other resurrections performed by Jesus, but none of the other resurrections involved one who had been dead four days.
5. She still may have been hoping or wishing for a miracle, but the context suggests this was a very doubtful hope in her thinking since her brother had been dead so long.
6. She later objected when they were about to open the tomb of her brother knowing her brother's body was already decaying.. (Jn. 11:39).

John 11:23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

1. Jesus promises her brother would "rise again," but she did not understand it to mean this promise was going to be immediately fulfilled.
2. She believed Jesus was speaking of the resurrection at the end of time, that is, "on the last day." See Jn. 11:24.

Martha's Response

John 11:24 Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day."

1. It is clear that at least some or many of the Jews believed in a resurrection. (Matt. 22:23-33; Acts 23:8).
2. Daniel had prophesied the future general resurrection. (Dan. 12:2).

Dan 12:2 "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace {and} everlasting contempt.

3. David believed He would be with God "forever." (Psa. 23:6).
4. The psalmist had faith he would be rescued from the grave. (Psa. 49:15).

Ps 49:15 But God will redeem my soul [corpse] from the power of Sheol [the grave], For He will receive me. Selah.

- a. Here the word "soul" is used in the sense of "a dead body, a corpse."
- b. The Hebrew "nephesh" could have the meaning of "a dead body, a corpse." (Num. 6:6).
5. Abraham and the Patriarchs were looking for a heavenly country. (Heb. 11:13-16).
6. Jesus had also spoken of the universal resurrection of the righteous and wicked to come. (Jn. 5:28, 29).
7. Her words echoed the words of Jesus in John 6. (Jn. 6:39, 40, 44).
8. Jesus did not promise her He would immediately raise her brother from the dead.

Jesus Spoke These Words Of Hope

John 11:25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies [physically],

1. Jesus is the source of life.
 - a. He is the source of physical life. (Jn. 1:3).
 - b. He is the source of spiritual life.

1) Jesus stressed this fact in John 5:25, 26.

John 5:25 "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.

John 5:26 "For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself;

2) Those who have submitted to Christ have "passed out of death into life." (Jn. 5:24).

John 5:24 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

- c. Jesus is the source of abundant life. (Jn. 10:10).

John 10:10 "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have {it} abundantly.

- d. Jesus is the source of the everlasting life to come. (Jn. 3:16, 36; 5:28, 29; 6:47).

2. Jesus promised that those who put their faith in Him would live again even if they died physically.
3. The wicked also would be raised when Christ comes again (Jn. 5:29), but there will be no blessing for them. (Jn. 5:29; Matt. 25:46; 2 Thess. 1:8,9).
4. Saving faith is not a mere intellectual faith.
 - a. It involves receiving Him. (Jn. 1:12,13).

John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, {even} to those who believe in His name,

John 1:13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

- b. It involves self-denial. (Matt. 16:24).
- c. It involves being "born again" or "from above." (Jn. 3:3,5).
- d. It also involves obeying Jesus. (Jn. 3:36). See Matt. 7:21; Lk. 6:46; Heb. 5:9.

John 11:26 and everyone [Jew or Gentile] who lives and believes in Me will never die [suffer spiritual or eternal death]. Do you believe this?"

- "will never die" is literally "never die into the age."

- They most likely did not understand the word “everyone” to include Gentiles, but this was the meaning of Jesus.
 - Salvation is for Jews and Gentiles who believe in Jesus. (Jn. 10:16,17; Mk. 16:15; Matt. 28:19; Rom. 1:16).
1. It is clear from the preceding verse that Jesus was not affirming those who believed in Him would not die physically.
 2. The idea must be that death would not be the permanent state of those who trusted in Him.
 3. “Die” here is used in a spiritual sense.
 - a. Jesus used the words “will never die” not meaning believers would not experience physical death.
 - b. The words “will never die” refer to the second death of eternal misery. (Rev. 2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8).
 4. Those who keep trusting and obeying Jesus will never die spiritually.
 5. The Bible is plain that we are destined to die physically. (Eccles. 3:2; Heb. 9:27).
 6. The question “Do you believe this?” is a question for all in every age.
 - a. Faith, in Christ and the resurrection, is vital to the victorious life.
 - b. Failure to believe in Jesus means to die in sins without hope. (Jn. 8:24).

Martha’s Confession And The Calling Of Mary

John 11:27 She said to Him, "Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, *even* He who comes into the world [as its Savior and Deliverer]."

1. Martha recognized Jesus as “Lord” and exclaimed “I have believed.”
 - a. The NASB correctly translated the perfect tense “I have believed.”
 - b. Martha already believed Jesus was “the Christ, the Son of God.”
 - c. Her understanding of Jesus was much greater than most others.
2. Martha made a great confession much like the ones Peter had made. (Matt. 16:17; Jn. 6:69).
3. Martha’s confession was three-fold: (1) You are the Christ (2) the Son of God (3) even He who comes into the world.
4. John the Baptist had also made this confession. (Jn. 1:34).

John 1:34 "I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God."

5. Andrew, Nathaniel and the Samaritan woman made similar statements or confessions. (Jn. 1:41, 49; 4:29).

John 1:41 He found first his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means Christ).

John 1:49 Nathanael answered Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel."

John 4:29 "Come, see a man who told me all the things that I {have} done; this is not the Christ, is it?"

4. The confession Martha made is exactly like the one John wrote this gospel to produce. (Jn. 20:30, 31).
5. The expression "even He who comes into world" occurs several times in the Scriptures.
 - a. See John 6:14; Matt. 11:3.

John 6:14 Therefore when the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world."

Matt 11:3 and said to Him, "Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?"

- b. Jesus used the words elsewhere. (John 9:39; 16:28; 18:37).

John 9:39 And Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind."

John 16:28 "I came forth from the Father and have come into the world; I am leaving the world again and going to the Father."

John 18:37 Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say {correctly} that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

- c. Martha meant He had come into this sinful world as its Savior and Deliverer.

Martha Went Away And Called Mary
Jesus Meets With Mary
11:28-32

John 11:28 When she had said this, she went away and called Mary her sister, saying secretly, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you."

1. Martha called her sister out of the house and away from the crowd to secretly tell her the good news about Jesus calling for her.
 - a. As already noted Mary likely did not know Jesus was near Bethany.
 - b. She had sent for Jesus and was still hopeful He would come.
 - c. She conveyed this "secretly" likely to give Mary an opportunity to spend some time with Jesus without the crowd.
 - d. It may have had something to do with the fact she knew there were those who wanted to arrest Jesus.
2. Martha rightly recognized Jesus as "the teacher." See Jn. 13:13.

John 13:13 "You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for {so} I am.

3. Nicodemus had earlier recognized Jesus was a teacher having come from God. (Jn. 3:1-2).
4. Jesus was addressed as "Teacher" several other times in this gospel. (Jn. 1:38; 8:4; 20:16).

Jn. 1:38 And Jesus turned and saw them following, and said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are You staying?"

Jn. 8:4 they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in adultery, in the very act.

Jn. 20:16 Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, "Rabboni!" (which means, Teacher).

5. "Teacher" is the Greek equivalent of "Rabbi." (Jn. 1:38; 3:2, 10; 13:13,14; 20:16).

John 11:29 And when she [Mary] heard it, she got up quickly and was coming to Him.

1. Mary quickly responded to the news that Jesus wanted to see her. (Jn. 11:28).
2. She had great faith in Jesus and was eager to speak to Him and receive comfort from Him.

John 11:30 Now Jesus had not yet come into the village [of Bethany], but was still in the place where Martha met Him.

1. Jesus had not yet arrived in the village of Bethany near Jerusalem.
2. He "was still in the place where Martha met Him."
 - a. It is not known how long He was there or why He remained or lingered for a time outside the village of Bethany.
 - b. This "place" of meeting mentioned here, is not revealed except it was near Bethany.

The Jews

John 11:31 Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and consoling her, when they saw that Mary got up quickly and went out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there.

1. The Jews were sincerely attempting to console Mary.
 - a. These were not followers of Christ, but friends of the family.
 - b. Some of them did come to believe in Christ. (Jn. 11:45).
2. When Mary quickly went out from their presence, they thought she was going "to the tomb to weep there."
3. Christians need to weep, but when the deceased is a faithful believer they should not weep as those who have "no hope." (1 Thess. 4:13).
4. It is not healthy to avoid weeping because this can create many emotional and health problems.

Mary Sees Jesus And Falls At His Feet

John 11:32 Therefore, when Mary came where Jesus was, she saw Him, and fell at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."

1. Mary falls down at the feet and expresses great confidence her brother would not have died if Jesus had been present.

2. She was not expecting Jesus to raise her brother from the dead.

3. She repeated what her sister had said. (Jn. 11:21).

John 11:21 Martha then said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.

4. Unlike Martha, her sister, she did not express faith in what Jesus could still do. (Jn. 11:22).

John 11:22 "Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You."

5. This does not necessarily mean she did not have the same faith as her sister, but there is no way of knowing for sure what she believed.

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