



## PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

# JOHN 11:17-32

## ASSURANCE OF VICTORY OVER DEATH—February 21, 2021

### INTRODUCTION/SYNOPSIS:

**Chapter 11:8-14** Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. He heard of Lazarus' sickness, but delayed going to see him for two days. After the 2 days Jesus told His disciples to get ready to go. The disciples protested Jesus' return to Judea because of the threat to His life. The last time He was there they tried to stone Him. Bethany is north of Judea. But Jesus alludes to the fact that His time on the earth is a final period of time and it cannot be changed. A person who walks in the light of God's Will cannot be harmed, but the person who walks at night with no light (darkness) will stumble without God's Light in him. After what Jesus said, He tells them, "*Our friend Lazarus is asleep and I'm going because I must wake him.*" Well, the disciples thought Lazarus was asleep physically and assumed that sleep was the best thing for his illness for him to recover. But Jesus had to plainly say that Lazarus was dead.

**Chapter 11:15-16** For the sake of the disciples, Jesus tells them that He's glad that He wasn't there when Lazarus died. Why? Because when He raises Lazarus from the dead, they will be astonished and believe. Thomas, called Didymus (Gr "twin"), encourages the disciples to go with Jesus, that they may die with Him. The outlook for safety in Judea looked dim to the disciples and Thomas felt that Jesus would be killed, and as a result they would be killed as well. Thomas was known as a doubting man, but he took the lead here by showing great courage and loyalty to Jesus which should be demonstrated by every believer.

### LESSON: I. A PURPOSEFUL DEATH JOHN 11:17-22

**11:17** Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already. When Jesus arrived, a messenger told Him that Lazarus had already been buried for four days. The fact that Lazarus had been dead that long only gives greater proof of the miracle and greater opportunity for people to believe. On the fourth day, decomposition of the body begins to set in. There will be no doubt about Lazarus being dead.

<sup>1</sup>Resurrection after three days of death proved to Jesus' opponents that He truly rose from the dead. Why? According to Jewish tradition, a person's soul/spirit remained with his/her dead body for three days. After three days, the soul/spirit departed. If Jesus' resurrection had occurred on the same day or even the next day, it would have been easier for His enemies to argue He had never truly died. Significantly, Jesus waited several days after Lazarus had died before He came to resurrect Lazarus, so that no one could deny the miracle.

**11:18** Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off:— The scene was on the outskirts of Bethany. Bethany was a village north of Judea about two miles (NIV) east of Jerusalem. Jesus had His reasons for not readily going into town; knowing the animosity against Him and not

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/why-three-days.html>  
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desiring to attract any undue disturbance, especially at this time. He still chose to take His time.

**11:19 And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. There were a tremendously amount of mourners (Jews) who had come to comfort the family.**

Back then in the Middle East, the dead were buried within 24hrs of death. Bodies were not embalmed, but were covered with spices and perfumes and wrapped with long lengths of cloth. And professional mourners were hired—at least one wailing woman and two flute players if you were rich. After burial the family, friends, and neighbors came back to the house to mourn with the bereaved for seven days.

**11:20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house.** Martha heard Jesus was coming, so, she ran out to meet Him. Jesus was finally close but not quite at the house. Was He too late? We see that there was a contrast between Martha and Mary. Martha was the woman of action and energy; the one loaded with initiative, which kept her busy, and she was the one who went out to meet Jesus. On the other hand, Mary was the meditative and thoughtful one, and she remained in the house to receive the mourners.

**11:21 Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.** Martha believed in Jesus. She even believed that if He had been there, Lazarus would not have died. Yet, she was disappointed! The point is:

- She believed but not to the point of resting in faith.
- She believed but it was limited.
- She believed but not fully entrusting the matter upon the One she called, no matter how it looked.

It was a questioning complaining faith which is a limited faith. It's a faith that questions Jesus' Lordship. It says to Jesus,

*'If you had been here; if you had acted differently; if you had done this or that, then this trial we're going through would not have happened. You could have prevented this if You had just come. We prayed, we trusted but You didn't come.'*

She might have been a little upset because Jesus didn't come immediately to heal her brother. So, let's look at our faith. We believe in healing for others, but not for our healing. Martha had faith to believe that Jesus had power to heal her brother from his sick bed, but not from the dead. This is also called limited faith. You have faith for one thing but not the other. She said, *"if you had been here,"* then... Can He do it? 'But he's dead.' Faith is faith! Just believe and don't fear of failure because it's always in God's hands; not ours. His plan is bigger than what we ask or think. We are not God, He is!!!

**11:22 But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.** Martha knew that whatever Jesus asked of God, God would give it to Him. She knew that much. But Jesus' ultimate purpose will now be revealed.

## II. A RESURRECTION PROMISED JOHN 11:23-27

**11:23 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.** This was Jesus encouraging Martha, but He was really speaking about the present, but she had not quite understood. Yes, He could have been there to heal Lazarus, but Jesus is getting her ready to really believe on who He really is; getting her ready to not doubt about anything; getting her ready to see with her own eyes the miracle that was possible all alone of what she had asked for—her brother to rise from his bed of affliction; his sickness, but this time from the dead.

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**11:24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.** Martha believed in the Resurrection, so, she thought Jesus meant that Lazarus would rise in the resurrection at the last day. This is one of our fundamentals of faith as a Christian—The Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Christ. Right then it may have been a little comfort, however, the promise of a future resurrection and reunion is not always the comfort we're looking for when a loved one has departed. Jesus was trying to get her faith into a **now** faith, a living faith. What was needed was the knowledge that Jesus, the very One who stood before her, **is "the Resurrection and the Life."**

**11:25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life:—** This is Jesus' **fifth I AM** statement. Jesus finally and plainly makes this defining declaration to her. There is no doubt about who He is now. **The One standing before her is the Resurrection and the Life.** Jesus is the very being and essence; the very power and energy of life opening up to her. (1) He can give and sustain life as He wills (2) and He can resurrect and restore life as He wills.

**11:25b ...he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:—** We just heard the great defining declaration, (His great promise) that all she has to do now is genuinely believe. **Two declarations** were made:

1. **He that believeth in me (Jesus)**
  - a. though he were dead
  - b. yet shall he live

Just as this world exists, another world exists—a spiritual world—a spiritual realm—a world that the Bible calls heaven. It's where God/Jesus, the angels, and other heavenly beings, and all those who have gone on before us (died) now live, **that believe in Jesus.** **The point is:** Because Jesus is the Resurrection and Life, Lazarus is therefore able to get up from the grave. This was the **now faith** purpose in which Jesus had come to bring Martha into.

**11:26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?—** I now see another reason why Jesus stayed on the outskirts of town, so that Martha's faith could come alive to the Life-giving Savior. Remember she was the first to come out to meet Jesus. And they are not even at the tomb yet, but still on the outskirts of the town. The second declaration:

2. **Whosoever liveth and believeth in me (Jesus)**
  - a. shall never die
  - b. believe this?

This was the time to SHOUT! Jesus needed to meet Martha, on the outskirts of town so He could have a one-on-one conversation. After He had said all of this to Martha, she had no time to bring doubt into the situation or mull over or ponder it. Either you are in or out; believe or not! Jesus had used the word "**believe**" 3 times in verses 25-26. He really wanted to unlock all the layers of her heart so she could get it!

Quicker than a believer can blink an eye, he passes from this world into the next world. He is transported and transferred into heaven. The believer never loses a single moment of consciousness. There is only one difference. The idea is that the believer shall never taste death for he is immediately perfected: transformed, made perfect, and more alive than ever before.

The crucial point of receiving eternal life is conditional: a person **must believe!** This is what Jesus asked

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Martha: *"Believest thou this?"*



She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world. Here it is, Martha's greatest confession. Martha confessed that she believed, and acknowledge His deity, calling Jesus "*Lord*." She believed three things about Jesus:

1. Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, she saw Him as Deliverer.
2. Jesus is the Son of God, she saw His Divinity.
3. Jesus is the Sent by God into the world she saw Him as the Son of God.

Knowing that Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life shows us three things:

1. That Jesus is alive, living right in the person of the Holy Spirit. He is both in us and all around us. Our faith is living and alive and in constant communion and fellowship with Him.
2. That our loved one is present with Jesus, no longer imperfect in mind and body, but perfect: more conscious, more aware, more alive than he/she was on earth. How do we know this? Jesus is alive in heaven and to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (2Corth.5:8).
3. That Jesus is alive, so the resurrection of our glorified bodies is assured (1Corth.15:1-58).

Where Jesus is, the resurrection is present and active. He is the Resurrection of the dead and the Life of the living. He has power over life and power over death.

## III. A RESURRECTION ASSURED JOHN 11:28-32

11:28 **And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee.** The profound news struck hope within Martha as she went to get her sister. Her faith and her trust was in **the Christ, the Son of God who was sent into the world.** And Martha hastened to share this glorious news with Mary secretly, so the whole mourning crowd wouldn't follow or so the danger of the Jewish leaders wouldn't overhear that Jesus was there and arrest Him. She shared three things as she called Mary:

1. She called him "*Master*." "*Master*" means Teacher; the greatest Teacher among men.
2. She said "*the Master is come*." Their answer has finally come. The Teacher can meet their need.
3. She said "*the Master is come and calls for you*." The Teacher summons her.

11:29 **As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him.** Mary arose and came quickly. The Lord was calling her and she responded quickly. We should have the same response in coming to Jesus; in serving Him, and in worshiping Jesus. There is a song that says *When He calls me, I will answer... I'll be somewhere listening for my name...*

11:30 **Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him.** The scene was in the same place where Martha met Jesus. You see Jesus had been on the outskirts of Bethany, a suburb of Jerusalem, but when Martha had met Him He was on His way to them, meaning He was coming into the town.

11:31 **The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there.** When the neighbors and friends saw Mary quickly leave, they thought she was going to the tomb to mourn over Lazarus, for some of them were paid mourners. They were with her for one

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reason: to comfort her. Naturally, they followed her, thinking she needed help in bearing up under her loss.

**11:32 Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. Mary fell down at Jesus' feet giving Him reverence and worship as soon as she saw him. She called Him "Lord", confessing her faith, and echoing what Martha had said "if thou had been here, my brother would not have died" (11:21).**

## SUMMARY:

Jesus had waited two days before going to Bethany after hearing the news of Lazarus' illness. Now, when Jesus has made the decision to go to Bethany where Lazarus, Martha, and Mary lived, Lazarus had been in the grave for four days. Many mourners are there to comfort the family. Martha learns that Jesus was coming, and she meets Jesus on the outskirts of their home, but Mary stays at home. There is a dialog between Martha and Jesus because His friend and her brother has died. Martha really wanted Jesus to be there before Lazarus had died, "*Lord if you had been here (before), my brother wouldn't have died.*" She had some beliefs but not like the beliefs Jesus wanted to teach her (**11:17-22**).

Jesus told her that her brother would rise again, but Martha kind of knew this only occurring in the Resurrection at the last day. And Jesus makes His divine declaration of being the Resurrection and the Life, His great promise: "*believe in me though you were dead, yet shall you live—whosoever live and believe in me shall never die.*" This was the comfort Martha needed! As she received this truth, she declared that she believed Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God which should come into the world (**11:23-27**).

Martha goes to her sister Mary to deliver this news that "*the Master had come and He calls for her.*" Mary arose quickly and goes to see Jesus. Now, Jesus had not yet come into the town, but was at the same place Martha had met Him. But, when the neighbors and friends saw Mary quickly leave, they thought she was going to the tomb to mourn over Lazarus. When Mary saw Jesus, she fell down at Jesus' feet giving Him reverence and worship and saying as well "*if thou had been here, my brother wouldn't have died*" (**11:28-32**).

## APPLICATION:

Life does not end for those that believe in Jesus. Death is only the beginning.