

The Raising of Lazarus John 11:1–53

Lazarus and his sisters, Martha and Mary, were Jesus' good friends. Jesus probably stayed with them when He was visiting Jerusalem. During religious festivals, the thousands of pilgrims were not allowed to stay overnight in Jerusalem—and Bethany was convenient, just two miles to the east, beyond the Mount of Olives. But Jesus and His disciples were probably in Perea, east of the Jordan River, when word reached them about Lazarus.

1. What was Jesus' immediate analysis of the situation of His friend?

Jesus' words led the disciples to expect Lazarus's recovery, but finally He told them that Lazarus had died and they were going to him.

2. How could Jesus be glad that He was not in Bethany to heal Lazarus?

3. John used the words "the Jews" to refer especially to the religious leaders. What does it say about Lazarus and his family that "many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them"?

Martha's greeting showed her disappointment that what she had hoped for had not happened, but she did not close the door of possibility. She said, "Even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." Jesus encouraged her to maintain an expectant faith with His great "I am" statement. The Greek has *egō eimi*—an emphatic "I, I only, am." This is the fifth of seven times in which John records Jesus' bold use of this designation for Himself in describing His messianic ministry. Remember, "I AM" is *Yahweh*, the name by which the Lord established His covenant with Israel. Here Jesus was making the strongest claims for Himself as the source of all life.

4. How did Martha respond to Jesus' "Do you believe this?"

Also in recording Martha's confession of faith, the Greek employs an emphatic *egō* along with the verb "I have believed." Martha was bold in her faith and in her expectation. When Martha went to tell Mary, she called Jesus "the Teacher," emphasizing that He taught her and her sister alongside the men.

5. What is suggested by the fact that Mary approached Jesus with the same words her sister had said to Him?

6. Jesus knew what He was going to do. Why, then, was He so deeply moved in spirit and troubled as He saw the others weeping?

7. What do Martha's words at her brother's tomb establish as a fact?

Lazarus was clearly and fully dead. At Jesus' command, the one whose body had already begun to decompose came out of the tomb alive, validating Jesus' bold "I am the resurrection and the life."

8. What effect did this miracle have on some of "the Jews" who witnessed it?

This miracle, planned by Jesus and done in a suburb of Jerusalem, moved Him a decisive step closer to the cross and the culmination of His ministry.