

"four days" - According to rabbinical tradition, the soul of a deceased person hovers around the body for three days in hope of a reunion but takes its final departure when it notices that the body has entered a state of decomposition.

Lazarus - Brother of Mary and Martha. Mentioned only here.

Martha - Sister of Lazarus and Mary. Depicted as anxious to be hospitable to Jesus in **Lk 10:38-42**.

Mary - Sister of Lazarus and Martha. She is found only three times in the Gospels, and in each instance, she is at the feet of Jesus.

*She sat at His feet and listened (**Lk 10:38-42**)

*She came to His feet in sorrow after the death of Lazarus (**Jn 11:28-32**)

*She worshiped at His feet when she anointed Him with the ointment (**Jn 12:1-8; Mt 26:1-13; Mk 14:3-9**)

"I am the resurrection and the life..." (25)

*Jesus is claiming to be God, a truth He promptly proved by raising Lazarus. Jesus had claimed Godhood as Light of the world, the Good Shepherd, the giver of eternal life, the door of the sheep, as existing before Abraham was born, and in numerous other ways. Here he appeared as Resurrection come in the flesh.

"the Christ" - The Greek word used here, *christos*, translates the Hebrew title *mashiach*, meaning "anointed one." Martha's commitment reveals a firm belief that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God, as preached by John the Baptist (1:34) and accepted by the disciples (1:49; 6:68).

In **John 11:1-16** Jesus is sent word from Mary and Martha of Lazarus' illness. Jesus delays in going to Lazarus because He considered this an opportunity for a demonstration of His power that would certify the Father's accreditation of him as the Son and confirm the faith of the sisters and the disciples.

John 11:17-27 (ESV)

17 Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb **four days**.

18 Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off,

19 and many of the Jews had come to **Martha and Mary** to console them concerning their brother.

20 So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house.

21 Martha said to Jesus, "**Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.**"

22 But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you."

23 Jesus said to her, "**Your brother will rise again.**"

24 Martha said to him, "**I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.**"

25 Jesus said to her, "**I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,**

26 and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

27 She said to him, "Yes, **Lord**; I believe that you are **the Christ, the Son of God**, who is coming into the world."

"if you had been here..."

* (21-22) The words Martha addressed to Jesus express both a repressed reproach and a persistent faith.

* (21) She was disappointed that Jesus had not responded to her first news of Lazarus's illness, but that did not lead her to break her relationship with him.

* (22) Despite her remorse, she was confident that God would grant Jesus' desire in this matter. (**Rom 8:28**)

"I know that he will rise..." (24)

*Martha interpreted Jesus' promise (23) that her brother would rise again in terms of the expectation of a general resurrection (**Acts 23:6-8**)

"I am the resurrection and the life..." (25)

*Jesus' words here contrast a belief in a doctrine with a belief in a Person (Jesus).

*The one who believes in Christ has eternal life that transcends physical death. Jesus' words are amplified by Paul's statement in **1Thess 4:16-17**.

*This means far more than an assertion of Jesus' power to raise Lazarus, extending to all the dead who ever lived (**John 5:24-29**).

*In this appears what is meant by "shall never die" (26) The Lord has not abolished physical death, but its significance, having made it a beginning instead of an end.

Teacher's Notes

Context

John 11:1–44 (ESV)

¹ Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ² It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. ³ So the sisters sent to him, saying, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." ⁴ But when Jesus heard it he said, "This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

⁵ Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶ So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. ⁷ Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." ⁸ The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?" ⁹ Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. ¹⁰ But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him." ¹¹ After saying these things, he said to them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him." ¹² The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover." ¹³ Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep. ¹⁴ Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus has died, ¹⁵ and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." ¹⁶ So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

¹⁷ Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸ Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, ¹⁹ and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. ²⁰ So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. ²¹ Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." ²³ Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." ²⁴ Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." ²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" ²⁷ She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."

²⁸ When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." ²⁹ And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. ³⁰ Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him. ³¹ When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. ³² Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." ³³ When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and

greatly troubled. ³⁴ And he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." ³⁵ Jesus wept. ³⁶ So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" ³⁷ But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?"

³⁸ Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. ³⁹ Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days." ⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" ⁴¹ So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me." ⁴³ When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." ⁴⁴ The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

Martha and Mary

Luke 10:38–42 (ESV)

³⁸ Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. ³⁹ And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." ⁴¹ But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, ⁴² but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."

Matthew 26:1–13 (ESV)

26 When Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said to his disciples, ² "You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified."

³ Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, ⁴ and plotted together in order to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. ⁵ But they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people."

⁶ Now when Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, ⁷ a woman came up to him with an alabaster flask of very expensive ointment, and she poured it on his head as he reclined at table. ⁸ And when the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, "Why this waste? ⁹ For this could have been sold for a large sum and given to the poor." ¹⁰ But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a beautiful thing to me. ¹¹ For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. ¹² In pouring this ointment on my body, she has done it to prepare me for burial. ¹³ Truly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her."

Mark 14:3–9 (ESV)

³ And while he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he was reclining at table, a woman came with an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, very costly, and she broke the flask and poured it over his head. ⁴ There were some who said to themselves indignantly, "Why was the ointment wasted like that?" ⁵ For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor." And they scolded her. ⁶ But Jesus said, "Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. ⁷ For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you can do good for them. But you will not always have me. ⁸ She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for burial. ⁹ And truly, I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her."

John 12:1–8 (ESV)

¹² Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. ² So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table. ³ Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. ⁴ But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, ⁵ "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" ⁶ He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it. ⁷ Jesus said, "Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. ⁸ For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me."

"if you had been here..."

Romans 8:28 (ESV)

²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

"I know that he will rise..." (24)

Acts 23:6–8 (ESV)

⁶ Now when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, "Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. It is with respect to the hope and the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial." ⁷ And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. ⁸ For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all.

"I am the resurrection and the life..." (25)

1 Thessalonians 4:16–17 (ESV)

¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

John 5:24–29 (ESV)

²⁴ Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

²⁵ "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. ²⁶ For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. ²⁷ And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. ²⁸ Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice ²⁹ and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

"the Christ"

John 1:34 (ESV)

³⁴ And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."

John 1:49 (ESV)

⁴⁹ Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

John 6:68 (ESV)

⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life,