

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Notes

Sermon Notes for October 29-30, 2005

"Lazarus, Come Forth"

John 11:17-27

The preparation for the miracle (John 11:1-16).

The arrival of Jesus and His disciples in Bethany (John 11:17-27).

Martha was the first of the sisters to encounter Jesus (John 11:17-24).

There was a well known Jewish belief that the soul of a dead person remained in the vicinity of the body hoping to reenter it for three days, but once decomposition set in the soul departed.

Martha's initial greeting in John 11:21 should not be viewed as a rebuke.

Martha's greeting in John 11:21, though filled with grief, was an expression of faith. Her greeting communicated that if Jesus had been present her brother would not have died.

Though John 11:22 expressed Martha's continuing faith in Jesus to perform miracles, we should not, based on her words, conclude that she was entertaining the thought He could raise Lazarus.

Though Martha did not believe that Jesus could raise Lazarus after four days she, like many other Jews, believed in a future resurrection that would take place on the last day (John 11:24).

One source of Martha's knowledge about the future resurrection she referred to in John 11:24 was the Old Testament Scriptures (Daniel 12:1-3).

Another source of knowledge about the resurrection she referred to in John 11:24 would have been the teachings of Christ (John 5:25-29).

When we combine all the knowledge about the resurrection that Martha had available it would appear that she knew Christ would play a major role in that future resurrection.

It is ironic that Martha likely knew that Christ would play a major role in Israel's future resurrection but she could not believe that He could raise Lazarus from the dead after four days.

When Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life," He said that He, like His Father, is the source of all life, whether physical or spiritual.

Because Christ is "the resurrection," those who believe in Him can be assured that if their body dies it will be resurrected (John 11:25).

Because Christ is "the life," those joined to Him by faith share His life and will never die in a spiritual sense because they will never be separated from Him in a spiritual sense (John 11:26).

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Martha's reply in John 11:27 in effect said, "since you are the resurrection and the life then you must by virtue of that fact be God's promised Messiah."

May God stretch our faith to such an extent that we might be able to see the fullness of what He can do in our lives, not only in the future but also in the present.