



Walking With the Savior

Through An Eyewitness Account of John

John, one of the sons of Zebedee, stood as an eyewitness to the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. He began his journey as a fisherman, leaving behind his nets and the future he had planned for himself to follow a teacher, a prophet, and a miracle worker. At the outset, John did not fully understand who Jesus was or what lay ahead. In faith, he aligned himself with Jesus, drawn by His words and deeds. As John walked alongside Jesus, witnessing His teachings and miracles, he gradually realized that Jesus was far more than a prophet or a remarkable teacher. John came to understand that Jesus was God in the flesh. This revelation was not just a turning point for John personally, but a moment of eternal significance. By choosing to follow Jesus, John's future was forever changed, and his decision would go on to impact the world—not only in his own time but throughout every generation to come. ***Let's embark on an inspiring journey with John as we walk alongside Jesus.***

Background Matters

11:17. Apparently **Lazarus** had died soon after the messengers left. **Jesus** was then a day's journey away. Since Palestine is warm and decomposition sets in quickly, a person was usually buried the same day he died (cf. v. 39).

11:18–19. The fact that **Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem** points up two things. It explains why **many Jews** from Jerusalem were at the scene of this great miracle (vv. 45–46). It also prepares the reader for the coming climax which was to take place in the great city. When a person died, the Jews mourned for a prolonged period of time. During this period it was considered a pious duty **to comfort** the bereaved.

11:20–22. **Martha**, the activist, **went ... to meet** Jesus while **Mary**, the contemplative sister, waited. (Cf. Luke 10:39–42 for a similar portrayal of their personalities.) Martha's greeting is a confession of faith. She really believed that **Jesus** could have healed her brother **if He had been** there. No criticism of Jesus seems to be implied since she knew her **brother** was dead before the messengers got to Jesus. Her words **But I know ... God will give You whatever You ask** might imply by



themselves that she was confident Lazarus would be resuscitated. But her actions in protest at the tomb (John 11:39) and her words to Jesus (v. 24) contradict that interpretation. Her words may be taken as a general statement of the Father's blessing on Jesus.

11:23–24. **Your brother will rise again.** Since the word “again” is not in the Greek it is better to omit it in the translation. This promise sets the stage for Jesus' conversation with **Martha**. She had no thought of an immediate resuscitation but she did believe **in the final resurrection at the last day**.

11:25–26. **I am the Resurrection and the Life.** This is the fifth of Jesus' great “I am” revelations. The Resurrection and the Life of the new Age is present right now because Jesus is the Lord of life (1:4). Jesus' words about life and death are seemingly paradoxical. A believer's death issues in new life. In fact, the life of a believer is of such a quality that he **will never die** spiritually. He has eternal life (3:16; 5:24; 10:28), and the end of physical life is only a sleep for his body until the resurrection unto life. At death the spiritual part of a believer, his soul, goes to be with the Lord (cf. 2 Cor. 5:6, 8; Phil. 1:23).

11:27. Martha gave a great confession of faith in Christ. She agreed with Jesus' exposition about eternal life for those who **believe** in Him. Then she confessed three things about Jesus. He is (a) **the Christ** (“Messiah”), (b) **the Son of God**—which is probably a title of the Messiah (cf. 1:49; Ps. 2:7)—and (c) the One **who was to come into the world** (lit., “the Coming One”; cf. John 12:13). She believed that Jesus is the Messiah who came to do God's will, but as yet she had no hint of the coming miracle regarding her brother.

11:28–30. Martha then told **Mary** that Jesus **the Teacher** was **asking for** her. He evidently wanted to have a private conversation with Mary. His purpose was probably to comfort and instruct her. “The Teacher” is a notable title for it was unusual for a Jewish Rabbi to instruct a woman (cf. 4:1–42).

11:31–32. Mary's sudden departure to see Jesus caused the crowd of Jewish comforters to follow **her**. So a private session with Jesus became impossible. Reaching **Jesus**, Mary **fell at His feet**. This is significant, for on a previous occasion she had sat at Jesus' feet listening to His teaching (Luke 10:39). Her greeting to Jesus was the same as her sister's (John 11:21). She felt the tragedy would have been averted **if He had been** present. Her faith was sincere but limited.

11:33–34. In great contrast with the Greek gods' apathy or lack of emotion, Jesus' emotional life attests the reality of His union with people. **Deeply moved** may either be translated “groaned” or more likely “angered.” The Greek word *enebrimēsato* (from *embrimaomai*) seems to connote anger or sternness. (This Gr. verb is used only five times in the NT, each time of the Lord's words or feelings: Matt. 9:30; Mark 1:43; 14:5; John 11:33, 38.)

Why was **Jesus** angry? Some have argued that He was angry because of the people's unbelief or hypocritical wailing. But this seems foreign to the context. A better explanation is that Jesus was angry at the tyranny of Satan who had brought sorrow and death to people through sin (cf. 8:44; Heb. 2:14–15). Also Jesus was **troubled** (*etaraxen*, lit., “stirred” or “agitated,” like the pool water in John 5:7; cf. 12:27; 13:21; 14:1, 27). This disturbance was because of His conflict with sin, death, and Satan.

11:35–37. Jesus' weeping differed from that of the people. His quiet shedding of tears (*edakrysen*) differed from their loud wailing (*klaiontas*, v. 33). His weeping was over the tragic consequences of



sin. The crowd interpreted His tears as an expression of love, or frustration at not being there to heal Lazarus.¹

This week in "Walking With the Savior,"

*As we enter the next chapter, John turns his attention to Lazarus and his sisters. We may wonder why he devotes an entire chapter to Lazarus's death, but this account takes us through a **powerful range of emotional highs and lows that can easily be overlooked when we read too quickly**. Let us slow down, enter fully into the story, and experience the depth of emotion John invites us to encounter through the anointing of the Holy Spirit.*

Study Guide 35

This study guide presents daily assignments that are specifically crafted to enhance your growth in the Word. Embrace each moment to meditate and reflect, and watch as your spiritual maturity flourishes through your dedicated efforts.

When Sorrow Calls, Compassion Answers

Jesus Comforts the Sisters

John 11:17–37

Open It, Mondays. Open your heart and mind to the truth of the Word.

1. *What is one of your greatest disappointments in life?

¹ Edwin A. Blum, "John," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 313–314.



Explore It, Tuesdays, keep the rhythm of personal study moving.

2. What did Jesus find when He arrived at Bethany? (11:17)

3. What did Mary and Martha do when they heard that Jesus was coming? (11:20)

4. *What did Martha say to Jesus about His having come after Lazarus had died? (11:21–22)

5. What did Jesus tell Martha Lazarus would do? (11:23)

6. How did Martha misunderstand Jesus? (11:24)

7. What did Martha and the others learn about Jesus' identity? (11:25)

8. *What did Jesus say would happen to those who believed in Him? (11:26)

9. What belief did Martha express to Jesus? (11:27)



Push on Wednesdays; keep the rhythm of personal study moving.

10. What did Martha tell Mary? (11:28)

11. What did Mary do after Martha told her Jesus was asking for her? (11:29)

12. Where did the Jews think Mary was going? (11:30–31)

13. How did Mary respond when she saw Jesus? (11:32)

14. What did Mary say to Jesus when He finally arrived? (11:32)

15. *How did Jesus respond to the weeping by Mary and the others? (11:33–35)

16. What question did some people have about what Jesus could have done? (11:37)

Get It Thursdays, keep the rhythm of personal study moving.

17. When has God's response to your situation in life seemed untimely?



18. *When do we tend to second-guess God?

19. How and when has God disappointed you?

20. Why are we sometimes disappointed by God?

21. *How should we respond to disappointment?

22. When has God given you comfort in the middle of a sad time of life?

Drive it Home, Fridays, keep the rhythm of personal study moving.

23. In what way is Jesus' response to Lazarus's death a model for us to follow?

24. *What attitude of disappointment do you need to confess to God and change to trust in His sovereign control?

25. How can you be a comfort to a struggling or hurting believer this week?

A Journey Through The Gospel of John **2026**

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