

Answers to Study Questions

1. Read John 9:1-5, the introduction to the story of the man born blind that Jesus heals. Compare what Jesus says in that introduction to the introduction of the story of Lazarus' raising from the dead in verses 1-14 of John 11. What similarities do you find?

When presented with the man's blindness and Lazarus' illness, Jesus declares them as opportunities rather than tragedies. John 11:4 and John 9:3

In both John 11:9-10 and John 9:4-5 Jesus refers to the light of day being time to do God's work, night is the time when work cannot be done. Jesus is the one who brings light, whose presence brings God's work to those in need.

2. Who are Mary and Martha and Lazarus? What is their connection to Jesus?

Beloved friends and supporters of Jesus. Mary had anointed Jesus' feet with oil. Jesus had stayed with them and Lazarus is said to be loved by Jesus as well.

3. What is the word sent to Jesus about Lazarus?

He is sick. The implication is that they want Jesus to come and heal him.

4. What is Jesus' response to this message?

He states that Lazarus' sickness will not end in death. So he stays for 2 more days before he announces that he will return to Judea.

5. What was the concern of the disciples expressed in verse 8 about Jesus returning to Judea?

The Jewish leaders had tried to stone him, and they feared that Jesus would be killed if he went back there.

6. Why does Jesus say has happened to Lazarus? Why does he need to go there?

Lazarus has "fallen asleep" which they don't understand means he has died. So Jesus tells them outright that he is dead.

7. What is Thomas' resolution?

Seeing that Jesus will not be persuaded otherwise, he resolves that they will just go with Jesus and die with him then.

8. What does Jesus and the disciples encounter when they get to Bethany?

Lazarus had died and had been in the tomb 4 days. Friends and mourners had come to comfort the family.

9. Who comes out to meet Jesus and what does she say to him?

Martha goes out to meet Jesus and tells him that if he had been there, he could have healed Lazarus, he would not have died.

10. How does Jesus respond to Martha? What does she think Jesus means?

He tells her that her brother will rise again. Martha says that she knows Lazarus will rise again in the resurrection of the dead.

11. How does Jesus explain what he really meant?

He declares that he is the resurrection and life, those who believe in him will never die.

12. How does Mary greet Jesus?

She fell at Jesus' feet and told him that if he had been there her brother would not have died.

13. What was Jesus' reaction to Mary's grief?

Jesus was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. He asked her where Lazarus had been laid. Jesus wept.

14. What do you think is the significance of Jesus' weeping? Why would he weep if he knew that he was going to raise Lazarus from the dead?

Jesus wept out of compassion for their grief, and for the suffering that had been endured.

15. What was the reaction of those who witnessed Jesus' weeping?

They noted how much Jesus loved Lazarus, how grieved he was for his loss. Some though, questioned why Jesus had not healed him and prevented his death.

16. Why does Martha object when Jesus calls for the stone to be removed?

Lazarus' body had been decomposing for 4 days, the stench would have been awful. She probably thought that Jesus just wanted to see view him one more time.

17. What does Jesus tell Martha in response to her objection?

Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?

18. What does Jesus say in his prayer of resurrection? And why does he say it?

He thanks his Father for hearing and answering his prayer. He wants everyone to know that he was sent by God, that this raising of the dead was God's doing through Jesus.

19. What happens when Jesus calls for Lazarus to come out of the tomb?

He comes out of the tomb, bound in grave clothes and Jesus tells them to loosen him and let him go.

20. What was the result noted in verse 45?

There were many of the Jews who had come out from Jerusalem to mourn with Mary and Martha who witnessed this and believed in Jesus.

21. What does John say (verses 45-57) happens then in Jerusalem as the news about Jesus' raising of Lazarus is told?

The Jewish leaders feared that the people would rise up in support of Jesus which would cause the Romans to destroy their city, temple and way of life. So they decide to kill Jesus as a means of preserving the peace.

22. What does John say that Caiaphas' declaration really meant?

Caiaphas declared that one man should die to save the nation. Caiaphas meant literally and militarily, but John notes that his words were actually prophetic, that indeed Jesus would give his life to save not only the Jewish people, but the whole world.

23. What does John say about Jesus' reaction to the threats against him?

He withdraws to Ephraim and does not move about in Judea/

24. How do the Jewish leaders plan to catch Jesus?

Watch for him to come to Jerusalem for the Passover festival and arrest him then.

25. What are the orders which the Sanhedrin put out regarding Jesus?

If anyone knows where Jesus is, they are to report it to them so he can be arrested.

26. Read the other Lectionary texts from Ezekiel 37, Psalm 130 and Romans 8. How do these passages connect with John 11?

They share the theme of resurrection – of how God's Spirit brings spiritual life to us.