

**A. John 11:17-46 – The seventh sign miracle: Lazarus’ resurrection (resuscitation)**

1. John 11:17 – *So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days.* Because of a prevalent false belief that a person’s spirit hovered above their body for three days, Jesus purposely **waited** four days so that in the mind of the people there was no more possibility of Lazarus returning to life.
2. John 11:18-19 – **Many** mourners came from Jerusalem to mourn Lazarus’ death, indicating the high level of respect and prominence his family enjoyed.
  - a. John 11:18 – *Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off...* Due to the closeness of Bethany to Jerusalem, a large crowd of family, friends, and acquaintances came to mourn Lazarus’ death. This was the perfect **setting** for Jesus to demonstrate His divine power.
  - b. John 11:19 – *... and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary, to console them concerning their brother.* The word *many* is critical in this verse. Jesus desired to perform this sign before a large **crowd**. In the days just before His death, this powerful sign would give irrefutable proof to as many as possible that He was indeed Messiah.
3. John 11:20-22 – Although Martha was disappointed with Jesus for not coming **sooner**, she still recognized His oneness with the Father and His mighty miracle working power.
  - a. John 11:20 – *Martha therefore, when she heard that Jesus was coming, went to meet Him, but Mary stayed at the house.* While Mary stayed at home, Martha **hurried** to meet Jesus. She greeted Him with mixed feelings of disappointment and faith.
  - b. John 11:21 – *Martha then said to Jesus, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.”* It was clear to Martha that Jesus could have worked a miracle of healing, but it seemingly did not enter her mind that Jesus could **raise** Lazarus from the dead, especially after having been in the tomb for so long.
  - c. John 11:22 – *“Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.”* What a testimony of faith. We would do well to have this same **mindset**, especially in those all-too-common moments of doubt and despair we often seem to experience.
4. John 11:23-24 – All believers will one day rise from the dead, never die again. This is the certain **hope** we have as believers in Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 15:50-58
  - a. John 11:23 – *Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”* Jesus promised Martha that Lazarus would **rise** again.
  - b. John 11:24 – *Martha said to Him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.”* Martha **believed** Jesus. Like most religious Jews, Martha believed in a future resurrection, but she had no clue that Jesus was about to perform an incredible miracle right before her eyes.
5. John 11:25-26 – Jesus instantly gives eternal life to all who believe in Him. All who believe in Him will live on, even in death. This was obviously true of Lazarus. He was still **alive** but not in His physical body. One day Jesus will resurrect the lifeless, decomposing bodies, of all who have believed in Him. He is both resurrection and life. 1 Thessalonians 4:16
  - a. John 11:25 – *Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies...”* Jesus is, in the **present**, both the life and the resurrection. The moment a person believes in Jesus they receive true life.
    - 1) Even when one’s body expires in death; the soul continues to live on throughout eternity. Believers do not **wait** until the end of time to get the life Jesus promised. 1 Corinthians 15:45 explains, *“So also it is written, “The first man, Adam, became a living soul.” The last Adam [Christ] became a life-giving spirit.”*
    - 2) Since Jesus is the resurrection, those saints who die physically will be resurrected and physically restored to life by Christ’s power and work. Jesus gives to all who believe in Him the hope of never-ending life and a future restoration to a glorified **physical** body. 1 Corinthians 15:48-55
  - b. John 11:26a – *“... and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die.”* Anticipating those who might assume a person ceases to live or have awareness after physical death, Jesus unmistakably and vigorously stated that no person who trusts in Him ever **ceases** to have consciousness or existence even after physical death.
    - 1) Paul referred to this truth in 2 Corinthians 5:8 when he said, *“We are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.”* At the physical death of a saint, the soul continues to be conscience and aware in the awe-inspiring **presence** of the Lord.
    - 2) Likewise, in Philippians 1:23-24 Paul declared, *“But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much **better**, yet to remain on in the flesh [the body] is*

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*more necessary for your sake.”*

- c. John 11:26b – Jesus asked Martha, “...*Do you believe this?*” Can we believe this? Can we believe that Jesus is fully capable of raising us up after death? Or are we buying into new age deceptions that we return to the stars or dissolve into the universe? Are we buying into the devil’s **lies**? 2 Peter 3:3-4,17
- 1) In the intermediate state between physical death and our literal future bodily resurrection, the **soul** never dies. There is no interruption of existence for either the saved or the unsaved. Luke 16:19-31 tells the story of a rich man and Lazarus. There Jesus showed how consciousness continues for both the just and the unjust.
  - 2) We must understand that all dead human bodies do indeed rest or “**sleep**” in the dust of the earth after death, awaiting future resurrection. Isaiah 26:19, Daniel 12:2, John 5:28-29, Acts 24:15
  - 3) In Revelation 20:13 the apostle John foretold the coming physical resurrection of the bodies of the **unsaved** it this way: “*And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds.*” Revelation 20:11-15
6. John 11:27 – *She said to Him, “Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, even He who comes into the world.”* The word believed is in the perfect tense, active voice, and indicative mood, conveying that Martha definitely had trusted in Jesus at a previous point in time and she continued even now to **believe** in Him.
- a. We can note here again that like Martha many in Israel had heard about a coming savior and were **looking** for the Christ. Luke 2:25,38; 24:21; Acts 13:23, 32
  - b. We see that Martha, having heard about the coming deliverer, had concluded that Jesus was that person. She then believed in Him and **instantly** became born again. At that moment, she was given eternal life as a gift. John 3:16
7. John 11:28-29 – Martha quickly and discreetly went to **tell** Mary that Jesus had come.
- a. John 11:28 – *When she had said this, she went away and called Mary her sister, saying secretly, “The Teacher is here and is calling for you.”* Martha was still totally unaware of Jesus’ plan. Privately she whispered to her sister that Jesus was asking for her. We do not know why she whispered this news to **Mary**.
  - b. John 11:29 – *And when she heard it, she got up quickly and was coming to Him.* Immediately Mary jumped up and went to Jesus. As we observe in the verses that follow, upon seeing Jesus, Mary also, like her sister Martha, voiced **regret** that He had not come sooner. John 11:21,32
  - c. When a loved one dies, it is easy to feel this kind of regret. “**If only** this or if only that our loved one would still be alive,” is often what we voice. We must trust that our times are in God’s hands. He controls the date and circumstances of our death. His ways and thoughts are higher than ours. Psalm 31:14-15, 139:16; Isaiah 55:8-9; Romans 11:33-36
8. John 11:30 – *Now Jesus had not yet come into the village but was still in the place where Martha met Him .* Jesus waited outside of town for Mary to come out to where He was. He had a plan to draw the majority of the mourners, many who were unsaved, out to the **tomb**. They were all going to witness one of the greatest signs miracles of Jesus ministry.
9. John 11:31 – *Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and consoling her, when they saw that Mary got up quickly and went out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there.* We see that when Mary abruptly left to go meet Jesus, the mourners thought she was going out to the tomb to weep, and so they **followed** her.
- a. There were Jewish mourners in the crowd who might have **avoided** Jesus if they had known she was going to meet Him. When they saw Mary jump up, they followed without asking questions. They simply thought she was going to the gravesite to mourn.
  - b. At times Christ accomplished miracles from a distance or away from the public eye. Other times, He used miracles to astonish and impress the multitudes. In this instance, Christ was nearing His final days of ministry and therefore wanted this miracle to be witnessed by many and then widely **publicized**.
10. John 11:32 – *Therefore, when Mary came where Jesus was, she saw Him, and fell at His feet, saying to Him, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.”* Bowing at the feet of Christ, Mary expressed both disappointment and faith. What she did not know was that Jesus can **easily** resurrect a corpse, even days after death. Luke 10:39, John 12:3
11. John 11:33 – *When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and was troubled ...* The word translated deeply moved EMBRIMAOMAI means “to

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be moved with **anger**, to snort with anger, or to sternly admonish.” It does not mean to be moved to sadness as we might logically assume.

- a. In Matthew 9:30 and Mark 1:43, EMBRIMAOMAI speaks of a stern warning and in Mark 14:5 of a scolding. It clearly portrays a negative emotion. Why would Jesus have been deeply **disturbed** and not simply sad?
  - b. While it is difficult to know for sure, Jesus may have been incensed with an **insincerity**. He perceived among some of the mourners. He probably knew that some of those present were going to report the astounding miracle He was about to perform to the leaders of Israel who would conspire even more diligently to kill Him. John 11:46-54
12. John 11:34 – ... *and said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to Him, “Lord, come and see.”* Jesus wanted them to **lead** him to the location of the tomb. Inquisitiveness about Jesus’ intentions would naturally draw a curious crowd to follow. This event was a perfect situation for many witnesses to see the logic defying miracle that was about to unfold.
13. John 11:35 – *Jesus wept*. Not only is Jesus divine, He is also fully human. Jesus, the resurrection and the life, **wept** at Lazarus’ funeral. Luke 19:41, Hebrews 5:7
- a. Death was never God’s plan for His creatures. Sin, death and separation, with all their pain and sorrow are truly unnatural. Jesus did not like death any more than we do. Ironically, He was about to face death Himself, but in doing so, He would gain **victory** over sin and death for us forever. 1 Corinthians 15:56-57
  - b. *Jesus wept* DAKRYO. This is the only occurrence of the Greek word DAKRYO meaning “to weep” in the Bible. Evidently, Jesus did not weep for the **same** reasons we would. That’s probably why John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, chose a more uncommon Greek word to describe Jesus’s grief.
  - c. Those present speculated as to why Jesus wept, but they were divided in their theories. Since the author does not state a definite **reason** for Jesus’ sorrow, we must use caution and restraint in arriving at our conclusions.
14. John 11:36-37 – The multitudes always had differing opinions about Jesus and His motives. This kind of reaction to Jesus still exists in our world today. The **Word** of God alone, not religion or human philosophy, should shape our views of Jesus Christ. John 7:43, 9:16, 10:21
- a. John 11:36 – *So the Jews were saying, “See how He loved him!”* Jesus indeed **loved** Lazarus deeply (Jn. 11:3,5), but since He was about to resurrect Him, it is not likely He was sad in the way they speculated.
    - 1) It may be Jesus sorrowed because He was bringing Lazarus back to this cruel world, away from the glories of **paradise**. In Philippians 1:21 we know from the apostle Paul that, “*For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain.*” 1 Corinthians 12:4
    - 2) We can be certain that Jesus did not grieve like people who have no **hope**. Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 4:13, “*But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.*”
  - b. John 11:37 – *But some of them said, “Could not this man, who opened the eyes of the blind man, have kept this man also from dying?”* Critics abound. If you act, they **criticize** what you do. If you don’t act, they criticize your lack of action. Even their example of healing the blind man was insincere. They had vilified Jesus for that act of mercy.
    - 1) Jesus’ critics, however, were soon to be dumbfounded by the **greatest** miracle ever, one that made giving sight to a man born blind look like child’s play.
    - 2) Jesus would raise a rotting corpse back to life. Lazarus was going to be **fully** restored to complete and vibrant health. John 12:2,9-11
15. John 11:38-39 – When Jesus commanded that the **stone** be removed, Martha cautioned Him against being repulsed by the stench.
- a. John. 11:38 – *So Jesus, again being deeply moved within, came to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone was lying against it .* Here again we see the phrase *deeply moved* EMBRIMAOMAI, which we saw was an **adverse** emotion meaning to be infuriated, or snort with anger. What would provoke such a strong negative reaction in Jesus?
    - 1) The crowd’s cynical reaction to Jesus’ tears shows their great **disrespect** for Him as a person and an incredible lack of faith. Matthew 13:58
    - 2) In their disdain they grumbled because even though Jesus healed a blind man, He was seemingly powerless to keep Lazarus from dying. Their **callous**, unbelieving hearts would obviously have distressed Jesus. Matthew 17:17,20
  - b. John. 11:39 – *Jesus said, “Remove the stone.” Martha, the sister of the deceased, said to Him, “Lord, by this time there will be a **stench** , for he has been dead four days.”* Martha’s statement shows that enough

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time had passed for decomposition to be well advanced. A stone covered the mouth of the tomb where Lazarus' body lay.

16. John 11:40 – *Jesus said to her, “Did I not say to you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?”* Jesus had told Martha that Lazarus would rise again. He had reminded her that He Himself is the resurrection and the life. But Martha did not **expect** Jesus to raise Lazarus to life right then and there.
- This miracle was about to greatly impact the disciples' faith. Earlier in verse four Jesus had indicated to His disciples that something **good** was going to come from Lazarus' sickness. “*This sickness is not to end in death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it .*”
  - By this great miracle, Jesus Christ's **glory** was about to be astoundingly manifested. Jesus had told Martha that she was about to see the glory of God, but she did not understand to what He referred.
17. John 11:41 – *So they removed the stone. Then Jesus raised His eyes, and said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me ...”* No one had ever gone out to a cemetery, opened a tomb, and resurrected the dead. As the stone was removed, the **tension** of the moment had to be entrancing. Jesus' prayer exposed His constant fellowship with the Father.
18. John 11:42 – *“I knew that You always hear Me; but because of the people standing around I said it, so that they may believe that You sent Me .”* Jesus prayed publicly so that those listening would be convinced that He was Messiah. God the Father's direct answer to Jesus' prayer was conclusive **proof** that the Father sent Him and worked miracles through Him.
19. John 11:43-44 – Jesus needed only to **speak** and immediately Lazarus was alive. The Bible says that in the beginning Jesus created the world and gave life by His words, by speaking. John 1:1-4, 1 Corinthians 8:6, Colossians 1:16, Hebrews 1:2-3
- John 11:43 – *When He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth.”* As soon as He finished praying to the Father, Jesus shouted to Lazarus. This would have been as scary as it was amazing. Only Jesus **could** conquer death.
  - John 11:44a – *The man who had died came forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings, and his face was wrapped around with a cloth.* These wrappings were **bands** of cloth, or bandages, that held the linen and spices in place around the corpse. Jesus could have miraculously removed these, but He chose not to. This allowed the crowd to help.
  - John 11:44b – *Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”* No amount of spices could overpower the **stench** of death. Unwrapping these bandages from a man who had been decomposing for four days had to have been nauseating, to say the least.
    - Scripture does not say a lot about the immediate reactions. Some may have fled in fear. But no one could deny the **reality** of this astonishing miracle: Jesus brought an indisputably dead man back to life. Everyone present witnessed firsthand Jesus Christ's resurrection and life-giving power.
    - Lazarus' sisters must have been awestruck and overjoyed beyond imagination. In the next chapter we will read about Jesus' appreciation banquet with a very serene Lazarus and his thankful sisters in their **home** community.
20. John 11:45-46 – Jesus' disclosure of His divine glory provoked two responses: some believed in Him, while others defiantly **rejected** Him. Acts 17:32-34
- John 11:45 – *Therefore many of the Jews who came to Mary, and saw what He had done, believed in Him .* Thankfully, when they saw Lazarus' resurrection, many placed their faith in Christ, which was also John's purpose in recording this event. As a truly great **sign**, this miracle still helps people believe in Christ for salvation. John 20:30-31
  - John 11:46 – *But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them the things which Jesus had done .* Regrettably, for the Pharisees this event created an urgency to assassinate Jesus. The fact that these witnesses **informed** on Jesus revealed their hardened hearts of unbelief. John 5:15, Mark 16:13-14

## B. John 11:47-54 – Lazarus' resurrection triggered a conspiracy to kill Jesus

- John 11:47 – *Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, “What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs.”* After Lazarus' resurrection the Jews' **apprehension** concerning Jesus skyrocketed.
  - The religious leaders called a **meeting** to plan how to deal with Jesus. They felt that Jesus was a danger they needed to deal with quickly.
  - They could not deny His works; in fact, they called His works signs. But instead of convening the counsel for good, they met for **evil** purposes.

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2. John 11:48 – “ *If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.*” Misinterpreting Jesus’s miracles and message, the religious leaders made decisions based on both **fear** and self-preservation.
  - a. Obviously under **satanic** influence, Israel’s leaders feared that everyone would end up believing in Jesus. That in fact, was Jesus’ goal from the beginning. Luke 19:10; John 3:17, 6:38-40; 1 Timothy 1:15
  - b. The council believed that if everyone believed in Jesus and followed Him, the Romans would take away their few remaining freedoms as a nation. They viewed Jesus as a **threat** rather than a savior.
  - c. This **bad** decision to reject Jesus as Messiah led to the very destruction they were trying to avoid. In 70 AD the Romans came and destroyed both Jerusalem and their beloved temple. Luke 21:20-24
3. John 11:49-50 – *But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all, nor do you take into account that it is expedient for you that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation not perish.”* Caiaphas feared Jesus might bring **physical** death to the whole nation.
  - a. Caiaphas was high priest from AD 18-36. Due to the possibility that Jesus might cause a rebellion that would result in Roman reprisals, Caiaphas recommended a simple solution to the council: **Kill** Jesus. Acts 3:14, 7:52, 13:28
  - b. When Caiaphas spoke of Jesus dying on **behalf** of (HUPER) the people, he did not realize he was prophesying.
4. John 11:51 – *Now he did not say this on his own initiative, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation ...*
  - a. God sovereignly turned the words of Israel’s high priest into a **prophetic** declaration concerning Jesus’ upcoming substitutionary death for the nation. It would actually be for their eternal good rather than their physical welfare. 2 Corinthians 5:21
  - b. Caiaphas is an interesting example of God **moving** men to speak prophetically. He was not a believer, but much like the prophet Balaam, God turned his evil intentions into a blessing. Numbers 22:35, 2 Peter 1:20-21
5. John 11:52 – *... and not for the nation only, but in order that He might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad .* Not only was Jesus going to **die** for Israel, He was also going to die for the Gentiles. John clarified that the death of Christ would bring many children to glory. Genesis 12:3b, Luke 2:13-14, Ephesians 2:11-22, Hebrews 2:10
6. John 11:53 – *So from that day on they planned together to kill Him.* The great achievement of the “United Council for the Resolution of the Lazarus Dilemma” was that the Pharisees and Sadducees (ruling priests) finally **agreed** on one thing: Jesus must die. Matthew 26:3-5
7. John 11:54 – *Therefore Jesus no longer continued to walk publicly among the Jews but went away from there to the country near the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim; and there He stayed with the disciples.* Knowing their evil plans, Jesus avoided public appearances until the time chosen by the Father. He would die on the Father’s **timetable**.