

HANDOUT: The Gospel of John chapter 11

Time-line summary of Jesus' friendship with Lazarus and his sisters:

- Martha invites Jesus to stay at her house. She cooks dinner for Him and His disciples sometime during the first two years of His ministry [Luke 10:38-42]. Notice Lazarus is not mentioned.
- Jesus relationship with this family must have continued during each of His visits to Jerusalem during His approximately 3-year ministry because John 11:6 describes Jesus as having a loving relationship with this family: "*Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.*"
- Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead sometime between late winter and early spring of 30AD [John 11]
- Six days before the Passover [Saturday], probably circa March 30AD [John 12:1], Jesus and the Apostles have a special Sabbath dinner with the family and Mary anoints His body, prefiguring His death and burial [John 12:1-12]
- Wednesday of that same week, two days before Passover* [Matthew 26:2; Mark 14:1-3] Jesus the guest of honor at a dinner at the house of Simon the Leper in Bethany. [Matthew 26:6-12; Mark 14:3-8].

*Note: The concept of a mathematical 0 place value did not exist in the first century AD so counting any sequence began with the first item [day, or hour, etc] of any list as #1 and the last item in the list as the last number in the sequence. This is why Scripture says Jesus was in the tomb three days, from Friday to Sunday, instead of two days as we would count the days. When Mark records that it was two days before the Passover that Jesus had dinner in Bethany [Mark 14:1] we know that day is Wednesday because John tells us in John 12:1 that the day **before** Passion [Palm] Sunday is 6 days before Passover which is Nisan 14 and which would be a Thursday [Saturday = day #1; Sunday = day #2; Monday = day #3; Tuesday = day #4; Wednesday = day #5; Thursday = day #6. Jesus is crucified on the 7th day from entering Bethany on Friday.]

You may remember Thomas as the Apostle who said he could not believe in the resurrection of Jesus unless he touched the wounds in His hands, but in John 11:26, the Apostle Thomas declared that he is ready to die with Christ. There an irony as well as a prophetic aspect to Thomas' declaration.

1. St. Paul teaches that all Christians have died with Christ: "*But we believe that if we died with Christ, then we shall live with him too.*" Romans 6:8 and "*for the love of Christ overwhelms us when we consider that if one man died for all, then all have died; his purpose in dying for all humanity was that those who live should live not any more for themselves but for him who died and was raised to life for them.*" 2 Corinthians 5:14-15
2. Thomas like Jesus' disciple Stephen, the first Christian martyr, and like many other believers will follow Christ in death. Thomas would be martyred for Christ at the altar of his Church in India. Only the Apostle John would not die a violent death.

Thomas' story is an inspiration for all of us: **We may stumble and we may fall, but so long as we repent and acknowledge Christ as Lord and Savior He will forgive us and empower us to be a conduit through which the works of God can change the world!**