

## HANDOUT: The Gospel of John Chapter 11

### Timeline 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 that 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. 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 AD 30 (John 11).
- Six days before the Passover on Saturday, probably circa March AD 30 (John 12:1), Jesus and the Apostles had a special Sabbath dinner with the family and Mary of Bethany anointed 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 was the guest of honor at a dinner at the house of Simon the Leper in Bethany (Matthew 26:6-12; Mark 14:3-8).

Lazarus's name is the Hellenized version of Eleazar, which is Hebrew for "God" ('El) and "help" (azar). The combination of words translates roughly to "God is my Helper" or "God has helped." God did indeed help Lazarus at his darkest hour.

\*Note: The concept of a mathematical 0 place value did not exist in the first century AD; therefore, counting any sequence began with the first item (day, 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 for 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 suffered crucifixion on the 7<sup>th</sup> day from entering Bethany on Friday.)

Thomas was 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 was ready to die with Christ. There is an ironic and prophetic aspect to his 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, followed Christ in death. Thomas suffered martyrdom for Christ at the altar of his church in India. Only the Apostle John survived to old age.

Thomas' story is an inspiration for all of us: **We may stumble and fall, but as 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!**