

Martha: Complaint or Compliant? (John 11)

The Pastor and the Professor (October 4, 2016)

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INTRODUCTION

GEOGRAPHY (From Bethany to Bethany): This will show that Martha was no complainer.
Lazarus lived in Bethany (just east of Jerusalem)

Jesus must travel from Bethany beyond the Jordan River to Bethany (Lazarus' home)
John 1:28 says that John the Baptist ministered in Bethany beyond the Jordan

John 10:40 says that Jesus returned to the place where John first baptized.
Therefore, Jesus went from Bethany beyond the Jordan (B.b.J.) to Bethany.

Problem: No town east of the Jordan River with this name has been identified.
Most equate B.b.J. with Bethabara (east of Jerusalem)

Recent scholarship has proposed that B.b.J. = Batanea (OT Bashan)

Aramaic speakers did not like the *SH* sound, so they often substituted *TH* for *SH*. They thought, "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN" (Dan 5:25) might mean "A mina, a mina, a shekel, and a peres."
Batanea is the Aramaic repronunciation Bashan.

Advantages of Batanea over Bethabara:

1. Betania resembles Batania more closely than it does Bethabara.
2. Jesus could easily go from Batanea to Cana in 2 days (John 1-2).
He could not make the trip quickly from Bethabara to Cana.
3. It is easy to see why Jesus arrived four days after Lazarus died, if He were coming from Batanea (John 10-11). It is hard to understand why He would arrive so late, if He were coming from Bethabara.

RESPONSE TO NEWS THAT LAZARUS WAS SICK (11:1-6)

A messenger told Jesus that Lazarus was sick (11:1-3)

Jesus told the messenger that the sickness is not unto death, but would glorify Him (11:4)

Though Jesus loved Martha, Mary & Lazarus; He ministered for two more days in Batanea (11:5-6)

TELLING THE DISCIPLES OF LAZARUS' DEATH (11:6-16)**ARRIVAL AT BETHANY (11:17-19)**

Jesus reached Bethany four days after Lazarus died, as mourners consoled Martha and Mary

MARTHA'S ENTHUSIASTIC GREETING

Martha hurried to greet Jesus as He approached town; Mary stayed in the house (11:20)

Martha asserted that Jesus would have prevented Lazarus' death, if He had been there (11:21)

Martha asserted that God answers all of Jesus' prayers (11:22)

Jesus asserted that Lazarus will rise again; Martha affirmed that she believed this (11:23-24)

Jesus is the Resurrector and Grantor of eternal life; He asked if she believed this (11:25-26)

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| <i>I am the Resurrection,</i> | <i>and [I am] the Life</i> |
| <i>He who believes in Me, even if he dies,</i> | <i>And everyone who lives and believes in Me</i> |
| <i>will live.</i> | <i>will never die.</i> |
| <i>Do you believe [all of] this?</i> | |

As the Resurrection, He will resurrect all believers.

As the Life, He gives everlasting life to all believers.

Jesus asked, *Do you believe [all of] this?*
[All of] this reflects Greek's idiomatic use of the neuter of *this* [= His whole statement]

Martha believed that Christ is the Resurrector & Grantor of everlasting life because she believed that He is the Christ, the Son of God, sent by the Father (11:27)

BRINGING MARY TO JESUS (11:28-37)

RAISING LAZARUS (11:38-44)

When Jesus came to the tomb, He commanded opening it (11:38-39a)

Martha pointed out that there would be a stench (11:39b)

Jesus reminded Martha that He had already said that believing (that He would raise Lazarus) would let her (now) see God's glory (11:40)

Jesus commanded removing the stone and thanked the Father for hearing Him, then He called for Lazarus, who emerged bound in his grave cloths (11:41-44)

***AFTERMATH: MANY BELIEVE, BUT THE SADDUCEES
NOW AGREED THAT JESUS MUST DIE (11:45-57)***

Prior to raising Lazarus, a majority of the Pharisees wanted Jesus dead. However, the Sadducees seem to have regarded Jesus as less of a threat to themselves. They seem to have enjoyed how He kept the Pharisees (sworn enemies to the Sadducees) preoccupied. Now, with the raising of Lazarus, though, so many people believed in Jesus and left the Temple that the Sadducees feared a revolt. Such a revolt would cause the Romans to nullify the Sadducees' position as keepers of order. Jesus must die. Indeed, the Romans deposed the Sadducees from their position of power in A.D. 70.

How ironic that the chief priests (who were Sadducees) plotted to put to death both Jesus (who raised Lazarus from the dead) and Lazarus (who had been raised from the dead). It is futile for them to put THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE TO DEATH.

CONCLUSION