

# *I Am The Resurrection And The Life*

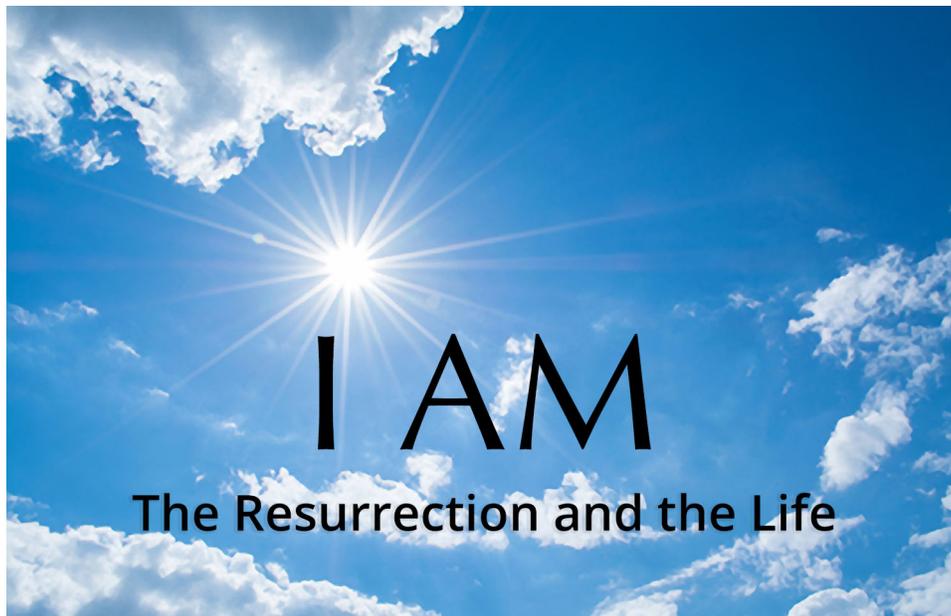
**A** dermatologist was once asked if the skin on the human reveals God that exists. She replied, “Yes!” The body is so complex that just the skin on the human body could not have occurred by random chance. We rarely hear that professional scientists and engineers believe that God exists because of the complexity of our bodies. It is incredible that God has designed bodies to repair themselves and fight diseases. God is more than the master designer of just the universe and our planet. He even designed our complex bodies. Our God is so magnificent that everything about our bodies screams that He exists. Another fact that we often miss is that most humans fear death. Instinctively, we fight to live. Our commercials constantly feature drugs, medical supplies, and procedures to help us live longer. We fear death! Why do we fear death? Because He has also set eternity in our hearts. God is eternal and we have the sense that we are eternal beings too! He designed us that way, but the question is where will we live for eternity? Because man is a sinful being who is in rebellion against a holy God, Jesus Christ died for our sins so that you and me can spend our eternity with Him. This is possible because Jesus is the resurrection and the life. In this study we learn what Jesus meant when He said that He is the resurrection and the life. Our study is John 11:17-27.

**BACKGROUND.** In our previous study, which was John 11:1-16, we discovered that Jesus and His disciples heard that Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, was sick. Martha had sent that urgent message to Jesus. When Jesus heard the news, He said that Lazarus’ sickness “is not to end in death” and that it was “for the glory of God.” Therefore, Jesus waited two days before traveling to Bethany, the city in which Lazarus lived. When news arrived that Lazarus died, He finally decided to leave for Jerusalem. But verse 8 tells us that the disciples were very concerned because the religious leaders wanted to stone Him to death. Eventually, the disciples decided to go with and if necessary die with Him.

**JESUS ARRIVES IN BETHANY.** This study begins with verse 17 and immediately we are told Jesus found that Lazarus

had been dead for four days.

*So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. John 11:17 (NASB)*



This implies the messenger must have traveled for about two days to bring the news. That is, it took two days to bring the news to Jesus and another two days to travel to Jerusalem for a total of four days. Verses 18-19 explains what was happening

when Jesus and the disciples came near the town of Bethany.

*Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off; and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary, to console them concerning their brother. John 11:18-19 (NASB)*

First, we are told that Bethany, which is modern day al-Eizariya, is about two miles away from Jerusalem. Second, we are told that Mary and Martha were being comforted by the Jews, this probably included the Pharisees and many Sadducees. An important question we should ask ourselves when we read any passage of Scripture is why did the Holy Spirit include it? The answer is that it teaches that Jesus was so important to Martha that she left the crowd and came to Jesus.

**Martha therefore, when she heard that Jesus was coming, went to meet Him, but Mary stayed at the house. John 11:20 (NASB)**

Apparently, Martha and Mary did not know Jesus was near the town. Verses 18-19 prepares us for events that will occur later, when we will be told that large crowds had learned that Jesus has raised from the dead (John 11:56; 12:9). This occurred because many people had already visited Mary and Martha and soon Jesus will raise Lazarus from the dead (John 11:41-44). This reveals that everything was going according to God's plan. Later in John 12:27-28 we will be told that the next step in the plan, Christ's death and resurrection, was ready.

Verse 20 also tells us that Mary stayed home, but why did Mary remain at home? We are never told. Maybe she was too heart-broken or she felt someone needed to stay with the crowd of people. Whatever the reason, it helps understand why verses 21-27 are all about Martha and Jesus and Mary is not included. Verses 28-37 are about Mary.

**MARTHA FINDS JESUS, HER FRIEND.** We are not told where Martha found Jesus. We are not told how far away Martha was from Jesus. All that we are told is what the Holy Spirit considered to be important for us! So we are told that Martha is with Jesus and she is speaking! I am overwhelmingly thrilled with the fact that Scripture is not concerned with trivia as are so many legends, fables, and books of the cults and false religions. A good example is the book called the *The Legends of the Jews*, documented by Louis Ginzberg.<sup>1</sup> It is full of the fanciful but that is not true of Scripture. Scripture simply records the essentials.

Therefore, only the conversation between Jesus and Martha is recorded.

**Martha then said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." John 11:21-23 (NASB)**

Now it does not seem that Martha is rebuking Jesus. Instead, she seems to politely complain that if Jesus had arrived earlier or had remained in Bethany, He could have healed Lazarus. When she said, "Lord, if You had been here," she used the second class "if" in the Greek grammar. This means that she actually said, "Lord, if you had been here but you weren't." She states the obvious. She may have thought Jesus should have remained in Bethany and not traveled or should have returned earlier. Then He could have healed Lazarus and prevented the death. Whatever the correct answer is, it is clear she believes that she knew what was best. If Jesus had just been in Bethany, Lazarus would have been alive. Martha was a strong-willed woman.

Then she seems to soften her comment with, "Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You." Her comment clearly reveals that she still does not understand that Jesus is God. But she does believe Jesus had a great connection with God and He would give Jesus anything because she describes what Jesus could have done. That is, she was convinced that Jesus could perform great miracles. She had seen Jesus perform various miracles and wonders before. She used a Greek tense for "know" that refers to a settled and assured knowledge. She had no doubts. She is not hoping or wondering if Jesus can pull off a miracle. She knew He could, but would He? But she did not yet understand the most important truth. God standing before her.

We discover also that she believed in a future resurrection. Since the Pharisees of the day believed in a resurrection<sup>2</sup> (Acts 23:7), it is possible that she said what she had been taught. Since Matthew 22:23 reveals the Sadducees did not believe in a resurrection (also see Mark 12:18; Luke 20:27),<sup>3</sup> it is clear she

1. Louis Ginzberg. *The Legends of the Jews*. The Jewish Publication Society of America. 1937.

2 Flavius Josephus. *Antiquities of the Jews*. 18.1.3.

3. *Ibid.*, 18.1.4

disagreed with their teaching and agreed with the Pharisees. Or, maybe she had read Job 19:25-27; Psalm 17:15, or Daniel 2:2? Maybe Jesus had taught her about the resurrection.

Jesus' next words must have been encouraging and yet disappointing, "Your brother will rise again." I would like to have seen her face when He said that. Did He smile? Did she smile? Was she surprised? Was she disappointed that Jesus said Lazarus would rise again? Whatever her facial expression, her next words reveal she did not expect Jesus' statement and understood the resurrection of the dead would occur in the future on the last day! She knew he would rise again, but she did not understand the message of Jesus.

Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." John 11:24 (NASB)

Martha was correct the resurrection would occur on the last day. The term "last day" does not refer to the time when God

will destroy the universe and God sits as judge at the great white throne judgment (Revelation 20:11-14). The term "last day" refers to the time from the first coming of Christ to the destruction of the universe. For Hebrews 1:1-2 tells us that Jesus walked on the earth in "these last days." Acts 2:17 tells us that during the apostle Peter's sermon he stated that they were in "the last days." The apostle Paul also said that in "the last days difficult times will come." And the apostle Peter said that in the last days mockers will come (2 Peter 3:3). That is, the last days started when Jesus arrived the first time and will continue until the universe is destroyed and judgment occurs (John 12:48).

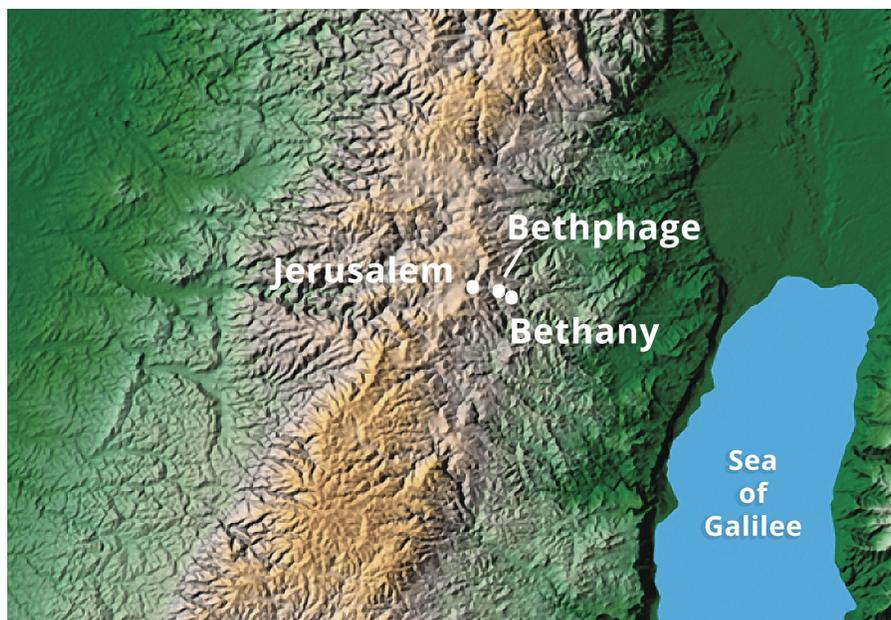
Scripture teaches that all of those who become believers

since Jesus' death and resurrection will be taken to heaven at the rapture prior to the tribulation (John 6:39, 40, 44; 1 Corinthians 15:51-54; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18;). The Old Testament saints are resurrected after the second coming of Christ (Ezekiel 37:12-14; Daniel 7:27; 12:1-2; Revelation 20:4, 6). Then at the end of the millennial kingdom unbelievers will be judged (John 12:48; Revelation 20:4).

**I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE.** Then Jesus replied that He was the resurrection and the life.

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and

believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?" John 11:25-26 (NASB)



Jesus' first two words in the Greek are *ego eimi*. He declared, "I AM." He declared that He was God. He used the same name that Jehovah used in Exodus 3:14. The Hebrew word

for "I AM" is *haya*. The word means "to be." That is, Jehovah declared He is existing, and Jesus just declared emphatically that He is existing too. Jesus is God. That is why *He is the resurrection and the life*. You see, He could raise anyone. He had and has the power to give life and to take life.

Earlier in John 5:26 Jesus said the Father had life in Himself and He did too! Life and the power of life was and is within Jesus! When Jesus said that the Father and He had life in themselves He informed us that God is self-sustaining. In theology we say God is an aseity. He is self-existing! He "is being"! He is the I AM—Life—and He can give it to others. What an incredible statement. Jesus is Life. Jesus is Existing!

That is why we read in the gospel of John that Jesus refers to

Himself seven times as the “I AM” :

- I AM the bread of life (John 6:35);
- I AM the Light of the World (John 8:12)
- I AM the Door (John 10:7, 9)
- I AM the Good Shepherd (John 10:11, 14)
- I AM the Resurrection and the Life (John 11:24)
- I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6)
- I AM the Vine (John 15:1, 5)

Another statement of deity occurs in John 8:24, but it is not used in a figurative statement such as “I AM the door.” All of these fabulous statements reveal that Jesus gives and sustains life. He is the light to spiritual truth. He is the door to eternal life. He is the good shepherd who cares for us. He would be resurrected after His death on the cross and He will resurrect every Christian from the grave. He is the only way, the truth and the life. He is the vine that supplies eternal life. The common theme to every statement is that He “is being” the existing source of real life— eternal life.

So Jesus said, “I AM, the resurrection and the life” and Martha reveals that she did not understand that He gives eternal spiritual life to those who believe in Him. Earlier in John 3:16, Jesus had promised that those who believe in Him will 1) never perish and 2) have eternal life. He just repeated that same message to Martha but rearranged the statement.

**MARTHA, DO BELIEVE THIS!** After Jesus declared that He was the resurrection and the life He asked, “Do you believe this?” Isn’t that the question everyone must answer? Isn’t that the question you and I must answer? Do you believe that Jesus is the resurrection and the life? Since every individual is headed to hell at the moment of birth because we are born sinners, the answer to this question determines if we will have eternal life in heaven or have eternal life in hell. Where are you going? The answer is found by first asking yourself if you believe that you are a sinner. If you believe that Jesus died so that your sins can be forgiven and you want Him to forgive your sins, then He will give you life and you will be resurrected and spend eternity in Him. You will live forever because He is “being”—I AM!

When Jesus said, “He who believes in Me will live even if

he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die” is a simple promise that those who are believing in Jesus will live after they die and then live forever—live and never die. This is a precious promise. Jesus means that He will not only resurrect those who believe in Him, but our loving Lord will sustain our lives into eternity. The English word “never” is actually translated from five Greek words— “no, no into the ages.” He used a double negative to emphasize that believers will never cease to live in heaven.

**YOU ARE THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD.** Martha’s reply is unexpected.

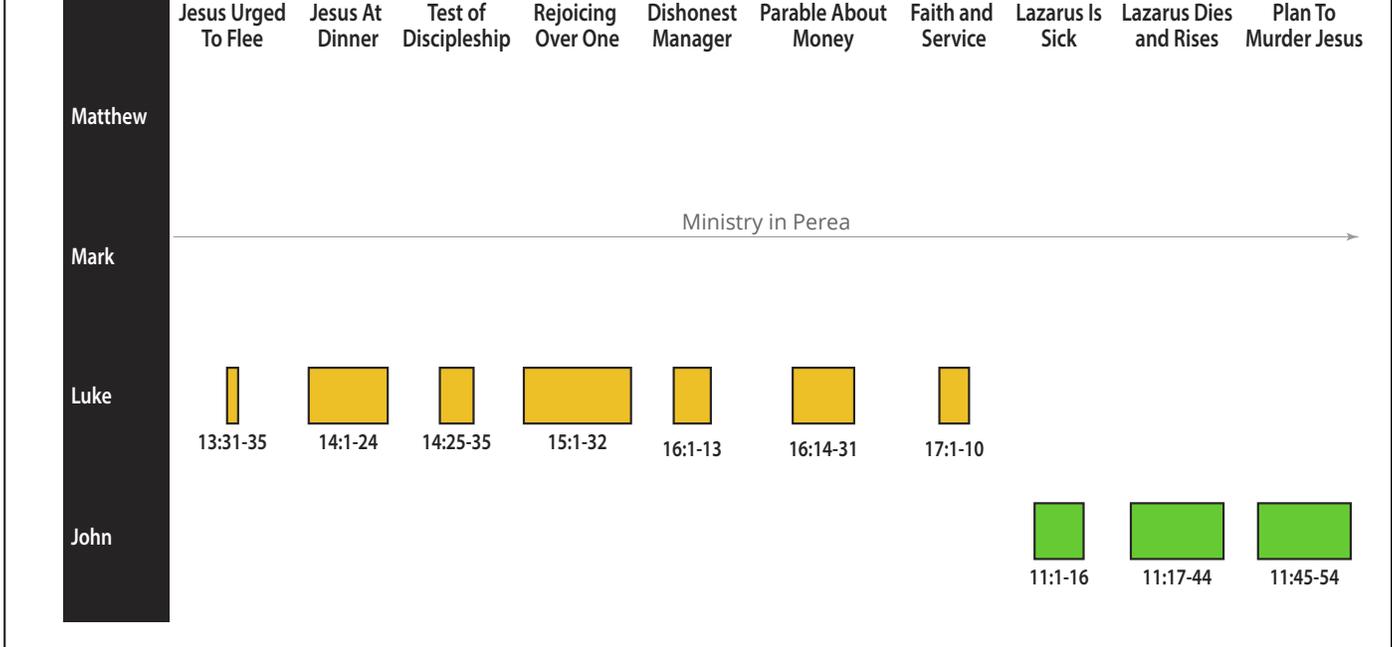
*She said to Him, “Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, even He who comes into the world.” John 11:27 (NASB)*

She reveals her heart and inner conviction that Jesus was an extraordinary person—the Christ and the Son of God. The Greek word that is translated as Messiah is also translated as “Christ.” This is a remarkable statement, but we must remember that earlier John, Andrew, and Peter believed Jesus was the Christ (John 1:35-42), yet they did not remain faithful to follow Him. Also, we have already learned that the term “Son of God” means that Jesus was and is God because in John 10:31-36 Jesus told the Jewish religious leaders that was the meaning of the phrase. Most likely she understand the meaning of “Christ,” and her understanding of the “Son of God” but her understanding *was very incomplete*. Remember that earlier she had said in verse 21-22 that God would give Him whatever He asked. She did not understand that He was actually God.

Otherwise, why would she imply that Lazarus would remain dead until the resurrection (John 11:21, 24)? Why would she say, “I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You”? If she actually understood that Jesus was God, her comments would have been different. She would have known that He could raise Lazarus by Himself. She would have understood that it did not matter if Jesus had arrived before Lazarus died or after Lazarus died or if Lazarus had been dead for ten years. Because Jesus could raise Lazarus at any time and by Himself because He was and is Life. Later

# Life and Heart of Jesus

Ministry In Perea - Fall of A.D. 32



Martha will reveal once again that she did not completely understand the meaning of the “Son of God.” She will object when Jesus asks for the stone on the grave to be removed. She will complain that Lazarus will stink. She will not understand that Lazarus would not stink because Lazarus would walk out of the grave alive! The very personification of Life can give life.

All of this reveals that she did not completely understand the term “Son of God.” She did not realize that Jesus was the Jehovah in Exodus 3. She did not know that God was standing before her, talking to her. He is “I AM, the resurrection and the life!”

**CONCLUSION.** The first part of John 11:28 tells us that Martha then left Jesus alone and went home.

*When she had said this, she went away . . . John 11:28 (NASB)*

When Jesus claimed that He is the I AM He revealed that He was the Jehovah of the Old Testament who created the universe and the world in six days. Jehovah had already raised five individuals: the son of Zarephath’s widow. 1 Kings 17:17-

22 tells us after the son of Zarephath’s widow had died she complained to Elijah. Then Elijah took the boy from her and carried him to the upper room of the house, laid on him and asked God to raise him from the dead. The Lord heard and raised the son. The son was raised because of God’s faithfulness and power. The next resurrection occurred when the son of a Shunammite woman was raised. 2 Kings 4:32-35 says that Elisha did the same thing that Elijah did, with one exception. When Elisha laid on top of the son he was mouth-to-mouth, eyes-to-eyes and hands-to-hands with the boy. Then the flesh of the child became warm. But maybe the most amazing Old Testament resurrection occurred when a dead man’s body was thrown into a grave and his body touched Elisha’s bones (2 Kings 13:20-21). In the New Testament two more people were raised before Lazarus died and was resurrected. They are the son of the widow Nain (Luke 7:11-15), and the daughter of Jairus (Luke 8:41-42, 49-55). That is a total of five individuals who were resurrected before Lazarus. Lazarus will be the sixth person who is resurrected. The facts are that Jehovah put life into these dead corpses. If He put life into dead bodies, He

could and does give spiritual life to whomever He wills. God is the Giver of Life — physical and spiritual.

Jesus would be crucified soon and three days later He would be raised from the dead. We must remember that Jesus had already made the incredible statement that He would resurrect Himself (John 10:17-18). And we must not dishonor God the Father and the Holy Spirit by not mentioning that God the Father (Acts 2:24; 3:15, 26; 10:40-41; 13:30; 17:31; Romans 4:24; 1 Corinthians 6:14; Galatians 1:1; Hebrews 13:20) and the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:11) would resurrect Jesus too!

Finally, remember that 1 Corinthians 15:20 teaches that Christ was the “first-fruits” of those who are asleep and some day would be resurrected. That is, Jesus was the first one resurrected to immortal life.

**But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.**

**But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ’s at His coming . . . 1 Corinthians 15:20, 23 (NASB)**

Those who would be resurrected to eternal life are referred to as those who are asleep. Their bodies are dead but their spirits are alive in heaven. Some day God will give those mortal, dead, and decayed ashes immortal life. He is the Life that gives life (1 Corinthians 15:23). Believers everywhere should rejoice that God is Life and Jesus is the first example that a man was resurrected to immortal life. Since Jesus is the God-man who was resurrected to immortal life, it reveals that believers can be and will someday in the future have immortal bodies like Jesus’ body (1 John 3:2)! Rejoice and praise to the Lord Jesus!