

# Daily Bible Study Commentary by Pastor Steve

We're excited to have you digging deeper into the Word. The best way to use this study guide is to read the Bible verse(s) first, then Pastor Steve's commentary. God bless you.

## John 10:37-38

**vs37-38:** Having already said, "The works that I do in the name of My Father, these bear witness of Me" (v25) (literal), Jesus again challenged these leaders to recognize that He was not only saying that He was the Son of God, He was doing miracles which proved His claim. These were genuine miracles that no honest person could deny. They required a level of power that only God could provide. If someone sincerely questioned whether or not God was at work through Him, all they would need to do would be to examine one of His miracles. They were signs that God approved what Jesus said and did, that the Father was "in" Him (guiding, revealing and empowering Him), and Jesus was "in" the Father (representing Him, expressing His character, submitting to His will and depending on His power).

## John 10:39-40

**v39:** There is absolutely nothing wrong with the logic of Jesus' defense. His works were so unquestionably miraculous that they did, indeed, prove that God was with Him, and these leaders had no answer to this challenge, so they resorted to brute force. They surged forward and attempted to seize Him, but somehow He managed to escape ("went out from their hand").  
**v40:** Jesus had repeatedly shown enormous courage in the face of such threats. Time after time He had returned to the temple knowing that the religious authorities wanted to arrest and execute Him. But after escaping this latest attack He left the city and went out to a place beside the Jordan River where John the Baptist had begun his ministry (Jn 1:28). It was the site where He Himself had been baptized (Mt 3:13-17) and called His first disciples (Jn 1:35-51). He did not return to Jerusalem until shortly before Passover (Jn 12:1), three to four months later.

## John 10:40-41

**v40** (continued): At some point during those months, He left the Jordan to visit Bethany (Jn 11:7, 18), a village located about two miles east of Jerusalem. He went there only to raise Lazarus from the dead (Jn 11:11) and then from there traveled north to a city near the eastern edge of the Judean wilderness, called Ephraim (Jn 11:54). **vs41-42:** John doesn't record anything Jesus said or did during those months that He spent near the Jordan River, but He must have continued to minister because John says, "Many came to Him" and "many believed in Him there." Those who had listened to John the Baptist preach at that same location, two to three years earlier (Jn 1:15, 19-36), still remembered this word about Jesus, and after listening to Jesus teach and watching Him minister they concluded that what John had said about Him was true: Jesus was the promised Son of God (Jn 1:34; Ps 2:7); He had existed before His birth (Jn 1:15); He would take away the sin of the world (Jn 1:29); and He would baptize God's people in the Holy Spirit (Jn 1:33). This response shows that John had successfully carried out His assignment to "testify to the Light" (Jn 1:8).

## John 11:1-2

**vs1-2:** While Jesus was staying near the Jordan a messenger arrived requesting that He come quickly to the village of Bethany because His dear friend Lazarus was dying. Lazarus and his two sisters, Mary and Martha, were followers of Jesus, and the family gladly welcomed Him and His disciples into their home when they passed by (Lk 10:38-42; Jn 12:1-2). Since there were so many women named "Mary" at the time, John identifies this "Mary" as the woman who performed a profound prophetic ministry shortly before Jesus was crucified (Jn 12:1-8). She anointed Him with an entire vial of very expensive perfume and then wiped His feet with her hair. At the time, Jesus explained that she was symbolically preparing Him for His upcoming burial (Jn 12:7-8).

## John 11:3-4

**v3:** It's about eighteen miles from Bethany to the Jordan River, so the sisters must have sent someone young and strong enough to carry their request as quickly as possible. Their message was simple: "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick (weak; ill)." The fact that they sent a messenger at all meant the situation was urgent. It meant they were worried and hoped He would come immediately, before it was too late. **v4:** When Jesus heard their plea, He recognized at once that the Father intended to use this event as another sign, particularly to the leaders in Jerusalem, that He was the Son of God (Jn 10:36). Lazarus and his sisters were a very prominent family, which can be seen from the fact that many religious leaders came out from the city to mourn when Lazarus died (Jn 12:19, 33). After describing the miracle of raising Lazarus, John will tell us the effect that event had on those leaders. He says, "Therefore many of the Jews (religious leaders), the ones who had come to Mary and beheld what He had done, believed in Him" (Jn 11:45).

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## **John 11:4**

**v4** (continued): When Jesus heard the message from Mary and Martha He said, "This sickness (weakness, illness) is not to death but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it" (literal). In other words, "This illness won't kill Lazarus, but God is going to use it to bring honor to Himself and cause more people to believe in His Son" (paraphrase). And though John doesn't tell us what the messenger did after He heard Jesus' statement, we can safely assume that he then carried that announcement back to the waiting sisters (v10). Yet apparently Lazarus had died shortly after the messenger left Bethany. It was a day's walk down to the Jordan River and a day's walk back, and Jesus remained at the Jordan for two days before leaving for Bethany (v6). So by the time He finally arrived there we learn that Lazarus had been dead for four days (v17). It's likely that Lazarus was already dead before the messenger reached Jesus.

## **John 11:4**

**v4** (continued): We can only imagine the shock Mary and Martha experienced when the messenger returned with the good news that Jesus had said Lazarus wouldn't die, and his recovery would bring glory to God. By that point in time the sisters were either preparing the body for burial or had already placed it in the cave which served as the family "sepulcher" (burial tomb where the body was allowed to dry until its bones could be placed in a bone box and stored in a small niche in the cave wall). The man Jesus said wouldn't die, was obviously very dead, and the apparent inaccuracy of His announcement must have shaken the sister's faith. Though they had never heard Jesus speak a false word, there must have been some initial confusion followed by further questioning to determine whether the messenger was reporting the Lord's statement correctly. Yet that announcement must have also stirred hope. It contained a promise that God would glorify Himself and His Son through their brother's sickness. Four days later when Jesus finally arrived Martha was able to say to Him, "And [even] now I realize that whatever things you ask God, God will give You" (literal) (v22). Even after Lazarus had been dead for four days she acknowledged that a miracle was still possible.