

John 11:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already.

Analysis

Jesus arrives to find Lazarus four days dead, confirming He delayed purposefully. Jewish tradition held the soul lingered three days; the fourth day marked irreversible death and bodily decay. This timing eliminates any naturalistic explanation (coma, mistaken death). The specific detail authenticates the account and magnifies the miracle. Four days also suggests Jesus received the message, waited two days, then traveled two days—perfect divine timing.

Historical Context

First-century Jewish burial was immediate due to climate. The four-day period exceeded any doubt about death's reality. Bethany's proximity to Jerusalem (v. 18) meant many witnesses to verify the miracle.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does the four-day detail strengthen our faith in the miracle's authenticity?
2. What does God's precise timing teach about His sovereignty in our lives?
3. In what ways do specific historical details confirm Scripture's reliability?

Interlinear Text

Ἐλθὼν	οὖν	ὁ	Ἰησοῦς	εὑρεν	αὐτὸν	τέσσαρας	ἡμέρας
came	Then	^{G3588}	when Jesus	he found	that he	four	days
G2064	G3767		G2424	G2147	G846	G5064	G2250
ἤδη	ἔχοντα	ἐν	τῷ	μνημείῳ			
already	had	lain in	^{G3588}	the grave			
G2235	G2192	G1722		G3419			

Additional Cross-References

John 11:39 (References Jesus): Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.