

JESUS RAISES LAZARUS FROM THE DEAD

BIBLE TEXT : John 11:1-46

LESSON 145 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?" (John 11:40).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

John 11:1-46

¹ Now a certain *man* was sick, *named* Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

² (It was *that* Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)

³ Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.

⁴ When Jesus heard *that*, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

⁵ Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

⁶ When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

⁷ Then after that saith he to *his* disciples, Let us go into Judaea again.

⁸ *His* disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?

⁹ Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.

¹⁰ But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

¹¹ These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.

¹² Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.

¹³ Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.

¹⁴ Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

¹⁵ And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I Lazarus' Death

1 After receiving a message of Lazarus' sickness, Jesus delayed His return to Bethany several days that He might work a miracle, John 11:1-6, 15

2 Jesus' announcement that He would return to Bethany caused among the disciples great concern for His safety, John 11:7-10, 16;

John 10:31

³¹ Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him.

John 8:59

⁵⁹ Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

3 The personal safety of Jesus was largely guaranteed by the protecting power of God, so long as His work remained unfinished, John 11:9, 10;

Luke 13:31-33

³¹ The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee.

³² And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third *day* I shall be perfected.

³³ Nevertheless I must walk to day, and to morrow, and the *day* following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.

John 13:30

³⁰ He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.

Psalms 91:11-12

¹¹ For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

¹² They shall bear thee up in *their* hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Matthew 10:29-30

²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.

³⁰ But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

4 To correct His disciples' misconception of Lazarus' condition, Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead," John 11:11-14

II The Divine Physician

1 Martha was the first to meet Jesus as He came to Bethany, John 11:20

2 Martha's and Mary's testimonies were the same, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died," John 11:21, 22, 32

3 When Mary came to see Jesus, many of the mourners followed her, thinking she was going to mourn at Lazarus' grave, John 11:28-33

4 Jesus sought to encourage the faith of Martha and Mary to believe on Him as the Resurrection and the Life, John 11:23-27, 40;

1 Corinthians 15:54-58

⁵⁴ So when this corruptible shall have put on

believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.

¹⁶ Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellowdisciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

¹⁷ Then when Jesus came, he found that he had *lain* in the grave four days already.

¹⁸ Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off:

¹⁹ And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.

²⁰ Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat *still* in the house.

²¹ Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

²² But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give *it* thee.

²³ Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

²⁴ Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

²⁵ Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

²⁶ And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

²⁷ She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

²⁸ And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee.

²⁹ As soon as she heard *that*, she arose quickly, and came unto him.

³⁰ Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him.

³¹ The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there.

incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

⁵⁵ O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory?

⁵⁶ The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

⁵⁷ But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

5 The weeping of Jesus revealed His compassion, John 11:33-38;

Luke 19:41

⁴¹ And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it,

Hebrews 5:7

⁷ Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;

Isaiah 53:3

³ He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were *our* faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

6 Some of the onlookers were mystified that Jesus had not been present to heal Lazarus, John 11:37, 4. 15

III Resurrection Power

1 Jesus' statement that He was the Resurrection and the Life is one of His greatest affirmations of His deity, John 11:25, 26

John 1:4

⁴ In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

John 5:26

²⁶ For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

2 Timothy 1:10

¹⁰ But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:

1 John 5:12

¹² He that hath the Son hath life; *and* he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

2 Jesus proved His deity by calling forth Lazarus from the grave, John 11:38-44

3 Many, seeing the miracle of Lazarus' resurrection, believed on Christ, while others went to tell the Pharisees all that had been done, John 11:45, 46;

John 12:9

⁹ Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.

John 12:17-19

¹⁷ The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record.

¹⁸ For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle.

¹⁹ The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him.

³² Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

³³ When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled,

³⁴ And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.

³⁵ Jesus wept.

³⁶ Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!

³⁷ And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?

³⁸ Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

³⁹ 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.

⁴⁰ Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

⁴¹ Then they took away the stone *from the place* where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up *his* eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.

⁴² And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said *it*, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.

⁴³ And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

⁴⁴ And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

⁴⁵ Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.

⁴⁶ But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.

uke 16:31

³¹ And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

NOTES:

Troubled Days

The incident of Lazarus' death is told by only one of the Gospel writers, Saint John. It is thought by some Bible students that the other writers did not mention Lazarus because he was still alive at the time of their writing. The miracle of his resurrection caused such fury and hate toward Jesus and Lazarus, from the Pharisees, that perhaps the disciples did not wish to bring undue notoriety to Lazarus. Because Lazarus became such a monument to the power of God, the Pharisees wished to kill him. (**John 12:9-11** ⁹ Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead. ¹⁰ But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; ¹¹ Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus. **John 12:17-19** ¹⁷ The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record. ¹⁸ For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle. ¹⁹ The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him.)

The time of Lazarus' death was in the last year before Jesus' crucifixion. Jesus' denunciation of all hypocrisy and fraud in the Jewish worship and teachings was causing great opposition from various quarters. The many miracles Jesus had been performing were adding fuel to the fires of jealousy and envy already burning. This last year of Jesus' ministry is often called the year of opposition, and it was so in truth. Jesus found it necessary to leave the immediate vicinity of Jerusalem to escape persecution. He was beyond Jordan, where John the Baptist first baptized, when He received a message that Lazarus was sick (**John 10:40** ⁴⁰ And went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode).

Jesus' announcement that He wished to return to Judaea again was received with many misgivings by His disciples. They well knew the tide of hate that was rising against Jesus and His followers. Reminding Jesus that only recently the Jews had sought to stone Him, they questioned the wisdom of His returning at that time.

Jesus sought to alleviate the fear of His disciples for His safety by reminding them that His work was not yet finished. So long as His mission was not finished, divine Providence was being invoked in His behalf. "Are there not twelve hours in the day?" Jesus questioned His disciples. He meant by that: as the day runs its course hour by hour, according to the plan of God, so also would the plan of God work in the life of Jesus Christ — each piece and segment in its own place and time. While the days were evil, and Jesus was beset by many enemies, nevertheless, Jesus was enabled by the providence of God to do the works He was sent to do, and to deliver His message of righteousness: Jesus on several occasions separated Himself from the people to avoid violence, and to keep the temper of the people as calm as possible. Yet, doubtless, God's hand stayed the murderous intents of the enemies of Christ on more than one occasion. (**Matthew 26:55** ⁵⁵ In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple,

and ye laid no hold on me.)

A time and place of repentance is given to all, and the Pharisees and the people were given time by the Lord to consider the works and preaching of Christ, whether they were of God. Until the hour of decision arrived, and the work of Christ was finished, Jesus would have opportunity to declare Himself. This did not seem to relieve the disciples' fears much, for Thomas said, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

Delayed Answer

Jesus, hearing of the sickness of Lazarus, delayed several days before going to Bethany. Jesus purposely tarried, and the reason which He gave His disciples was that the glory of God might be manifested when He did go. Jesus said Lazarus was asleep, but His disciples did not understand that Jesus spoke of death as sleep (meaning the body sleeps and the soul is with the Lord). Jesus corrected their misunderstanding by saying plainly, "Lazarus is dead." No message had reached Jesus to tell Him of the death of Lazarus, but Jesus knew that Lazarus had died, for He was the son of God and knew all things; there was nothing hid from Him.

We know from the record of the Bible that Lazarus and his sisters Martha and Mary were greatly beloved of Jesus. He often stayed at their home, and it was Mary who sat at His feet to learn of Him. One would think that Jesus would have been very solicitous of the welfare of His close friend, knowing he was sick unto death. Jesus could have spoken the word, and Lazarus would have been instantly healed regardless of the distance they were apart. (**Matthew 8:8** ⁸ The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed)

The love of Christ is far above anything that mortal man can conceive. Jesus loved Lazarus and desired to see him well and happy; but most of all Jesus wanted Lazarus and the others there to know God's eternal truths, and to be a partaker of them. Wherever Jesus was, in everyday life, He never failed to use those present circumstances to point men to another life, eternal life! He did not fail to use this particular happening graphically to show men who He was, and what His message was. As the truths Jesus had to present were so foreign to most men's thinking, He had to portray them vividly and with methods that would enable men to see His meaning.

God's answers to our prayers are sometimes different from what we expect. Jesus did not refuse to aid Lazarus, but He did it in His own time, that the glory of God might be seen. How effectively that glory was manifested is evident from the fact that many believed on Christ from that time on.

Faith

Jesus did not go to the house of Lazarus when He arrived at Bethany. Perhaps this was to avoid any unfavorable disturbance until He had accomplished that which He desired. Martha was the first to meet Jesus, and her first words were the same as Mary's later greeting: "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." There did not seem to be any doubt, either with Martha or Mary, that Jesus could have healed Lazarus had He been there.

Martha's next statement to Jesus showed her faith in Him: "But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of

God, God will give it thee." Martha's faith did not seem to have flowered into its maturity yet, for Jesus encouraged her faith by telling her that her brother would live. Martha's assertion that she knew her brother would live on the Resurrection Day brought forth from Jesus one of His grandest declarations found in Scripture of Himself, His deity, and His resurrection power. "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." Martha, not yet being able fully to grasp all that Jesus meant by such a statement, and nearly overwhelmed with the immensity of what she had just heard, believed all her faith could grasp. She broke forth with a heartfelt utterance in answer to Jesus: "Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God." A worthy declaration of faith from anyone!

Mary, coming to Jesus, could only fall at His feet weeping, and saying: "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Jesus, seeing the weeping of Mary and the Jews who followed her, wept also. Much speculation has been advanced as to Jesus' weeping at the grave of Lazarus, and at Mary's sorrow. Undoubtedly the weeping of Jesus was more than just human sorrow at the loss of a friend and more than sympathetic tears for Martha and Mary in their bereavement. Jesus' sorrow, springing to the surface from the depths of the soul of the Son of God, was the compassion of God for His loved ones.

Christian Consolation

Here at the graveside of a dearly beloved friend, Jesus met again the enemy He had come to defeat and destroy — death! the sting of which is sin. Saint and sinner alike have suffered physical death because of God's condemnation on a sinful and cursed world. It was never in the plan of God for His creatures to suffer the terrible pangs of death. God never intended, in the beginning, that families should be separated and loved ones torn away from one another. Sin brought the enemy of men — death!

Only God can comfort the bereaved at the time of death. Jesus, as the express image of God, was at Lazarus' tomb to give the comfort of God to the sorrowing by bringing life from death. The Psalmist has said: "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Psalm 30:5). The tears of the children of God may be for a season, but God will wipe them away, and they shall be no more. (**Revelation 21:4** ⁴ And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away)

The consolation of Christ, which is the hope of the resurrection of the dead in Christ, has always been a great bulwark of strength to the Christian. The Resurrection is the very backbone of the Gospel. Jesus told His disciples: "Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy ... and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you" (John 16:20, 22; **1 Corinthians 15:13-19** ¹³ But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: ¹⁴ And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. ¹⁵ Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. ¹⁶ For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: ¹⁷ And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. ¹⁸ Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. ¹⁹ If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable).

Lazarus died that God might raise him up again for a great testimony to the weakhearted and those doubtful of the power of God. Jesus' answer to Martha's and Mary's sorrow is the answer to all who can hear it: "Though he were dead, yet shall he live." It has been often said that death cannot abide where the source of all life, Jesus Christ, is. At the command of Jesus to Lazarus to "come forth," he came forth, alive and well.

The news of Lazarus' death and resurrection spread everywhere, and many believed on Jesus because of it. Lazarus became a powerful testimony to the power and grace of God during his entire lifetime.

It was but a short time later that Jesus again proved His power, and the truth that He was the Resurrection and the Life, by His own resurrection. The Pharisees thought with His death they had Christ silenced forever. That hope was short-lived, for just three days later the grave could no longer contain the Giver of Life, and He burst forth in all His glory. Where many believed on Jesus because of the resurrection of Lazarus, untold millions have believed because of the resurrection of Christ.

Millions have died Christian deaths, and done so willingly with the utmost confidence that He who was able to raise up Jesus would also raise them up, and would also raise up all those who call upon His name (**2 Corinthians 4:14** ¹⁴ Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you).

"He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and talks with me along life's
narrow way.
He lives, He lives, salvation to impart!
You ask me how I know He lives?
He lives within my heart."

QUESTIONS

- 1 Why did Jesus delay His return to Bethany?
- 2 Why did the disciples not wish Him to go?
- 3 What assurance did Jesus give His disciples for His safety?
- 4 What encouragement did Jesus give Martha that all would be well with her brother?
- 5 Why did Jesus weep at the grave of Lazarus?