

LESSON 2

JESUS' RAISING OF LAZARUS

Scripture Text: John 11:1-44

Today we find Jesus in contact with the home of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. Lazarus is sick unto death, and the sisters send to Jesus an urgent message. It was amazing to the sisters that Jesus made no immediate response to their call in behalf of their brother. When Jesus finally arrived at Bethany, Martha met Him with much sorrow. She said, "Lord if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Jesus replied, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." Jesus did not say that resurrection came about through Him. He said, "I AM the resurrection, and the life."



MEMORY VERSE: *Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.* *John 11:25*

Death of Lazarus

John 11:1-17 A certain man was sick . . . Lazarus . . . Mary and her sister Martha. This event occurred just before Jesus entered Jerusalem for the last week before His crucifixion—a very busy week before He faced the Cross. It seemed amazing to the sisters—as it would to us until we read the complete story through—that Jesus was in no hurry to go to them. Here we see an example of those strange delays of the divine which so often bewilder us. But within these delays are wrapped some of God's richest blessings. It is hard to see how such a misfortune can be **for the glory of God**. It was not fear of the Jews that kept Him away, such as His disciples felt for Him (verse 8). Jesus' actions were planned. He lived as continual Master of every situation. He saw the end from the beginning.

Lazarus is dead. How did Jesus know? No messenger had come to Him. **I am glad . . . I was not there**—Let the situation be at its worst, that the remedy may appear more clearly. **To the intent ye may believe**—To inspire belief is the purpose in Jesus' mind. **In the grave four days**—No question that he is dead, beyond human help.

Jesus Is the Resurrection

John 11:18-37 When Jesus came, Martha met Him outside the village. There is faith and also a tone of rebuke in her words—**Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died**. She questioned in her mind why He hadn't come immediately. **But I know, that even now . . .** She thought this a harder case than illness, but had hope in Jesus' ability. Is anything too hard for Him who can do all things? When Jesus told her, **Thy brother shall rise again**, she thought He spoke of the future Resurrection.

I am the resurrection, and the life—Jesus Christ holds the power of life. He has even more, He IS life. **He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live**—life in soul and life in body. Jesus gives life to both. Both are resurrections, the soul being made alive spiritually and the body being made alive after death. **Whosoever liveth**—is born again, made alive spiritually—**and believeth in me**—continues joined to Him by faith—**shall never die**—the second death, eternal spiritual death cannot touch him (Revelation 20:14). There will be a resurrection of the body on some distant day, but for everyone who accepts Jesus as Lord and Savior, there is an immediate resurrection from sin to salvation, from darkness to light, from bondage to freedom, from death

into a life that is everlasting. **Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord.** Martha's faith reached far enough. Her mind may not have comprehended all, but in taking Him in, she took in all He could do and would do. **Jesus wept.** At the grave of Lazarus we see Jesus sharing human sorrow. He continues to share it to this very hour. "Does Jesus care? . . . Oh, yes, He cares, I know He cares, His heart is touched with my grief . . . I know my Savior cares." Thank God for a caring Jesus!

Lazarus Resurrected

John 11:38-44 Jesus . . . groaning in himself—grieved and burdened. **Take ye away the stone.** When Jesus Himself was raised from the dead, angels rolled back the stone from the door of the tomb. But on this occasion Jesus refused to use divine power so long as there was human power available and unused. He commanded human beings to roll back the stone. When man is involved, God will give him a part to do. God will not do for us what we can do for ourselves. Martha thought of the immediate problem—**he stinketh.** There was a weakness in her faith. Jesus tried to help it—**if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see . . .** We have many stones to roll aside to get our faith where it needs to be to receive miracles from God. Some are the stones of unbelief, doubt, and anxiety. **Jesus lifted up his eyes**—All His work was in close relationship with His Father. **Thou hearest me always**—never a break in their fellowship, nothing to hinder His prayers. This is how WE fulfill the Scripture, "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Broken fellowship with God brings a hindrance in our prayers. This union with God is the secret of victory and prayer answers for us as well as for Jesus. **Because of the people which stand by I said it.** The concern of Jesus was always for the people around Him. **That they may believe that thou hast sent me.** Here we see from Jesus' words how important it is that we believe this—**for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins** (John 8:24).

He cried . . . Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth. By His Word Jesus had power over death. Lazarus was not raised to life as we will be on the Resurrection Day. He had to die again. Then we all will be changed and made immortal, to die no more. Christ was the first to experience this change to His body (1 Corinthians 15:20). **Loose him, and let him go.** Now was complete the purpose for which He had acted as He had. The faith of the sisters was honored, many believers were added, the disciples were anchored stronger in faith, and God and His Son were glorified. Lazarus was bound with graveclothes, and his face was bound about with a napkin when he came forth. Even after men are saved, they need the help of others in order to break many of the binding powers that sin had placed upon them. It is our duty, as saints, to help to loose them and let them go free.

God's Will

How many of our misfortunes would be for the glory of God if we only let Him finish what He has begun? This is His plan for giving us blessing. God can use even sickness and death to our good and His glory if we hold onto Him in faith and let Him follow out His purpose.

JUST A THOUGHT

**The promises of God are certain, but they do not
all mature in ninety days.**

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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