

Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead (John chapter 11)



(Partially adapted from Biblestudytools.com)

Who Was Lazarus in the Bible?

Lazarus was a friend to Jesus and a brother to Mary and Martha. Lazarus lived in Bethany, south of the Mount of Olives and about two miles from Jerusalem. Including the accounts listed in John, the Bible tells us Jesus visited Bethany on several occasions (Matthew 21:17, 26:6; Mark 11:1, 11-12, 14:3; Luke 10:38-42, 19:29, and 24:50).

John 11:5 tells us, "Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus." The word for "loved" used here is *agape*. Jesus was fond of them and loved them dearly and they were beloved friends.

Bible Story of Lazarus Raised from the Dead

Jesus receives a message that Lazarus is ill. Jesus tells his followers: "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it."

Jesus then delays his departure two days. The disciples are afraid of returning to Judea, but Jesus says: "Our friend Lazarus is asleep, but I am going to awaken him." when the apostles misunderstand, he clarifies, "Lazarus is dead, and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe."

When they arrive in Bethany, Lazarus has been dead and buried for four days. Before they enter the town, Martha, Lazarus' sister, comes to meet Jesus and tells him: "if you had been here, my brother would not have died". Jesus assures Martha that her brother will rise again and states: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" Martha affirmed that she does indeed believe, "Yes, Lord. I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world".

Upon entering the village, Jesus is met by Mary and the people who have come to console her. Upon seeing their grief and weeping, Jesus is deeply moved. Then, after asking where he was buried, the shortest verse in the entire Bible is found – "Jesus wept". After that, Jesus asks for the stone of the grave to be removed, but Martha interjects that there will be a smell. To which Jesus responds, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?"

So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said: "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me." When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

Lazarus is mentioned again in the chapter 12. Three days before Jesus is crucified (Tuesday), Jesus returns to Bethany attends a supper that Martha serves. Jesus and Lazarus together attract the attention

of many Jews and John states that the chief priests consider having Lazarus put to death because so many people have come to believe in Jesus on account of his raising Lazarus.

7 Important Lessons from Lazarus' Story

Here are at least seven lessons from Lazarus' story.

1) *Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life*

When life's trials get to be *too much*, it only takes thought of our Lord and Savior to get us back on track. For a Christian, this earthly life isn't all there is, because one glorious day Jesus will raise us and bestow upon us the glorified bodies He promised (John 11:26). Therefore, every day is a day to rejoice (Philippians 4:4), for we are His and no one can snatch us out of His hands (John 10:28). Romans 10:9 and 1 Corinthians 12:3 both proclaim this truth and 2 Timothy 1:10 states Jesus abolished death. Our lesson? Belief in Jesus means we too are overcomers.

2) *Believers are to grieve with hope*

1 Thessalonians 4:13 reminds us we are not like those who have no hope. Our hope is in the Eternal One, the One Who gives us eternal life with Him (John 11:25, Romans 6:5, 1 Corinthians 15:42).

3) *Jesus has compassion for each one of us and calls us by name.*

"Lazarus, come forth!" Can you imagine what that was like? Not only to be Lazarus but to witness such a stunning event by the One who is sovereign *over* death? It has been stated that if Jesus had not called Lazarus by name, and had simply said, "Come out," every dead soul would have resurrected!

It's easy to create the image in our heads of an omnipotent God Who oversees the events of mankind without personal involvement. After all, how could He have time to relate to the day-to-day life of billions of people? Not so with our Lord. The Bible says He loves us, and to love someone is to engage with them. John, *the beloved disciple* (John 21:20), would have a greater sense of the love displayed by Jesus. We, too, can infuse that amazing love into everything we think, speak, or write of Him. "We love because He first loved us (1 John 4:19).

4) *Jesus does everything for God's glory. Get in on what He is doing—for His glory.*

Romans 14:23 says whatever does not proceed from faith is sin. Whoa! In order to glorify God, we must first have faith in Him. We, in the belief of what He has done, is doing, and will do, are privileged to take part in bringing glory to God (Matthew 6:9).

5) *Jesus' wisdom and knowledge supersede that of man.*

It seems everyone around Him questioned Jesus' decision to delay his visit to his sick friend. God's timing is *always* perfect, for He is omniscient. Trust the wisdom of Scripture; it's God's message to each of us.

6) *Jesus came to have a relationship with everyone, not just the Jews*

1 John 2:2 tells us He did. Jesus, in contrast to the Jewish leaders, interacted with all peoples. Because of Jesus and the love He imparts to us, we can share the good news with everyone. We are commanded to meet regularly with our Christian brothers and sisters (Hebrews 10:24-25), and we are commanded to go out into the world (Matthew 28:19-20). In the account of Lazarus, Jesus said, "...everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die."

7) *Jesus is our ultimate teacher*

The sisters called Jesus, *Rabbi* (teacher). Once again, imagine *being* there to sit at His feet. We can do this every day as we read and meditate upon Scripture, therein our faith grows.