

John 11

The ministry of Christ was a manifestation of God in Him. The miracles John explained in his Gospel reach their climax in the resurrection of Lazarus, which is a prelude to the resurrection of the Lord Himself.

The reputed first tomb of Lazarus at al-Ei-zar-iyā in the West Bank generally believed to be the biblical Bethany. The name Lazarus is Latin-ised from the Hebrew: אלעזר, El' āzār, El-e-azar - "God is my help".

John 11:1 Now a certain *man* was sick, *named* Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

Bethany was on the Eastern slope of the Mountain of Olives about 2 miles from Jerusalem. Lazarus is only mentioned by name by John but his family is referred to by Matthew, Mark and Luke. We know the sisters from the story found in Luke 10:38ff. It seems Simon the leper was in some way associated with this family. They appear to be a family of some money for they owned their house and had their tomb in a garden. Prior to Christ's crucifixion they were able to give an alabaster box of ointment worth a considerable sum in today's money.

John 11:2 (It was *that* Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)

John has jumped ahead in time his account of this is found in John 12:1-11.

John 11:3 Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.

In their distress, the sisters turn to the one in whom they have complete confidence. They know He is a sympathizing friend to whom they can report their troubles.

John 11:4 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.

Death was not the object of this sickness. It had been permitted for another reason. The sickness was to manifest the divine power of Christ in rescuing Lazarus from the jaws of death.

John 11:5 Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

Christ's delay was not caused by indifference.

John 11:6 When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

Jesus worked beyond Jordan was not yet complete and he did not want to abandon a work that was half done. The long interval between the burial of Lazarus and his being raised would make the miracle more remarkable.

John 11:7 Then after that saith he to *his* disciples, Let us go into Judaea again.

Jesus proposes to re-cross the Jordan where his enemies were gathered.

John 11:8 *His* disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?

They knew that the authorities in Jerusalem were determined to murder him.

John 11:9 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.

The Jews divided the day into twelve hours of day light where a man could see clearly where he was waking. Christ loved to speak in simile.

John 11:10 But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

Jesus is not stumbling in the dark, He has a clear pathway, even though it leads to Jerusalem, his enemies and to death He will walk in the light.

John 11:11 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.

In Mark 5:39 Jesus speaks of death is sleep.

Death will be followed by resurrections just as sleep is followed by wakening up.

John 11:12 Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.

The disciples took Jesus's words literally.

John 11:13 Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had .spoken of taking of rest in sleep.

Often quiet sleep is the turning point of some sickness and foreshadows recovery.

John 11:14 Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

John 11:15 And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.

Had Christ arrived before Lazarus' death He would have felt compelled to heal him. Such a miracle would have been less striking and less proof of His Divine power. For the sake of the disciples, to increase their faith and for a demonstration of his mastery of the realms of death Jesus was glad Lazarus had been buried four days and decomposition had begun.

John 11:16 Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

Thomas Didymus literally "the twin" looked upon his return to Jerusalem where the hate of Jesus was so intense as a return to certain death.

Thomas was willing to die with him.

John 11:17 Then when Jesus came, he found that he had *lain* in the grave four days already.

Christ previously had raised two persons from the dead in Galilee cf:

Mark 5:35-42 While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's *house certain* which said, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further? 5:36 As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe. 5:37 And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James. 5:38 And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly. 5:39 And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. 5:40 And they laughed him

to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying. 5:41 And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise. 5:42 And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was *of the age* of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment.

Luke 7:11-16 And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people. 7:12 Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. 7:13 And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. 7:14 And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare *him* stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. 7:15 And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother. 7:16 And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people.

Now in Judea right at Jerusalem in the face of his enemies comes the crowning miracle of Jesus' ministry. Jesus will demonstrate He is the resurrection and the life.

John 11:18 Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off: This is a little less than two miles.

John 11:19 And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.

By Jews John distinguishes the inhabitants of Judea and usually means those of influence or official character. Pharisees arranged that friends and professional mourners should sit with the family. on the floor for thirty days.

John 11:20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat *still* in the house.

She went out either from caution because of the Jews or because mourning customs were offensive to Him

John 11:21 Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

These words express a conviction, a lamentation and a slight degree of reproach all combined.

John 11:22 But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give *it* thee.

At the same time she had a faint hope that was hardly defined in her own mind.

John 11:23 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

Jesus taught a literal resurrection of the body.

John 11:24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

This was a belief held by all the Jews except the Sadducees.

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

This is a grand declaration that could have never fallen from the lips of any sane mortal. Jesus is the power which opens every grave, gives life to the sleepers and calls them forth to a life of a new existence that endows men with eternal being. When Jesus opened His own tomb He did it for all mankind.

The coming resurrection of Lazarus a few moments later was the demonstration of the truth of Jesus's words.

John 11:26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

The dead who believe in Him shall be raised alive, the living who believe shall never perish. Death will only be a change to a better existence. Christians never know death, but they pass at once to be with Christ.

John 11:27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

He asks about her faith and she responds with the good confession.

John 11:28 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.

Jesus had evidently directed her to go get her sister.

John 11:29 As soon as she heard *that*, she arose quickly, and came unto him.

Quickly shows her joy in coming to Him.

John 11:30 Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him.

John 11:31 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.

The message to Mary was private and the Jews could only imagine she had gone to weep at the tomb as was the custom of the women.

John 11:32 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.

This act shows her grief, her dependence and her faith in Christ. Mary believes the Lord could have easily healed Lazarus and he would have not died

John 11:33 When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled,

The word “groaned” really means indignant. He was indignant at the hypocritical weep of the Jews who followed her and were acting according to the rules. Empty religious forms were an abomination unto Him.

John 11:34 And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.

John 11:35 Jesus wept.

The shortest verse in the Bible and one of the most touching.

We see Jesus the prophet weeping over the sins of Jerusalem but Jesus the brother weeping at the tomb of Lazarus.

John 11:36 Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!

Some of the Jews were touched by Jesus's tender affection.

John 11:37 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?

The word "and" should be translated "but." Their argument is rather if he opened the eyes of a blind man, why could He not save a friend from death.

John 11:38 Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

Graves were sometimes cut in the rock as we dig them in the earth.

Sometimes they're cut in the side of a hill, and sometimes natural caves were selected. This family vault was a cave closed by a stone that covered the entrance.

John 11:39 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.

The body had been four days in the tomb. It had been long enough for decomposition to occur. She seems to have thought Jesus wanted to look at the body of His dead friend.

John 11:40 Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

He reminds her His promise which is condition upon their faith.

John 11:41 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.

The Son always sought to honor the Father and to show the Father was in Him and He was in the Father. They were in constant communication.

John 11:42 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.

Because such a miracle would induce the people to believe that God had sent him.

John 11:43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

As John will say in Revelation 1:15 “his voice as the sound of many waters.”

Job 19:23-27 Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! 19:24 That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever! 19:25 For I know *that* my redeemer liveth, and *that* he shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth: 19:26 And *though* after my skin *worms* destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh shall I see God: 19:27 Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; *though* my reins be consumed within me.

Joh 5:21 For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth *them*; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.

John 5:25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. 5:26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; 5:27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. 5:28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 5:29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

Matthew 25:31-36 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 25:32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats: 25:33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 25:34 Then

shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 25:35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 25:36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

I Corinthians 15:50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. 15:51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 15:52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 15:53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. 15:54 So when this corruptible shall have put on 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. 15:55 O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory?

I Thessalonians 4:13-17 But, I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. 4:14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 4:15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 4:17 Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

II Peter 3:1 This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in *both* which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: 3:2 That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: 3:3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, 3:4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the

fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of the creation.

2Pe 3:5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: 3:6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: 3:7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. 3:8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

2Pe 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. 3:11 *Seeing* then *that* all these things shall be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought ye to be in *all* holy conversation and godliness, 3:12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? 3:13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. 3:14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

John 11:44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

At once the sleeper arose and came forth from the dark cold bed were he had lain for 4 days. The napkin was tied under his Jaw to keep it from falling. The winding sheet would interfere with his ability to walk.

This miracles the climax of the wonderful works of Christ and because of the final plans for the arrest and crucifixion.

We have learned

We should take our troubles to Christ as the sisters Mary and Martha did.

Even if Christ displays His response we should not doubt knowing:

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

We should look upon Christ as an all sufficient helper.

He can be touched with feels of our infirmities cf: Hebrews 4:15.

Christ is the fountain of life, the resurrection and the life, if we had eaten of the Bread of Life, Drunk the Water of Life and have Christ in us, the hope of glory, we have eternal life. We are immortal.

John 11:45 Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.

Many of the Jews of Jerusalem were compelled to believe Jesus was a man of God.

John 11:46 But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.

Others non-believers unable to explain the miracles went at once to the Pharisees to report.

John 11:47 Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles.

The chief priests including Caiaphas and Annas were Sadducees and they were leaders of that party. The old feuds between them and the Pharisees were forgotten and the two sects untie to call a meeting of the Sanhedrin. The term "this man" is used to show contempt. Jesus is doing miracles and they are idle doing nothing, doing nothing to counter the influence of Jesus and His miracles on the people.

This body admitted the miracles and was without excuse for their blindness. Two of their members Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus later became Christians, so it was easy to learn what happened at this meeting.

John 11:48 If we let him thus alone, all *men* will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.

They take it for granted that the miracles were worked to produce belief in Christ. The Romans did not have to come, they were already there. Judea was Roman Province, there was a Roman Governor and a Roman garrison was station in the tower of Antonia overlooking the temple itself

John 11:49 And one of them, *named* Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all,

Caiaphas was a Sadducees, a powerful and unscrupulous man who was high priest for eighteen years from 18 AD to 36 AD. He was closely wedded to the Romans as they appointed twenty-five high priests in one hundred years or a different one every 4 years.

Caiaphas is saying: “You do not even know the simplest rule of statesmanship, one must be sacrificed to the many.” The proud Sadducees contrasts his clear policy of putting Jesus to death with the vague do nothing previous policy.

John 11:50 Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

People “laos” is the Jewish race while “ethnos” is the nation as a civil and political organization.

John 11:51 And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation;

He unwittingly uttered prophecy, like Balaam while wickedly counseling the death of Christ.

John 11:52 And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

Jesus death broke down the barrier between Jew and Gentile and made friends of the hostile clans of the Earth. What Rome could not do with a sword was accomplished by a cross.

John 11:53 Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.

Here is the official accumulation of the Jewish hatred and their plans of the death of Christ. Their previous plots were often and many cf:

John 5:16-18 And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day. 5:17 But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. 5:18 Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

John 7:32 The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him.

John 7:45 Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him?

John 8:59 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.

John 9:22 These *words* spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.

John 10:39 Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand,

John 11:54 Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.

Jesus once more retired from Jerusalem

John 11:55 And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves.

They went to purified themselves as ceremonial uncleanliness before the feast cf:

Exodus 19:10-11 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes, **19:11** And be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai.

John 11:56 Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?

There was a restless curiosity among the country people to know more of the wonderful teacher of whom they had heard so much.

John 11:57 Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he were, he should shew *it*, that they might take him.

This order was given to intimidate Christ and His disciples to keep Him from coming to the Passover.

Sources: KJV, e-Sword, Clarks Commentary, B.W. Johnson's Commentary & Wikipedia