

Gospel Reflections:  
JOHN 11

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JOHN 11:1-17

- 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 believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.
- 16: Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, 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.

True death is not only of the body, but of the soul, when it is cut off from GOD because of the sin that hangs over it. JESUS CHRIST refers to Himself as The Light of the world, Who has come into the world, that men might not die in their sins, but be reconciled back to GOD. JESUS delays and then goes the long way to Mary's home through Judea, where He had just escaped after the Jewish leaders at The Temple accused Him of blasphemy for saying that He and The Father are one. But through there He goes again, and Thomas in fact says, "Let us go with The Master and die with Him at their hands!" But His hour had not yet come for The Cross.

So we read of The Lord's intentional delay, not only to give Lazarus enough time to die physically, but to in fact have been dead 4 days when He arrives on the scene. Why? So that there is no doubt that The Son of Man has power over even life and death, that He could and would raise His friend Lazarus back to life from the dead! What does Moses testify of to the ancient Israelites in The LORD's Name, but that The Word of Life is there at their fingertips, that they should take it and live? He says in DEUTERONOMY 30:14-15, "But The Word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in

thy heart, that thou mayest do it. See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil.”

JOHN 11:18-27

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.

JESUS, ever in control of all the situations in which He passes, declares Himself to Martha, “I am The Life and The Resurrection. Believe in Me as The Messiah and you shall live eternally with Me in Paradise Above!” But first He says to Martha, “Your brother shall live again!” Here Martha confesses her faith in the promise of Eternal Life for the righteous with The LORD. But JESUS is about to raise Lazarus from the dead now, in her present tense, as a sign to call men to believe and confess in Him as The Messiah!

Note also that, even amidst her terrible grief, Martha confesses her faith in GOD’s Messiah, that “Thou art The CHRIST!” Here we will recall Saint Peter’s confession of The Divinity of JESUS, when The Lord questioned His disciples and asked them point blank in MATTHEW 16:15, “...but whom say ye that I AM?” Peter then confesses what all of the Apostles should have known in MATTHEW 16:16, “...Thou art The CHRIST, The Son of The living GOD!”

JESUS then explains in the next verse that such knowledge of Who He is comes from GOD The Father, revealed in The Spirit of GOD, and not arrived at by mere intellectual inquiry! To know JESUS as The CHRIST of The Most High, we must have The Faith of Martha and Peter. And it is upon such Faith that, as JESUS declares in MATTHEW 16:18, that “...upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it!”

JOHN 11:28-37

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.

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?

“JESUS wept.” Does not The very Heart of CHRIST weep for our suffering and pain, as He wept for the sorrow of Mary and her family at the death of their loved one? I was at the bedside of a cancer patient with a hospital Chaplain recently. He knelt down at the bedside and held the patient’s hand. Beginning to pray with and for her, I too knelt down to hold the patient’s other hand at the other side of the bed. As I looked up, I could see the Chaplain’s face, and that he was holding back tears himself as the patient wept. I too found myself wanting to cry for this poor woman’s sorrow and suffering.

Afterwards, in the hall of the cancer ward, I shared with the Chaplain that I observed him to be feeling the patient’s suffering so deeply that he seemed on the very verge of tears. He asked me, “How did that make you feel?” I said, “I too, was – like you – holding back my own tears as the patient wept.” He answered, “Was not JESUS Himself there with us over that lady, also weeping?” I answered simply, “Yes.” O how much The King of the universe loves us, we who’s physical bodies are mere dust, and whose souls suffer so in this life!

So much does The Almighty love us that He came to suffer for us, that our tears may end by His hand! So David cried in his distress to The LORD as in PSALM 56:8, O GOD, “Thou tellest my wanderings: put Thou my tears into Thy bottle: are they not in Thy Book?” GOD knows our sufferings. He cares. That is why He came Incarnate to The Cross. For us. He, having counted all our tears, there at Calvary wipes them away forever when we enter into His Eternal Presence in Heaven Above, where as Saint John foresees in REVELATION 21:4, “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!”

JOHN 11:38-45

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.

Now we see indeed that JESUS is The CHRIST, for He is truly The Resurrection and The Life for all those that believe and life in Him! "Lazarus, come forth!" Picture The Lord stretching forth His hand to the catacomb of death! See the dead man, his soul reunited with his body by The very Word of GOD spoken over Him, stir, sit up and stumble into the light of the day towards The Lord! And as the burial cloths are removed upon The Lord's Command, see the joyful awe and exuberant shock of his loved ones and all those standing there, "He lives again and is made whole!"

Therefore many believed on JESUS, not merely as a prophet of GOD and a good Teacher of The Law, but as The Saviour Himself, The Promised One of Israel sent do deliver His people and all men from the sting of sin and the grave! So Saint Paul sings to us in I CORINTHIANS 15:55-57, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is The Law. But thanks be to GOD, Which giveth us the victory through our Lord JESUS CHRIST!"

JOHN 11:46-57

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

47: Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for This Man doeth many miracles.

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.

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

50: Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that One Man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

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

52: And not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the

children of GOD that were scattered abroad.

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

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.

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.

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?

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.

What were the members of The Sanhedrin afraid of? Was it truly for the people and the nation, that somehow JESUS might bring the wrath of the brutal pagan Romans upon their heads? Or was it something else? Truly, as Caiaphas the high priest had prophesied, "This One Man must die for the sake of the nation and gather in all the people of GOD!" Was however their concern that "all the people will believe on JESUS as The CHRIST," and therefore no longer look to them or recognize their importance and authority before men?

O how vain we can be, even those of us who love The LORD with all our heart, mind and soul, and try to love our neighbours as ourselves! David speaks The Words of chastisement of The LORD upon us all in PSALM 4:2-5, "O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn My Glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? Selah. But know that The LORD hath set apart him that is godly for Himself: The LORD will hear when I call unto Him. Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah. Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in The LORD" and not in your own vanity!