



The Resurrection of Lazarus

Λαζαρος

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When their brother Lazarus became deathly ill, the two sisters, Mary and Martha, sent an urgent message to the Lord Jesus Christ to come quickly to Bethany. Bethany was a village of Judea on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives approximately two miles from Jerusalem. The Lord Jesus had recently withdrawn across the Jordan River to avoid arrest and possible stoning for being falsely accused of blasphemy.

The Lord Jesus Christ did not hurriedly go to Lazarus, His beloved friend, but rather waited for two days to begin His journey. Following the two day waiting period He told His disciples, *“Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awake him.”* (John 11:11) The disciples clearly did not understand what the Lord Jesus had spoke and the Lord then told them in no uncertain terms that Lazarus was dead and that He was glad for their sake He had not been present at the time of death.

Upon setting out for Bethany it was clear that the Lord Jesus Christ was determined to work a miracle. The Lord Jesus was taking great personal risk upon returning to Judea. By the time the Lord reached his destination of Bethany, Lazarus had been dead four days. It is thought by scholars that the reason the Lord chose to wait four days to reach Bethany was to dispute a Jewish belief that could have contradicted the miracle about to take place. The devout Jews of the time believed a person’s soul hovered over the dead body for three days and did not depart until the fourth day. Surely, He wanted to avoid this speculation and give all glory and honor to God.

Official mourning was taking place at the home of Mary and Martha. The mourning began on the same day as the death and burial of Lazarus. Burial was immediate in Bethany due to the warm climate. Weeping and wailing was culturally accepted and expected, lasting three days. Lamentation continued the remainder of the week followed by general mourning which was to last thirty days following death. During the thirty days mourners would come to visit the household of the deceased Lazarus, as was the custom to mourn with the sisters.

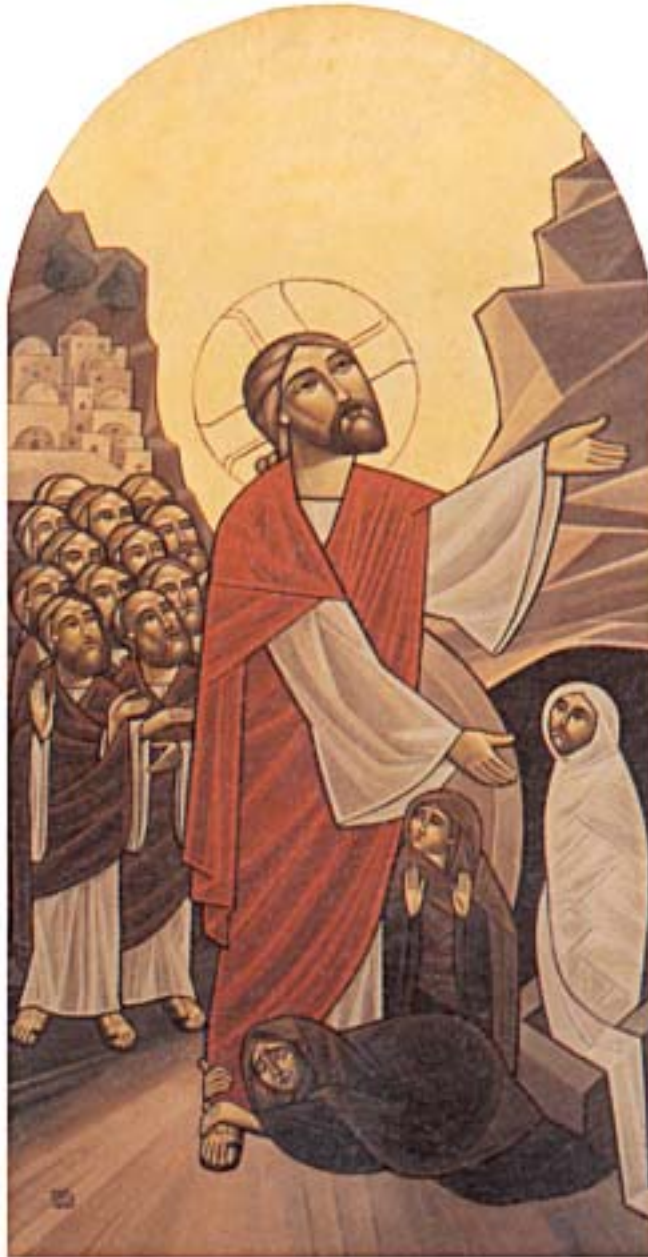
When the Lord Jesus Christ arrives at the home of Mary and Martha, Martha goes to meet the Lord, while Mary remains at home, sitting. Sitting was the correct cultural posture when mourning and greeting mourners. When Mary learns of the Lord’s arrival she goes quickly to meet Him. After these exchanges, the Lord Jesus Christ goes to the place of burial. Within the burial tomb was a corpse that by the fourth day most probably had begun to deteriorate as embalming was forbidden in Judaism.

The Lord Jesus Christ commanded the stone, which sealed the tomb, be rolled away immediately giving thanks to the Father for all His work and prays for the bystanders that they may see the Glory of God within the forthcoming miracle. The Lord called the dead man back to life, *“Lazarus, come forth.”* (John 11:43)

Lazarus came out remaining still bound in his linen burial clothes, which signified he would need them again for he will eventually die. In contrast, when the Lord Jesus Christ died and was Resurrected, His burial linens were left in the tomb. The Lord had truly risen and would never die again.

The resurrection of Lazarus, only mentioned in the Holy Gospel of St John, divided the Jews who had come to Bethany to pay their respects to the sisters. Many of the miracle’s witnesses believed that the Lord Jesus Christ was the chosen Messiah who would restore Israel. Others most probably saw trouble forthcoming and reported all they saw to the Jewish leaders who may have begun to think of killing both the Lord and Lazarus at this time. It is widely believed that the Jewish leaders did not want to destroy the working relationship between the reigning high priest and the Romans. The other three Holy Gospels purport that the decision to kill the Lord Jesus Christ ultimately came when He overturned the moneychangers’ tables at the Temple.

On the Saturday before the Lord’s Crucifixion He once more went to Bethany as a guest for dinner in the home of His beloved friend Lazarus (Lazarus Saturday) and the following day He entered into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday). It could be of no mere coincidence that the beloved disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, St John, wrote in his Holy Gospel



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of the Lord's beloved friend, Lazarus and Lazarus resurrection. Dining with His beloved friend, Lazarus prior to His entry into Jerusalem could not have been a mere coincidence either.

The power of friendship and love in the case of Lazarus

as well as St John the Beloved proved to be eternal.

May the Lord Jesus Christ reign in the hearts of each of us as it did in the beloved friend Lazarus and the beloved disciple, St John.

Holy Bible Chariot Quiz

1. *In battle, who took 1,000 chariots from King Hadadezer and "houghed at the chariot horses"?*
(2 Samuel 8:4)
2. *Which prophet had a vision of four chariots, each drawn by a different colored horse, coming from between what looked like two brass mountains?*
(Zechariah 6:1-3)
3. *Who was made "to ride in the second chariot" of King Pharaoh?*
(Genesis 41:42-43)
4. *Whose war chariots were lost in the Red Sea?*
(Exodus 14:23-28)
5. *Who had "cities for chariots" for his 1,400 chariots?*
(1 Kings 10:26)
6. *Who had 900 iron chariots, and made life unbearable for the Israelites for 20 years?*
(Judges 4:3)
7. *When "there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire", who watched his friend depart*



"Chariot of Fire"

- heavenward in the vehicle?*
(2 Kings 2:11, 12)
8. *Who had the reputation of driving "furiously"?*
(2 Kings 9:16-20)
9. *Which King, wounded in battle, died in his chariot and was brought to Samaria where "one washed to chariot in the pool of Samaria"?*
(1 Kings 22:34-38)
10. *Who was left with an army of not more than fifty horsemen, ten chariots and ten thousand footmen?*
(2 Kings 13:7)