



Online Bible Study Lesson7

Resurrection of Lazarus

1 Corinthians 15:22

Since we are all in Adam we will all die, likewise, all who are in Christ will be made alive.

Dying stinks, we all agree. Death ruins an otherwise great life. Our dreams die, our works vanish, all our accomplishments are buried with us. All that's left at the end is a block of tombstone engraved with our name. Did you realize that God didn't create us to die, but to live forever?

Read John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:20-21

Well, great news, there is hope. There is a resurrection from the dead, available for all of us. That's for sure, because God made us a promise.

We're going to have a terrific study today; a lesson that will give you hope for a future glorious day. Not only giving you hope, but the directions to realize how to experience what lies as the basis for our hope. The perfect Bible story to present such wonderful news is the story of Lazarus and Jesus. Let's study the death and resurrection of Lazarus, one of Jesus' best friends.

Read **John 11:1-44**

The Death and Resurrection of Lazarus

Lazarus was Mary and Martha's brother; all were good friends with Jesus. For instance, Mary would experience the privilege of anointing King Jesus' feet with expensive perfume found in **John 12:1-6**.

One day Mary and Martha sent Jesus a note saying that Lazarus had become very sick. Jesus immediately spoke to his disciples, saying, "*Lazarus' sickness will not end in death. No, it happened for the glory of God so that the Son of God will receive glory from this*" (**John 11:1-4**). Jesus remained calm, staying in place for two days after receiving the note.

Against his disciple's better wishes, *i.e.* their reluctance to return because of past attacks in the region, Jesus informed them that they were heading back to Judea. Jesus told them, *"Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep but now I will go and wake him up"* (John 11:5-13)

Jesus later clarified himself by saying Lazarus had actually died. Thomas thought that Jesus was walking into a trap, so he volunteered to go and die with Jesus. Thomas' bold attitude to follow Jesus is a perfect model for all of us to emulate. By the time Jesus and his disciples arrived at Bethany, Lazarus had been dead for four days. Both Mary and Martha had some regretful words for Jesus about his seemingly poor sense of timing. They of course wished he had arrived earlier, much earlier, in fact.... four days earlier so that Lazarus hadn't died at all.

Jesus told Martha, *"Your brother will rise again."* She thought he meant that Lazarus would rise along with everyone else in the last days. But, that's not what Jesus meant. He asked Mary, *"Where have you put him?"* After they showed Jesus Lazarus' tomb where he lay, Jesus stated, *"Roll away the stone!"* Martha, unsuspecting of a great miracle, said, "Lord, he's been dead for four days. The smell will be terrible."

Jesus responded, *"Didn't I say that you would see God's glory, if you believe?"* The stone was rolled aside. Jesus looked to heaven and prayed, *"Father, thank you for hearing me. You always hear me, but I said it out loud for the sake of all these people standing here, so that they will believe you sent me."* A hush fell upon the crowd. The anticipation overtook all who witnessed the prayer.

What was Jesus going to do?

Jesus shouted, *"Lazarus, come forth!"*

Lazarus appeared at the tomb's entrance, I guess he hopped to the entrance fully wrapped in strips of burial cloth. Everyone was in shock and in disbelief. A surreal moment enveloped everyone in the crowd. "Who is this man who can raise the dead?!" Jesus gave one final command, *"Unwrap him and let him go!"* Lazarus was freed from the bonds of death.

Can you think of a time when God used you in the miracle process?

Have you had to "roll the stone away" to see life come into a situation?

Lazarus was brought back to life and perfectly healed of physical death and its unknown causes. Physical death suffered a serious defeat in this miracle. You can bet there was a tremendous celebration to welcome Lazarus back to the living, but also to celebrate Jesus, their long-awaited Messiah. The death of Lazarus, with its accompanying pain and suffering, would soon be a distant memory to his loved ones.

Was the resurrection of Lazarus the first time a person was ever raised from physical death?

Would the resurrection of Lazarus be the last time a person was raised?

Let's find out.

List of Resurrections in the Bible

The Bible has a handful of people who physically died and were subsequently raised from the dead. Their resurrection accounts are listed here.

Old Testament Resurrections:

- **Widow's son resurrected by Elijah (1 Kings 17:17-24).** God worked a resurrection miracle through Elijah to confirm his status as a true prophet of God. The Lord also had mercy on the widow for her gracious aid to his appointed prophet.
- **Wealthy woman's son resurrected by Elisha (2 Kings 4:32-35).** As if confirming the office of prophet for Elisha, the Lord also worked a resurrection miracle on the wealthy, hospitable woman's young son.

New Testament Resurrections:

- **Jairus' daughter resurrected by Jesus (Mark 5:36-43).** The synagogue's leader, Jairus, was told by Jesus to not fear, but have faith. The crowd of mourners laughed at Jesus when he told them the 12 year old girl was only sleeping. He healed her and she immediately rose from the bed and walked around the room.
- **Widow's son rose to life by Jesus (Luke 7:11-17).** This was a momentous resurrection with many witnesses in the village of Nain. Jesus walked into

town and crossed paths with a funeral procession. He noticed the young, but widowed, mother of the child and his heart overflowed with compassion. He told her not to cry. Jesus touched the coffin, and said, "Young man, I tell you, get up!" The boy sat up and began talking! Jesus lovingly, joyfully handed the boy back to his mother. The little boy was the young widow's only child. We have such an awesome Savior!

- **Moses and Elijah resurrected at Jesus' Transfiguration (Luke 9:28-36)** Most theologians fail to include these two bodily resurrections as a miraculous event. However, the two prophets appeared in physical body and voice to witnesses after they died or left this current life. Why wouldn't you consider Moses and Elijah's physical return to earth a miracle resurrection?
- **Resurrection of Lazarus by Jesus (John 11:1-44)**
- **Jesus Christ resurrected by the Holy Spirit (John 20:1-10)** Jesus was the first fruit of all who will be resurrected to eternal life in heaven (**1 Corinthians 15:23**).
- **Dorcas rose from the dead by Peter (Acts 9:36-43)**. Dorcas was a Christian servant, always helping those in need. She got sick and passed away quickly one day. The people heard that Peter was nearby so they summoned him. Peter came and knelt in prayer for her and she instantly arose.
- **Eutychus rose from the dead by Paul (Acts 20:7-12)**. Eutychus was listening to Paul preach when the young man fell asleep, falling out a window to his death three stories below. Not only was Eutychus raised from the dead, but his injuries were all perfectly healed, too.

Let's return to the resurrection of Lazarus, so we can learn more of the story's truths.

Resurrection of Lazarus

This biblical account of Jesus' miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead contains valuable insight about Jesus' nature. Most importantly we see his human attachments, which are much like our own. Jesus loved this family, *i.e.* Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. They were some of his best friends. There is a neat story given us in **Luke 10:38-41**, where Jesus, like an older brother, rebuked Martha for being too busy tending to his needs. Martha told Jesus to tell Mary to help her, but Jesus told Martha she was out of line, because Mary was sitting at his feet learning from him. In other words, it was more important to be fed spiritual food by Jesus, than to feed Jesus food for his body. With Jesus, the spiritual always trumped the physical. Our perspective of life should be similar.

In the case of Lazarus, Jesus knew that he would be raised from the dead. He also knew that Martha and Mary were suffering terrible sorrow, so he longed to rush to Bethany and raise Lazarus from the dead. However, he had to wait until the appointed time. The Father had a set moment when the resurrection miracle was to be performed. Lazarus met the time of official death for the Jews which was believed four days. Everyone knew Lazarus was dead. That's when Jesus arrived, when all hope for Lazarus had ended. Four days of death. Four days spent wrapped in grave clothes. Four days worth of (graphic beware) rigor mortis, liver mortis, and decomposition had ravaged Lazarus' corpse.

Martha said, "Lord, he will smell." She was absolutely correct. Lazarus' state of decay makes this miracle truly amazing. Although Jesus knew that Lazarus would soon be raised, the moment struck his emotions. He saw the people's anguish. He saw the pain of death. He heard the agony of those who lost a loved one. He felt the pain of the loss himself. The moment struck him like a lightning bolt and the bible records that **Jesus wept!**(**John 11:35**).

Jesus, the Resurrection and the Life

In raising Lazarus from the dead, Jesus demonstrated his power and love for us. Only God can raise a physically dead person back to life again. Jesus raised Lazarus so that his disciples and other onlookers would be prepared for his own forthcoming resurrection from the dead. The news of Lazarus' resurrection spread like wildfire. The miracle brought joy, but also resentment. The scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees began plotting Jesus' demise (**John 11:53**). They hated him with a burning passion. They hated this entire situation so much that they even wanted to kill Lazarus! (**John 12:9-11**).

Miracles and Belief

John 11:45 shares that many people believed in Jesus as the Messiah after he raised Lazarus from the dead. That was one of the intended purposes of Lazarus' death and resurrection. God was drawing people to himself (**John 6:44**), through his Son, by giving him this great work to perform (**John 5:19**). People watched Jesus perform the miracle, but Jesus pointed their eyes to the Father. God's glory was the ultimate purpose for the resurrection of Lazarus (**John 11:40**). People seeing this miracle were in absolute awe. Think about it for a moment. Think of losing a loved one to death for four days. Think of Jesus suddenly dropping in on you and raising your loved one to life.

How would you react? Exactly! **You would be in AWESTRUCK WONDER!**
We know our God is the God of the living, not a God of the dead! (**Luke 20:38**).
So, what is a man to do?

Resurrection of Lazarus Discussion Questions:

1) If someone needs rational evidence before they believe, such as personally witnessing a resurrection or other miracle, what would you tell them? (see **Luke 16:31**).

2) Why do you think Jesus wept over the death of Lazarus when he knew he was going to raise Lazarus from the dead in a few moments?

3) How does Christ motivate those of us who don't have the good fortune to witness one of his incredible miracles? (see **John 20:29**).

Resurrection of Lazarus Bible Verses:

So also is the resurrection of the dead. Our bodies are buried in corruption; but raised in incorruption. Our bodies are buried in dishonor; but raised in glory. Our bodies are sown in weakness; but raised in power. They are buried a natural body; but raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body and there is also a spiritual body. **1 Corinthians 15:42-44** NHEB.

For our dying bodies must put on bodies that will never perish, and the mortal must put on immortality. But when this corruptible will have put on incorruption, and the mortal will have put on immortality, then what is written will happen: "Death is swallowed up in victory." "Death, where is your victory? Death, where is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. **1 Corinthians 15:53-57** NHEB.