

Lazarus' Resurrection Reveals The New Birth And The Rapture

I have found from my study of the Bible that God uses ordinary events in the Scriptures to give us insight into future events before they happen.

We find one such event recorded in the Gospel of John, which gives an account of Lazarus' death and resurrection. John 11:1-4 says:

"Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. 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."

Notice Jesus' reaction when He heard the news that Lazarus was sick:

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

The story of Lazarus was a type or profile of mankind, who was spiritually dead when Jesus came to earth. When the man left Bethany with the message, Lazarus was only sick, but by the time he arrived, Lazarus was dead, and Jesus knew it.

God's Word reveals in a marvelous way the past, the present, and the future. This fits perfectly with the Scriptural profile found in Genesis 1:14-18, which, by double reference, revealed that Christ's first coming to earth would be on the fourth day.

"And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also." (Genesis 1:16)

Follow this thought pattern very carefully, for this event gives us insight into the fourth day account revealing what was to happen in the four thousandth year on earth. Great light was to come to the earth in two ways: by the sun on the fourth natural day, and by the birth of Jesus in the four thousandth year by prophetic reference. (2 Peter 3:8)

We know Jesus was in Heaven at the time Abraham validated the Covenant by raising the knife over his son Isaac (Genesis 22:1-18). It was that Covenant that made it legal for God to send His Son to the earth to redeem mankind from spiritual death (Genesis 15:1-8). But Jesus stayed two days (2,000 years) still in the same place where He was (Heaven) before He came to the earth. Those two days fulfill the prophetic profile in the Genesis account, for the greater light came on the fourth day, representing four thousand years of human history.

Jesus was on His way to Bethany when He was met by Martha.

"Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" (John 11:21-26)

Notice the prophetic implications of His statement: "...*I am the resurrection, and the life...*" In other words, Jesus was saying that He (Jesus) has already died, and that whosoever has believed in Me will be resurrected at the time of my appearing. And whosoever is alive and believing in Me at my appearing shall never die, but become immortal.

These statements fit prophetically with what the Apostle Paul taught. Compare the following Scriptures with what Jesus said to Martha.

"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: 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." (I Thessalonians 4:16-17)

"Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 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." (I Corinthians 15:51-52)

Jesus' statement "... *whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die...*" in verse 26 of John 11, is prophetic of the righteous who will be alive at the time of the Rapture. He reveals that they will never die, but be caught up alive. It is obvious that Jesus was preaching the Rapture to Martha.

THE STONE AND THE LAW

When Jesus arrived at the tomb of Lazarus, He 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." (John 11:39)

When Jesus was born on planet earth, mankind had been spiritually dead for four thousand years. Notice that after Jesus heard that Lazarus was sick, He stayed two more days in the same place where He was, so He would arrive on the scene to give him new life on the fourth day. This profiles Jesus as the salvation of God. He came to fulfill the Law and make the new birth available to all mankind.

Jesus was beyond Jordan, where John had first baptized him, when He received the message that Lazarus was sick and it took the messenger a day to travel that distance. After Jesus heard that Lazarus was sick, He stayed two days still in the same place, making a total of three days. Then it took Jesus another day to get to Bethany.

Some might suggest that mankind was not spiritually dead before the Law was given, concluding that mankind had not been dead for a 4,000 year period.

God gave the Law to Moses approximately 2,500 years after the creation of Adam. But mankind was spiritually dead from the time that Adam sinned. This is what Paul was referring to in Romans 5:13, "*For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.*"

So, man had actually been spiritually dead for 4,000 years, but he did not recognize that fact until the Law came.

The very first thing Jesus did when He arrived on the scene was to remove the stone from the tomb. That stone represented the Law, for the Law had kept mankind entombed in spiritual death.

Let's compare the following Scriptures in Galatians with Jesus' statement in Matthew.

"But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." (Galatians 3:22-25)

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." (Matthew 5:17-18)

It was through the law of works that sin had flourished. The Law revealed that man couldn't be righteous within himself; Jesus said he must be born again. (John 3:7)

THE MINISTRATION OF DEATH

Jesus removed the stone, which represented the Law that had entombed mankind. In II Corinthians, we find Scriptural precedent that the stone represented the Law.

"Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?" (II Corinthians 3:6-8)

In these verses Paul called the Law "*the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones.*" Remember God had written the Law in stone. Today we keep the spirit of the Law, but not the letter of the Law (II Corinthians 3:6). We know that spiritually dead people can't keep the Law, and those who are spiritually alive don't need the Law. We are not under the Law of the Old Covenant, but are under the Law of the New Covenant, which is the law of faith, which works by love (Galatians 5:6,13).

LAW FULFILLED

Jesus did what no man had been able to do: He lived perfect and upright under the Old Covenant for thirty years. He fulfilled it to the letter, and it passed away as stated by Paul in Romans 10:4, *"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth."*

In Paul's day, the Jews were still trying to obtain righteousness by the Law. In this dispensation of grace, those who believe Jesus is the Son of God and confess Him as Lord of their lives have eternal life. Eternal life is in the Person of Jesus Christ. If you are in Christ, you are a new creature and you have eternal life. The Apostle John brings the Biblical perspective of eternal life into sharp focus in the following verses.

"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that bath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." (1 John 5:11-12)

John made it so simple you would have to have help to misunderstand what he said.

RESURRECTION—LIFE IMPARTED

When Jesus removed the stone from the tomb, there was a glorious resurrection to new life.

"And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. 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." (John 11:43-44)

This was the way people were embalmed in those days: by being wrapped in strips of linen soaked in spices.

The grave clothes in which Lazarus were wrapped represent religious bondage. All kinds of man-made rules and regulations had been added to the Law. They couldn't eat with unwashed hands; they couldn't even walk through the fields and eat grains of Wheat on the Sabbath day. Those regulations turned out to be religious bondage for the people. Jesus commanded them to loose Lazarus and let him go from that which had him bound.

There are many today who are still bound in that same manner. But in John 10:10, Jesus said, *"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."* Abundant life is found only in the Person of Jesus Christ. *"He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."* (1 John 5:12) Choose Jesus Christ today.

MARANATHA!

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