

Sunday February 26th 2017
For Jews Request a Sign.....
Part Twenty Three

1). Joh 11:1 ¶ *Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. 2 It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. 3 Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love 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 may be glorified through it." 5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. 6 So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was. 7 Then after this He said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."*

a). We had seen last time that Lazarus's sickness was for a specifically stated reason – 'for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it'. And again here we have one of those remarkable situations where Lazarus, a real person, has a real sickness and dies because of it. But then, in the foreknowledge of God, at exactly the right time, the Lord takes this real event in order to teach profound spiritual truth concerning Israel's present and future, just as we had seen with the man blind from birth.

b). What a comfort it would be for Israel to know with respect to themselves that 'this sickness is not unto death' and that this sickness is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.

c). Now, as the scripture clearly says that Lazarus dies we should keep in mind that this is referring to his physical death, with the one dying then being located in the place of the dead. The 'death' the Lord speaks of in v4 is not this physical death but is rather talking of separation from God – separation from His light, His glory, His presence, His life with respect to the age to come and so the sickness pictured through Lazarus will not come to this end – it is not unto separation from God's purpose.

d). Even those who are eternally lost and have died physically are located now in the place of the dead and will be resurrected and will 'live' for eternity, but separated from God's purpose for all time - Re 20:11 ¶ *Then I saw*

a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. 14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

e). And the same of course is true for the eternally saved Christian who has died physically. Such a one is now in the place of the dead and at the time of the rapture will be raised first to appear at Christ's Judgment Seat and all will 'live' throughout eternity, but not all will rule with Christ, not all will have 'life' with respect to the age to come – Re 2:11 *"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death."*

And again 'death' in this verse, 'the second death', is talking of separation from God's purpose with respect to the Millennial Kingdom, not physical death or ceasing to exist. And those Christians who do not overcome will find themselves separated from the One who is 'the light of the world', finding themselves instead in the darkness outside, outside of the sphere of the One who is light - 1Jo 1:5 ¶ *This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.*

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f). And all of that to say this – although Lazarus dies physically his sickness is not unto 'death', it does not separate him from God's purpose.

g). And if we now bring this over to what the sign points to we can see that although Israel is sick as we have seen described in - Isa 1:4 *Alas, sinful nation, A people laden with iniquity, A brood of evildoers, Children who are corrupters! They have forsaken the LORD, They have provoked to anger The Holy One of Israel, They have turned away backward. 5 Why should you be stricken again? You will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, And the whole heart faints. 6 From the sole of the foot even to the head, There is no*

soundness in it, But wounds and bruises and putrefying sores; They have not been closed or bound up, Or soothed with ointment.

A sickness pictured in the second sign through the certain nobleman's son – Joh 4:47b.....*for he was at the point of death.*

And again in the third sign through the man at the pool of Bethesda, it is not a sickness unto 'death'; it will not result in the nation's separation from the purpose of God for them with respect to the Millennial Kingdom and the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

h). Israel's is a spiritual sickness brought about through the nation's unfaithfulness and disobedience over centuries of time that effectively sees them throughout their history in the place associated with 'death' rather than in the place associated with 'life'. And this situation is described the following way in Isaiah Chapter 28, verses which also prophetically look to the time of the Tribulation - Isa 28:14 ¶ *Therefore hear the word of the LORD, you scornful men, Who rule this people who are in Jerusalem, 15 Because you have said, "We have made a covenant with death, And with Sheol we are in agreement. When the overflowing scourge passes through, It will not come to us, For we have made lies our refuge, And under falsehood we have hidden ourselves." 16 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, A tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; Whoever believes will not act hastily. 17 Also I will make justice the measuring line, And righteousness the plummet; The hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, And the waters will overflow the hiding place. 18 Your covenant with death will be annulled, And your agreement with Sheol will not stand; When the overflowing scourge passes through, Then you will be trampled down by it.*

i). Israel being in the place of death because of disobedience and unfaithfulness is exactly the same picture we are given through the type, which is also a sign, of the prophet Jonah - Jon 2:1 ¶ *Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the fish's belly. 2 And he said: "I cried out to the LORD because of my affliction, And He answered me. "Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, And You heard my voice. 3 For You cast me into the deep, Into the heart of the seas, And the floods surrounded me; All Your billows and Your waves passed over me. 4 Then I said, 'I have been cast out of Your sight; Yet I will look again toward Your holy temple.' 5 The waters surrounded me, even to my soul; The deep closed*

around me; Weeds were wrapped around my head. 6 I went down to the moorings of the mountains; The earth with its bars closed behind me forever; Yet You have brought up my life from the pit, O LORD, my God. 7 "When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the LORD; And my prayer went up to You, Into Your holy temple. 8 "Those who regard worthless idols Forsake their own Mercy. 9 But I will sacrifice to You With the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD." 10 ¶ So the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

Here in Jonah we see that Jonah 'prayed to the Lord his God from the fish's belly', picturing Israel in that future day crying out to the God of their fathers from the place of death among the Gentile nations.

j). This is something not seen in the account of Lazarus as this is not the focus of the sign but can be seen in so many other places in scripture that it is not necessary for it to be there, but Jonah vomited onto dry land and the resurrection of Lazarus are 2 pictures of one and the same event – Israel restored and healed; their covenant with death having been annulled – all of which is inextricably connected to the 8th sign the resurrection of Christ – Mt 12:39 *But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 40 "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*

2). We had also noted this last time - Joh 11:6 *So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was. 7 Then after this He said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."*

a). And it will not escape our attention that if the Lord stayed 2 more days where He was it would be on the third day following the 2 days that He returned to Judea to raise Lazarus – resurrection is always seen in connection with the third day from the foundational type of day 3 of the restoration in Genesis Chapter 1 onwards.

b). Now the 2 days themselves are a reference to the 2 days of this present dispensation when the Holy Spirit is searching out a Bride for God's Son from among eternally saved Christians in the antitype of the oldest servant's search for a bride for Isaac in Genesis Chapter 24.

c). And we have also seen these same 2 days picturing the same period of time in connection with the Lord's dealings with the woman at the well leading into the second sign, the healing of the nobleman's son - Joh 4:3 *He left Judea and departed again to Galilee. 4 ¶ But He needed to go through Samaria.....40 So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. 41 And many more believed because of His own word.....45 So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they also had gone to the feast. 46 So Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum.*

So the Lord returns to Galilee after 2 days to heal the nobleman's son and He returns after 2 days to Judea to raise Lazarus from the dead – these are 2 facets of the same picture.

d). And the reason for the existence of these 2 days is seen at the end of Matthew Chapter 12 into the beginning of Chapter 13 and Chapter 21, from one perspective - Mt 13:1 ¶ *On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea.*

Mt 21:42 Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD'S doing, And it is marvelous in our eyes'? 43 "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.

And the reason for these 2 days is seen in Psalm 110 from another perspective- Ps 110:1 ¶ <<A Psalm of David.>> *The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."*

And seen in Acts Chapter 3 from yet another perspective - Ac 3:19 *"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, 20 "and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, 21 "whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.*

e). All that we must know about the 2 days of this dispensation from our own perspective, as the Holy Spirit searches for the Bride, can be found in the NT letters, beginning with Romans, which are themselves built upon, and provide an unveiling of, that which is found in the OT scriptures, including the Gospels.

f). But for John and the raising of Lazarus the focus is Jewish and takes us beyond these 2 days, when everything seen in our previous scriptures will have come to pass, into the 3rd day.

3). Joh 11:8 *The disciples said to Him, "Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone You, and are You going there again?"* 9 *Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world.* 10 *"But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him."* 11 *These things He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up."* 12 *Then His disciples said, "Lord, if he sleeps he will get well."* 13 *However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep.* 14 *Then Jesus said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead."*

a). The disciples are concerned about the Lord returning to Judea because the Jews had on several occasions sought to stone Him and their fear is based in their lack of understanding of the Lord's purpose and the timing of that purpose. It was perfectly safe to return to Judea at this time because it was still day, the 'Light of the World' was still in the world and His time had not yet come. It seems though that the disciples didn't quite get this – Joh 11:16 *Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."*

b). If we back up one verse though we will see something quite interesting - Joh 11:15 *"And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him."*

Jesus is glad for the sake of His disciples that He was not there before Lazarus died, so that they may believe – which begs the question, 'Believe what?'

c). The simple answer to this is that the disciples who witnessed the sign would believe that for which the sign was then recorded, that Jesus is the

Christ, the Son of God. And this is exactly what happened – but the raising of Lazarus is only a part of the picture to that end.

d). It was not the raising of Lazarus of itself that led them to believe because if we go to the night of the Lord's arrest following the last supper we will find this in – Mr 14:50 *Then they all forsook Him and fled.*

And Peter we will remember denies all knowledge of the Lord 3 times – Mt 26:73 *And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, "Surely you also are one of them, for your speech betrays you."74 Then he began to curse and swear, saying, "I do not know the Man!" Immediately a rooster crowed.75 And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." So he went out and wept bitterly.*

These are not the actions of those who understood and believed what it meant that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. These are the actions of the men fearful to go back to Judea because of the Jews.

e). But following the Lord's resurrection they do understand and they do believe and that which they then believed is in no small part dependent upon that which they witnessed at the raising of Lazarus. Perhaps we could be bold enough to say that the raising of Lazarus was the key that began to unlock the door to understanding the Lord's resurrection.

f). We will deal with all this in due time, but for now let's return to the account of Lazarus.

4). Joh 11:17 ¶ *So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days.*

So Jesus returns to Judea on the 3rd day to find that Lazarus has already been in the tomb 4 days. And these 4 days in the tomb present us with exactly the same picture as the man blind from birth.

a). Israel, since the nation's inception has been blind to her calling and blind to her Messiah and in consequence has been found to be in a completely contrary direction to the one the Lord required effectively placing the nation in the place of death, just as we saw with Jonah in the belly of the great fish in the sea.

b). The 4 days Lazarus is in the tomb represents 4000 years –

2Pe 3:8 ¶ *But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*

The 2 days, 2000 years of this present dispensation and then the 2 days, 2000 years of the previous dispensation taking us all the way back to Abraham and including of course the final 7 years of the Tribulation, Daniel's 70th week.

c). And so the nation will be seen to remain in the place of death, with respect to her calling for a full 4 days, 4000 years. And then after the 2 days, 2000 years of this dispensation and following the 2 days, 2000 years of the dispensation given to Israel, the Lord will return on the 3rd day to raise the nation from the place of death. This is what we are to see in the reference to 3 days and 4 days in the account of Lazarus.

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5). Joh 11:20 *Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house. 21 Then Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 "But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You." 23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." 24 Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." 25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. 26 "And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" 27 She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."*

I don't know if we can say that Martha rebukes the Lord, but she does point out that she believed that had He been there Lazarus would not have died. And in response the Lord tells her, 'Your brother will rise again' – but Martha at this point, somewhat like Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman, only sees the literal, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day'; to which Jesus makes the most profound declaration – 'I am the resurrection and the life....'

a). There is no resurrection apart from Him and there is no life, either eternal or Millennial, apart from Him – 1Th 4:16 *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.*

Joh 5:28 *"Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice*

Joh 11:43 *Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!"*

Col 3:2 *Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.*

We will continue with this next time though – if the Lord is willing.