

## John 11:1 – 17

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~ **The Lord Jesus Christ** will return to Bethany to raise Lazarus from the dead before the end of this report from our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God. We have reached some very definite high points in this section of Scripture; but each event is now succeeding itself. Today, we ascend just a little bit higher up the mountain of the government of God. This Gospel has been like climbing a mountain, as we said when we began in John. We're not at the top of the mountain in this chapter, to be sure – but we're getting closer – and the air is getting thin and difficult to breathe for some people. If you have not read all twenty previous safari reports from this book of the Bible, then I highly suggest you go back and do so now.

John wrote this Gospel because, although many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book, these were recorded that we might believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and by believing we might have eternal life in His Name. In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God; and the Word was made flesh. When Jesus came in the flesh, we saw His works through miracle, parable and discourse; and our reasonable conclusion is: the thesis by John is sustained.

The only lingering question is: can Christ raise the dead? That should be the question of any religion. Any reasonable person is concerned regarding death. It's certainly the big question for me in this life. Most people view death as some huge mystery; but this life happens to be a mystery to me, too. If there is no resurrection, then what I am doing makes me the most miserable of all men. Power over death is what the Lord Jesus holds in His hands. In our last several reports, we have considered how liberalism has thrown out all the miraculous accounts from the Bible. They use the most illogical argument that can possibly be made. They maintain that anything miraculous in nature simply doesn't belong in the Word of God. They don't have any scholarly predication on which to make such an outrageous claim;

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they only do so because they don't believe in the miraculous. They need to dismiss it. Well, if you eat fish, you better believe they have bones because they do have bones; and if you aren't careful you may choke to death on the very substance that is supposed to give you life.

The miraculous is definitive in Scripture. It's literally impossible to throw out the bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ without getting rid of the fact that He was God. The liberal explains this away in myriad ways. There is a substitute teaching that employs a synthetic doctrine. It's usually stated something like this: "... I believe in a religion of the here and now – not the hereafter." These people say the resurrection is a 'pie-in-the-sky' add-on - and they don't go for it. This was the position of the Sadducee's in Jesus day. The liberal wants a meat and potatoes religion, to be sure. Theirs must be practical and not at all theological. They say they only want practice and not doctrine. Interestingly, that's the kind I want, too! The difference is: I want the hope Christ offers in His truth.

Of course, we receive many 'benefits' when we trust Christ as our Savior – for lack of a better term – in the here and now; but the most valuable gift we receive is eternal life. Asking the question 'will the dead be raised' seems to be a very practical question. This life is so brief and this little day we live in is so small compared to eternity, that it may not even be worth mentioning. With all the wars that are going on around us, I think it's a very good question to ask if the dead will be raised. If you ever find yourself in the unfortunate position of saying good-bye to a child in death, you'll find this question more than practical. When you find yourself standing at the graveside of a loved one, you'll find yourself hopeless without the Lord Jesus Christ. You can turn your music up as loud as it will go, but it won't drown out the despair in your heart.

There is no cult, ism or religion in existence that claims to raise the dead. One or two false religions in recent history have made that claim, but they aren't around any longer. Of course, they couldn't produce the corpus delecti. Naturally, the resurrection involves raising the physical body. When the Lord Jesus sent out the disciples, He sent them to heal the sick and raise the dead. The liberal will seek to over-spiritualize this topic until it becomes

a moot point but, in the day we are studying, we are talking about physical healing and physical raising of the dead. To promise everything here and now but nothing hereafter is like giving a baby a rattle to play with in the playpen. It's not a tool. It's not helpful. It's just a mind-numbing pacifier.

A student pilot can take off in a jet airplane with minimal knowledge; but only an expert can land it safely. The liberal is the pilot that takes you into the clouds and gives you a few thrills. Then, when the fuel is depleted he grabs a parachute and jumps out. That's when you're on your own. You'll run out of fuel ten miles short of the airport, the plane crashes, and everyone dies. They act as if the ride will have been nice enough while it lasted. It makes no sense. It's pretty important to know how to land an airplane if you deign fly. Once you get off the ground, the landing becomes the all-important maneuver. The supreme test of the Word of God is the issue of life after death. I would think it natural for anyone searching for a religion to want to understand this aspect of their teaching. Further, you would think they would require some modicum of proof.

The Gospel records account for three incidents of the Lord Jesus Christ raising the dead. Peter and Paul are also declared by the Word of God to have raised the dead. Our hope in the Christian faith is the raising of the dead. Only John brings us this account of Lazarus, though. If we put all of the Gospel records together we have the raising of the young girl as a child, then a young man in the prime of life - and now we have an old man being raised from the dead. There won't be any generation separation in the resurrection of different ages sent to different classes and departments. Old people won't be in a retirement home. All will be raised together. We have a very definite break-down in age and race separation in the world today, but the most tragic break-down of all is promoted by the church itself; and that is when they divide up into age groups. I am absolutely sure this is sinful for a body of believers to do. I know that many accuse me by saying I don't have a church so, naturally, I am an expert on the things I don't do myself and, frankly, I can agree with that; but I still believe I am right about the age divisions....

*1 Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.*

~ This was the town of Mary, but we're going to the home of Martha. Martha may have had charge of the kitchen, but the keys to the city belonged to Mary. Many women are called to a ministry in the home, and no one is a bigger boss than the woman is in any home. Mom runs the kids out of the house and makes the husband get out of bed and get busy. Then, there are others that have an outside ministry, and they may teach children or do child evangelism. Many improper judgments are made along these lines today regarding the neighbor who doesn't work in the church. Some will question if they are serving the Lord at all. Well, neither one of these functions mean the other is or isn't serving the Lord....

*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.*

~ We see inside a poor person's humble home in this illustration. Thank God we have a story of tenderness and sweetness connected with this account. Lazarus has been identified as the one whom Jesus loved. Well, Paul said Jesus loved him, too. John and Peter both said the same thing. We can rejoice that the Lord loveth the child of God everywhere, friends - even when we become sick. The Lord Jesus has deliberately stayed away and was purposely not present with them at this time as He makes this statement....

*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.*

~ This is where the Bible gets serious, my beloved. This is where it is extremely interesting to note that '... these things were written that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.' Jesus waited around another two days deliberately and purposely. See, sometimes, God allows one of His own to die. It happens every hour of every day. When it does, Jesus is calling that person home. Lazarus died. These miracles we are considering are being performed for the glory of God. This is another section of Scripture where we are forced to decide if we believe the Bible is the Word of God - or not. Well, apparently, Jesus loved this entire family. The Lord loves your entire family, too, friends. We can't keep Him from loving us, but we can block His love completely out of our lives. Just as we can't stop the sun from shining, but we can put up a roof of coldness and indifference that doesn't allow one ray of sunshine to ever touch our skin....

*7 Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judaea again.*

~ Don't miss the "again" of verse seven. Jesus has already been there, but He had to withdraw at this time because of the furious opposition. The apostles aren't sure about the judgment of the Lord, you may be sure. Well, Jesus is going there again. As long as Jesus is in the world, He will be the light of the world. If there is to be light in Bethany in the time of death, Jesus MUST BE THERE! That's why Jesus returned. Jesus was in the world, and He was the light, but He says the night is coming when no man worketh. This should be a great trouble and discomfort for all of the sign-gift crowd who know they have no power, no gifts and are not serving the Lord the way they should be. If I were them, I would make some notes. Of course, they aren't reading these safari reports. The Lord Jesus has compassion on the helpless and hopeless state of these sisters, so He is going to them....

*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.*

~ The apostles misunderstood the Lord Jesus, and many people misunderstand God today completely. Death, for the believer, has a new name: life. Death has been robbed of its terrors and the sting of the grave is gone. Resurrection, naturally and exclusively, refers to the physical body. Death is when the body is put to sleep, and resurrection is when the body is raised again. Death, for the believer, never refers to the soul or spirit. There is no such thing as soul sleep, according to the Bible....

*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 fellowdisciples, 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.*

~ The word for resurrection is "anastasis," which means "to stand." When a spirit stands up, what position does it get in? No, friends, the word resurrection refers to a physical body – not the spirit or soul. Death is an awful, stark reality that science is totally helpless in understanding. Death is a separation from the body of the spirit, because when we are absent from this body we are present with the Lord, as Paul told us.

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The resurrection is, likewise, a reality. Buddhism speaks at length about the resurrection of the soul. Many of the cults, such as Catholicism, speak of resurrection. My friends, whether you are saved or lost you are soon – and very soon – immediately or sooner for some of us – going into eternity. Many people would like some proof that death means extinction and nothingness. Some say, however erroneously, that when we die we are just like a dog. The end. Well, we even have information that all good dogs go to Heaven, friends. Unfortunately, for these people, we have documented proof that there is a resurrection of the human body in Christ; some unto eternal judgment and damnation, and others unto eternal life in God.

If all of this is disturbing to you, then you are hearing the Lord speak. Our next several reports should be deeply troubling to all of us; but I hope you'll read them – very carefully. Some ignore this subject – they just will not speak of it. For the unsaved man, I wouldn't want to talk about it, either. Many lost people say they don't care about dying – but I say one is impaired or insincere when one makes that foolish and untruthful statement. A sober, normal man – however lost – does not sincerely proclaim that falsity. I think the Lord Jesus made it quite clear what He means by "sleep."

The Arab world went into shocking grief decades ago when Nasir died. The people cried out to a leadership that had zero hope to offer; but they did say this: "don't grieve for Nasir because he is dead, but his ideas and theories are still alive, and they will live on." Well, it is likely that no one reading this report has any idea who or what that was all about; but, either way, man's words are not hope – no hope at all. Only the Word of God offers hope. Tragically, the only hope the lost have is none.

One day the news of death will reach you about a loved one. Do you have hope today for that inevitable tomorrow? Do you have a relationship with God that will give you a reason to carry on in times like that? Thomas, in verse sixteen, was sure a doom and gloom man, was he not? - as he says, "... let's go die, too!" Well, thank God Thomas was willing to go die; but when it came right down to it, Simon Peter denied Jesus – I'm sure Thomas

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would have done the same. I don't think the human nature of the apostles was any better than ours today, quite frankly. Our human nature isn't very good; so, if not for the grace of God, we would all deny Him in a moment.

Many men are leaving the ministry today - and that is tragic, indeed. Churches that fall by the wayside and people that turn away from the faith who once stood for something – but no longer – is tragic. If you enjoy this Spiritual Safari, you might consider that very closely right now in prayer, friends. This expedition is one dicey proposition for me, personally. I know many people here would love to see this end. They might get that wish real fast; I don't know. I do know the Lord Jesus is going to Bethany in the next leg of our safari and we're going with Him. I don't know how much farther we will go on this expedition – but we are going to Bethany with Jesus – and I am planning to take you as far as God wants you to go. Again, you may want to consider that in prayer today ~

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