

## The Gospel of John 11:1-27

### I The Dead Man and His Need (vv.1-4)

- A. The Lord had left Judaism and had come to a place (9:40) from which He could proceed to Bethany, which was an early miniature of the assembly.
- B. Lazarus, along with his sisters Mary and Martha, afforded the Lord a place of rest outside of Jerusalem, in their small home, in Bethany (Luke 10:38-42)
- C. Lazarus got ill and his sisters sent for the Lord to heal him, but the Lord demonstrated that He did not come mainly to heal, but rather to give life. The Lord said that Lazarus' illness was not unto death, meaning that if it was just a matter being sick the Lord could heal him, or not, but eventually Lazarus would get better. However, since the illness resulted in death then the Lord had to come in, not to heal, but to give life, which would restore to a living condition (not unto death).
  1. When the sisters of Lazarus sent the news to the Lord Jesus that Lazarus was sick, no doubt their intention was that the Lord would come to heal him. However, when he received this report, He did not do anything. Here we have the third sign in this chapter, the sign of the Lord's delay.
  2. What was the reason for the Lord's delay? The Lord's delay in this chapter is a sign that the Lord did not want to be a healing Savior but a life-giving Savior. Healing corresponds to the natural thought, but life-giving is a divine thought. Many Christians have never heard about life-giving; they are not familiar with this term in the spiritual vocabulary. However, it is common for Christians to talk about healing. However, the point here is that the concept of healing is natural, whereas the concept of life-giving is divine.
- D. God's intention is not merely to heal us, for in His sight we are not sick—we are dead.
  1. God's salvation is not a salvation to heal the sick, but to enliven the dead. God's salvation is to enliven the dead, to cause those who are dead to become alive. In 10:10 the Lord Jesus **did not** say, "I came that they may have healing, and have it abundantly." In this verse He said, "I came that they may have life and may have it abundantly." This life is not psychological life (psyche) or physical life (bios); it is the divine life, the eternal life, the uncreated life of God (zoe), which is actually God Himself. The Lord came that we may have this divine, eternal life and have it abundantly.
  2. In chapter eleven, the Lord Jesus delayed until He knew that Lazarus had died. The Lord's delay here is a sign indicating that He did not intend to heal the sick man and thereby only be a healing Savior; rather, it was His intention to raise the dead and thereby be a Savior who gives life. This was the reason the Lord did not come to do anything to heal Lazarus from his sickness.

### II The Frustration of The Disciples' Human Opinions (vv.6-16)

- A. In the eight foregoing cases, in chs.3-10, religion was the main frustration to and opponent of life. Now, outside religion on the new ground, life was going to raise a dead person. Here life no longer faced religion with its rituals, but it was frustrated by many human opinions: the disciples' opinions (vv.8-16), Martha's opinion (vv.21-28), Mary's opinion (vv. 32-33), the Jews' opinion (vv. 36-38), and, again, Martha's opinion (vv.39-40). Opinions, which come from knowledge, belong to the tree of knowledge, but the Lord here was actually the tree of life for people to enjoy.
- B. In the Lord's salvation He does not merely heal the sick; He also gives life to the dead. Hence, He remained two days until the sick one had died (v.6). The Lord does not reform or regulate people—He regenerates people and raises them out of death. The first of the nine cases in chs.3-11 involved regeneration, and the last involved resurrection, revealing that all the aspects of Christ as life to us, which are unveiled in the other seven cases, are in the principle of regeneration and resurrection. This last case was the actual changing of death into life.
- C. Whenever we express an opinion that is contrary to the Lord's will, that opinion signifies that we are not walking in the day but in the darkness. If we are following the Lord, we should say "amen" to whatever He says and not express any opinion. As long as we express an opinion of any kind, that opinion will be a sign that we are in darkness and that we do not know what we are saying. Only the Lord knows what to say. When He says, "Let us go," that is something in the day, in the light. The Lord's guidance always is light. If we follow His guidance, we shall be in the day, and we shall walk in the light. But if we follow our opinion, we shall be in darkness...Man's opinion is a sign of darkness.

### III The Frustration of Martha's Human Opinions (vv.17-27)

- A. The Lord told Martha, "Your brother will rise again" (v.23). This meant that the Lord would raise him **immediately**; but Martha expounded the Lord's word so as to postpone the present resurrection to the last day. Some knowledge of fundamental teaching is truly destructive and frustrates people from enjoying the Lord's present resurrection life.
- B. The Lord said to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life," and asked her, "Do you believe this? She answered, "Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God." Her reply did not answer the Lord's question. Her old, preoccupying knowledge covered her, preventing her from understanding the Lord's new word. Man's old knowledge and old opinions are coverings that keep him from knowing clearly the Lord's new revelation.
- C. The record in the Gospel of John is different from that in the so-called synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. It is not John's intention to describe the miraculous acts of Christ. Rather, John's intention is to depict the divine life, portraying this invisible life through a number of visible cases. All these cases are signs.
- D. In chapter eleven we have the case of Lazarus. In this chapter the Lord says, "I am the resurrection and the life" (v.25). Both resurrection and life are invisible. If we did not have a tangible case, we could not understand resurrection and life. Hence, here in this chapter is a specific case of a dead person who is resurrected. Through this case we can come to know what resurrection is. Actually, resurrection is the Person of the Lord Jesus Himself. This means that resurrection is not mainly what the Lord does; resurrection is primarily what the Lord is. Because Christ is resurrection, when we have Him, we have resurrection