

LAZARUS AND THE DEATH CONQUEROR

John 11:15-44

The subject of this story first appears to be Lazarus. But it is not. The subject of this story is Jesus, the Death Conqueror.

John 11:15 Then said Jesus unto them, Lazarus is dead. :16 ...to the intent that you might believe.

The reason Lazarus died was so they could believe.

Death is not our friend, it is our enemy. It is the result of sin (**Roman 6:23** *The wages of sin is death*) and the domain of Satan (**Hebrews 2:14** *...him that had the power of death, that is, the devil*). Of all things, mankind most desperately needs someone to conquer death. If death is a good thing, then why did Jesus go through so much trouble to defeat it? Wouldn't we be content to die and stay dead, if death is so good? Death is the enemy and something to defeat. That's why the resurrection.

His friends knew that Jesus had amazing powers. He healed lepers, cast out devils, walked on water, and created food. Was there anything this man could not do? His friends loved him and believed him, but when Lazarus died, even their faith had limits.

John 11:20 Then Martha...went and met him. :21 If thou hadst been here my brother had not died. :22 But I know whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. :24 I know that he shall rise in the resurrection.

Martha stretched her faith forward one more step, then fell back. Maybe Jesus could raise Lazarus even now. But no, that's beyond even his abilities. Oh well. There will be the resurrection. It is a precious faith that seeks to believe what it dares not.

John 11:40 Said I not unto thee that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? :42 ...that they may believe that thou (God) hast sent me :43 Lazarus, come forth! :44 And he that was dead came forth.

Everyone there saw the dead come forth. That's wonderful, nothing wrong with that. But a few, the believers, saw much more than a dead man come back to life: they saw the glory of God.

What you see depends on where you're looking. If you're looking at the dead man, when the dead arise, you see a living Lazarus. But if you're looking at Christ, when the dead arise, you see the living God, that creative being who made the worlds, now directing his power to deliver mankind from the jaws of death. That is what Martha saw and, hopefully, what we see at our Easter celebration.