

## A CHANGE OF CLOTHES

### JOHN 11:1-44

April 10, 2016

#### Introduction

This story may be very familiar to many of you. I remember first hearing it at a “Back Yard Bible Club” in Denver, Colorado. I was so young that I didn’t really understand all the implications of the resurrection of a dead man, only that I was happy that Jesus loved him so much that he made his friend to come back to life.

Sometimes I miss those days of sheer innocence of simply hearing what the Bible said and then believing it; I heard and believed. While I still hear the word of God and believe, my spiritual maturity takes me to the place where I want to “wring-out each passage” like a wash rag, to gain every bit of information possible that God is telling us.

One of the Bibles I own is simply called a “readers Bible.” There are no study notes. No references or helps. It does not contain maps or a concordance. It is simply the Bible in paragraph form. Sometimes I just crack open that Bible and read for the sheer pleasure of reading the Bible. I would suggest that this Bible would be a great addition to your library. Curl up with a cup of coffee or tea and simply read the Bible for enjoyment.

There are two other points of introduction; First, according to the cultural traditions of the Jews, the dead were to be buried that same day, however, it was believed that the soul hovered near the body for three days but after that time there was no hope of resuscitation and decay would begin [*Anchor Bible: Gospel According to John*, Brown, 424].

Second, the Gospel of John holds many miracles, two describe the miracles as manifestations of “glory” (John 2:11 and 11:4, 40 and both of these were personal for Jesus.

I plan on reading most of this chapter today, so I suggest you follow along until we get to the 43 and 44<sup>th</sup> verses where I will focus most of the sermon.

The name Lazarus = “whom God Helps”, in Hebrew the name is translated as Eleazar.

#### Brief Outline of this Chapter

*Jesus friend Lazarus of Bethany, is sick unto death* (v. 1)

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*John 11:1 Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. 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.*

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*Jesus stays longer so the “glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified.”* (v. 4)

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*John 11:4 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.*

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After two days, they begin to make their way to Bethany (v. 6-7)

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*John 11:6 When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was. 7 Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judaea again.*

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Jesus explains that Lazarus is dead to the disciples (vv. 8-15)

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*John 11:8 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. 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.*

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Upon arrival, Jesus finds that Lazarus had been dead for four days (v. 17)

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*John 11:17 Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already. 18 Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off: 19 And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.*

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Conversation between Martha and Jesus (vv. 20-27). Remember the story when Martha worked in the kitchen while Mary sat at his feet learning?

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*John 11:20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house. 21 Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. 22 But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. 23 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. 24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. 25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: 26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? 27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.*

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Conversation between Mary and Jesus (v. 32)

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*John 11:32 Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.*

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*Jesus approaches the tomb* (v. 33-38)

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*John 11:33 When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, 34 And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. 35 **Jesus wept.** 36 Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him! 37 And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? 38 Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.*

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Jesus wept is the shortest verse in the Bible and yet it carries a deep meaning. Perhaps Christ, in His human nature, weeps in sorrow with the family...although if Jesus knows He is about to raise him from the dead, why weep over Lazarus' death instead of having a triumphant and joyous response of singing?

Possibly His weeping over death is a precursor over the weeping over His own death by those that love Him.

Maybe His weeping follows one of His titles, "a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53:3)?

It is conceivable that the full impact of sin is seen in the death of one He loved so much...sin brought about death.

However, for me, it is clear that the sorrow over the resurrection of His friend is the reason for His weeping. Jesus was going to call Lazarus back from heaven and to live his life in a world where wickedness, persecution and ultimately death would find Lazarus once again. Oh, I wonder how many of us would trade the glories of heaven to come back to earth, where death would once again claim you?

*The stone is rolled away and Jesus prays to the Father* (vv. 39-42)

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*John 11:39 Jesus 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. 40 Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? 41 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. 42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.*

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It will not be long before another stone will be rolled away from a grave of the Savior at His resurrection.

“Lazarus is raised from the dead.” (v. 43-44)

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*John 11:43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. 44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.*

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## Lazarus Was Delivered From Death

The time had passed for Lazarus to be fully considered dead, and yet he was delivered from death and the grave, and yet he was not totally free from the result of the resurrection. He was a living man, still bound by a “dead man’s clothes.”

People will always judge you by the clothes you wear. Even in our “Casual” dress, we are what people see about us. When Lazarus shuffled out of the cave due to his death wrapped bindings, we didn’t hear anyone say, “He is still dead, he is wearing his grave-clothes.” No they were astonished as a “dead man was walking” out of the tomb. He was alive, but bound by his death clothes.

## Lazarus Required Help From Others

Lazarus was helpless as he exited the grave. He needed others to remove the death shroud from him. He was not strong enough to break free of the clothes that bound him.

Jesus came to give us life! Jesus commanded that the grave clothes be taken off Lazarus. His grave clothes marked him as a dead man.

My dear fellow brothers and sisters, the message out of this one verse is simply “Quit “living” among the dead.” Look and act like you are a child of God, look alive!

Some of you are still wrapped up in your grave clothes.

The grave clothes of ignorance keep you wrapped up in the old world. Unless you already know all there is to know about God’s Word, then you need to be in attendance for Sunday School, Morning Worship, Sunday Evening, and Mid-Week Service.

The grave clothes of sorrows may be keeping you wrapped in the old world.

The grave clothes of non-commitment. Selfishness and pride keep many from following Jesus. Some in this audience need to “leave the fishing nets” of the old life and follow God in all His ways.

Some of you may have had a time of salvation, but you have never followed through in believer’s baptism. You are still wearing the grave clothes.

### Conclusion

Before Lazarus could fully live, he had to have his grave clothes, which bound him head to foot, loosened so that he could enjoy life.

There are many, even in this church, who have been made alive by the grace of Jesus Christ but they continue to wear their grave-clothes.

If you are a child of God, you have been brought from death unto life...so ACT LIKE IT!

**GET RID OF YOUR BURIAL CLOTHES!**