

The Last Days re-visited

Lloyd Dale - 2002

Chapter six

“Then said Jesus unto them plainly, **Lazarus is dead.**” (Joh 11:14 AV)

“Jesus saith unto her, **Thy brother shall rise again.**” (Joh 11:23 AV)

“Jesus said unto her, **I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believes in me, though he dies, yet shall he live: And whosoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Believest thou this?**”
(Joh 11:25-26)

Basically these verses present a picture of recent life and death of Lazarus and his future revivification.¹ Whoever lives believing in Jesus Christ, though he dies -- he will live again and he shall never die again. This is what Jesus about Lazarus

Thus, according to Jesus: any person that lives as did Lazarus and believes in Jesus Christ as did Lazarus and then dies as did Lazarus; he shall live again believing in Jesus Christ as did Lazarus – he shall never die again. *DO YOU BELIEVE THIS?* If you do not you should, because it is exactly what the Bible teaches not only here in the Fourth Gospel but also in Rev 20:6.

In this conversation about Lazarus, nearly 2000 years ago Jesus told Martha that **He is “the resurrection, and the life: he that believes in me, *though he dies*, yet shall he live: and whosoever lives and believes in me shall never die.”**

What is Jesus really saying here about Lazarus? In order to fully grasp what Jesus said about Lazarus, there are four categories in this statement that we need to examine very carefully:

¹ Revivification is the restoration of life to a dead body. It is not “resurrection” as it is defined in the Bible. In this case involving Lazarus, he was not resurrected by Jesus. Jesus simply restored life to the dead body of Lazarus and he once again became a living person to whom was made the promise that he would never die again. Thus, Lazarus lived until the Parousia at which time he was “changed” from mortal to immortal along with the other who remained alive until the Parousia of Jesus. (See the Fourth Gospel 21:20-22; 1Cor 15:23c, 51-54; 1Thess 4:15-17; Rev 20:6)

1. A living person that then believes in Jesus Christ (Lazarus was such a person)
2. That living and believing person dies (Lazarus died)
3. That dead person lives again and believes in Jesus Christ (Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead)
4. That person living again shall never die. (Lazarus is that person that **shall never die**)

Jesus certainly made the above statement in the context of Lazarus' life and death: therefore, in the scenario recorded here, Jesus clearly told Martha, within the hearing of His disciples, that Lazarus would not die again. It is because of this statement by Jesus to Martha overheard by the disciples that they began to think that Lazarus, the disciple whom Jesus loved,² would never die again.

With that above information in our minds, it is now time to back up a few verses and look at another concept closely related to the one above.

(Jesus)...said unto them (His disciples), our friend Lazarus **sleeps**; but I go, that I may **awake him out of sleep**. 12 Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleeps, he shall do well. 13 Howbeit **Jesus spoke 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. (the Fourth Gospel 11:11-15, emphasis added)

In order to understand what Jesus meant by the statement "...our friend Lazarus **sleeps**" and much of the balance of the New Testament, we must ascertain a *Biblical view* of "**sleep**."

We are about to examine a passage of scripture that is going to require some careful and discerning analysis:

Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all **SLEEP**,... (1Corinthians 15:51b)

"We shall not all sleep," what does Paul mean by this statement? We are usually told that sleep, as used in this and similar verses, is a reference to death, while this is true on the surface; to find its full meaning we must go much deeper.

At this point we need to ask ourselves several questions:

- 1) What is sleep/death?

² According to the context of the fourth Gospel 11:3, 5, 36, Lazarus, not John, was the disciple whom Jesus loved! There is no statement in the New Testament that Jesus loved John. Thus, Lazarus, *not John* is the author of the Fourth Gospel!

- 2) Does sleep/death **for a person of FAITH who lived before Christ's life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and Parousia in the first century** have the same meaning as it does for **a person that lives after those events took place**?
- 3) For that matter, is there any difference in sleep/death for a person without faith who lived before the Parousia than there is for a person who lives after the Parousia had taken place?

To properly understand all these things we must **let the Scriptures**, apart from our traditional (often wrong) preconceptions, **answer these questions**.

In the fourth Gospel, in the account about the “sleep” of Lazarus, John clearly explains that by “*sleep*” Jesus meant death:

Howbeit Jesus spoke of his (Lazarus') **death**: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, **Lazarus is dead**. (Fourth Gospel 11:13-14, emphasis and comment added)

In the Old Testament there are a number of occasions where death is spoken of as sleep. (See Deut.31:16; 2 Sam.7:12; 1 Ki.1:21; Job 7:21, 14:12; Ps.13:3; Jer. 51:39, 57; & Dan.12:2)

While we do not have the time or space within this document to go into all the details, a thorough study of the Old Testament will reveal that, from the Old Testament point of view, when a person died, that person as a dead body, was buried and decayed in the grave (sheol) back to “dust” and that was the end of the matter, no eternal bodiless spirit or soul in heaven or anywhere else for that matter. The current Christian teaching that every person has an eternal/immortal soul/spirit that goes immediately to heaven when a person of faith dies has no basis in the Old Testament and, as we shall see in this study, it has no basis in the New Testament either. It is Christian fiction.

Jesus Christ himself confirms this understanding of the Old Testament view of death in the Fourth Gospel 3:13 where he declares:

...NO MAN has ASCENDED up to HEAVEN, but he that came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man which is in heaven.

This statement completely refutes the Christian teaching that Enoch, Moses and Elijah did not die but went directly to heaven. That too is Christian fiction.

With the above fresh in our minds, we must ask ourselves a couple basic but very important questions:

1. When does a person of faith go to heaven?
2. How does a person of faith get to heaven?

Now, because we must believe that the statement made by Jesus referenced above is true, we must ask ourselves,

1. “Can a person of faith go to heaven after death?”
2. “If so, what has changed since Jesus uttered those words that now makes it possible for a person of faith to go to heaven after death?”
3. “If so what?”
4. “How?”
5. “When?”

Again we must let Scripture answer these questions!

We learn from Job, that he understood that at his death,:

... I shall **SLEEP** in the dust; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be. (Job 7:21, emphasis added)

However we learn that Job also knew that this was going to change, he would no longer sleep in the dust in the last days when his redeemer would come:

For I know *that my Redeemer lives*, and *that He shall stand upon the earth at the last days*: 26 *And though after my skin worms destroy this body*, yet in my flesh (through resurrection) I shall see God: 27 **Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another...** (Job 19:25, emphasis and comment added)

Job ostensibly understood that his Redeemer was the eternal Yahweh, that he (Job) would *die, be buried in the ground, and decay to dust*, but that in the last days his Redeemer (Yahshua) would stand on the earth and that he would make possible a resurrection. Nothing is stated here about any part (soul/spirit) of Job going to heaven when he died.

Daniel confirms this view as the correct view:

And many of them that **SLEEP** (dead, buried and decayed) in the dust of the earth shall awake (resurrection), some to everlasting life, and some to shame *and* everlasting contempt. (Daniel 12:2, emphasis and comment added)

Once again, nothing is stated here about any part (soul/spirit) of these persons going to heaven when they died.

Israel’s great king, David, also held this view:

Therefore my (David’s) heart is glad, and my glory rejoices: my flesh shall rest (sleep) in hope. For thou (Yahweh) will not leave my (David’s) nephesh (being) in sheol (grave); neither will you suffer your Holy One (Yahshua) to see corruption (decay to dust)...As for me (David), I will behold your face (Yahshua’s) in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, **when I awake** (resurrection), with your (Yahshua’s) likeness. (Psalms 16:9-10 & 17:15, emphasis and comments added)

Ostensibly David knew that he would die, be buried, and decay to dust. However he did not say that a portion (soul/spirit) of him went to heaven when he died. David also knew that his redeemer would live on earth, die and be buried, BUT, He (the Messiah) would not decay, He would be resurrected and would provide a resurrection in which David would awake (be resurrected) in the likeness of the Messiah (Yahshua).

In Acts 13:33, Paul confirms that this is the correct understanding of these Scriptures:

God has fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that He has **raised up Jesus to live again**; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day I have begotten thee³. 34 And as concerning that **he raised him up from the dead**, no more to return to *the place of corruption*, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. 35 Wherefore he saith also in another *psalm*, **Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption** (decay). 36 For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on **sleep**, and *was laid* (buried) unto his fathers, and *saw corruption* (decay): 37 BUT HE (Yahshua), **WHOM GOD RAISED AGAIN (to life)**, SAW NO CORRUPTION.
(emphasis and comments added)

All these things are verified in many other passages of Scripture but our time and space is limited so we must move on. **We now know that the entrance into “Heaven” was going to be made possible by RESURRECTION of the dead in Christ**, thus, we have answered the what and how questions from above. The question that remains to be answered is; WHEN?

Actually the Scriptures we have quoted above have answered the when as well. Job, David, and Daniel all knew that the resurrection would be provided in conjunction with the advent of Yahshua, the Messiah/Redeemer, in the last days of the Mosaic “Marriage” Covenant, when Yahweh was going to provide a New “Marriage” Covenant in the Messiah/Redeemer, Yahshua.

The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews and other New Testament Scriptures tell us exactly when those “last days” were to be:

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Has **IN THESE LAST DAYS** spoken unto us by *His* Son, whom *God* has appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the ages; 9:26 For then, he must often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once **in the end of the age** has He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. 28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him, **HE SHALL APPEAR THE SECOND TIME...UNTO SALVATION**. 10:35 cast not away, therefore, your confidence, which has great compensation of reward. 36 For you (first century Hebrew Christians) have need of

³ The phrase “this day I have begotten thee” is properly understood to be the day of the resurrection of Jesus, not His physical birth.

patience, that, after you have done the will of God, **you might receive the promise** (of resurrection). 37 For yet **a little while**, and **he that shall come will come, AND WILL NOT TARRY** (see 2 Pet.3:9). 39 But we are not of them who draw back unto *the* destruction (of Jerusalem and those in it in 70 AD); but of them that believe to **the saving** of the being (by resurrection). (Hebrews 1:1, emphasis and comments added)

The author of this letter clearly explains to the Hebrew Christians that the “last days” of the Mosaic “Marriage” Covenant was to be inclusive of the time beginning with Christ’s ministry, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension and ending with His parousia appearance at which time the **SALVATION EVENT** would be **finished** and their being would be saved. It is also clear that Jesus would accomplish this **in a short time**. He would “*not tarry*”!!! Isn’t it amazing in the light of this direct declaration by the Holy Spirit inspired author of Hebrews that after 1930 plus years *the church is still teaching that not only would He tarry but that he has tarried and continues to tarry after nearly two thousand years!!!*

The Apostle Peter confirms the teaching of the letter to the Hebrews;

Blessed *be* Yahweh, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy **begets us again** (through personal resurrection) unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 **TO AN INHERITANCE INCORRUPTIBLE, AND UNDEFILED, and that fades not away, RESERVED IN HEAVEN for you**, 5 **Who are kept by the power of God through faith UNTO SALVATION READY TO BE REVEALED IN THE LAST TIME**. 6. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now FOR A SEASON, (a short time) if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: 7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it **be tried with fire**, might be found unto praise and honor and glory **AT THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST**: 8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see *him* not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: 9 **RECEIVING THE END OF YOUR FAITH, THE SALVATION OF your BEING**. 10. Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace *that should come* unto you: (1 Peter 1:3, emphasis and comments added)

We see that in the above passage Peter very clearly confirmed that Yahweh had provided “by the resurrection of Jesus Christ...a living hope” for a salvation that would be finally and completely realized at the revelation/appearance, (i.e. the parousia) of Jesus Christ which was to take place in a short “time/season” (time, Gk. *chronos*) which Paul calls a “short work” in Rom. 9:28.

Without going into all the details here, it can be unequivocally stated that **all the writers of New Testament repeatedly confirm this view**. And as we have shown in other documentation⁴, Jesus Christ Himself repeatedly confirmed that all of these things would take place within the time span of that first century generation

⁴ See our website: www.lloyddale.com

which was then living and would not all die⁵ before the Parousia of Jesus Christ. The prophet Daniel prophesied, and Jesus Christ often confirmed through his teaching that all these things would occur in the time frame of the destruction of the temple and the city of Jerusalem. Without equivocation, that destruction of Jerusalem and the temple occurred in 70 AD, **that is the WHEN!!!!**

There is at least one other very interesting aspect to this “sleep” concept that needs to be examined. In Peter’s epistle to the “aliens scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia...” he wrote what many consider strange and unfathomable words:

For Christ also has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to Yahweh, being put to death in the flesh, but *being* quickened by the Spirit: By which (the Spirit) also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of Yahweh waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a-preparing, wherein few, that is, eight beings (Heb.-nephesh; Gk.-psuche) were saved through the water...Who shall give account to **Him that is ready (in the first century, not in our century) to judge the living and the dead.** For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are **DEAD**, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but **LIVE** (by the means of resurrection) **ACCORDING TO YAHWEH IN THE SPIRIT. For the END OF ALL THINGS IS AT HAND** (there, then, in the first century not in ours):... (1Peter 3:18-20 & 4:5-7a, emphasis and comments added as in all other Bible quotes in this document)

It is only in the context of death (“sleep”) as clearly defined above that these Scriptures can be properly understood. Also this particular passage is nearly impossible to grasp by those who insist that there is no second chance after death. For Peter expressively states that the people who died (“sleep”) are, by the preaching of Jesus in the Spirit, preached to in their “prison” that even though they were judged as men in the flesh and died; these “dead...live according to Yahweh in the spirit” as the result of the gospel being preached to them there in their “prison” of death by Jesus Christ in the Spirit. Now there may not be any second chance for those that have died since these events happened during the first century, but the Bible certainly teaches that those who had died prior to the judgment and resurrection of 70 AD heard the gospel and had a chance to respond to it and thus “live according to Yahweh in” their resurrection spiritual body.

Please note that Peter tells these first century Christians that “the end of all things is at hand”. If “the end of all things was at hand” in the first century, it is certainly foolish of us today to believe that, 1930 plus years later, the “end *that was* at hand” in the first century did not occur in the first century. Here is the problem that we

⁵ “Would not all die;” some would remain alive until the Appearing/Parousia/Revelation of Jesus Christ. Within the texts of the New Testament the words “appearing/appearance, revelation/manifestation all refer to the Parousia of Jesus Christ. [1Co 15:6; 1Th 4:15 & 17 -- Col 3:4; 1Ti 6:14; 2Ti 4:1, 8; Tit 2:13; Heb 9:28; 1Pe 1:7, 5:4; 1Jo 2:28, 3:2]

must address: Peter wrote to these first century folks, “that the end was at hand!” At hand actually means do close that you can almost reach out and touch it, If this event of the “end” did not occur in the first century as Peter declared that it would be, then how could Peter have been an inspired writer? If Peter was truly an inspired writer; then “the end” of which he wrote either had to occur or Peter had to be wrong. It is much easier for me to think that “the end” did occur than it is for me to think that Peter was wrong and therefore not an inspired apostle.

Remember that Jesus Christ stated repeatedly that “all these things will be fulfilled in this generation” **meaning His generation**. Jesus Christ was thirty two or three years old when He made these statements relative to that generation. Forty years later that generation would be in their forties to seventies. That generation WITH “ALL THINGS” OF THE MOSAIC “MARRIAGE” COVENANT was about to end and all those things did end just exactly as they were prophesied to end.

If they did not end, Jesus Christ and all His “inspired” writers were either confused or deliberately lied to the people of the first century and subsequently to us.

I can accept the idea that the church has been wrong about these things for nearly two thousand years, **BUT I CANNOT ACCEPT THE IDEA THAT JESUS CHRIST - YAH ENFLESHED - AND ALL OF HIS “SPIRIT INSPIRED” WRITERS COULD HAVE BEEN CONFUSED, MISTAKEN, OR THAT THEY LIED TO ALL OF US** (from the first century unto today). It, therefore, becomes obvious that our old traditional ideas about the “last days” being the end of this material, physical “heaven and earth” **have been WRONG!!!!**

We need to adjust our theology/eschatology to fit the Scriptures, we have tried long enough *to make the Scriptures fit our traditional misunderstanding and it has failed miserably*.

RESURRECTION AND LIFE

In summary of our study of “sleep” as used by Jesus, Paul and others, we can conclude; that up until the time of the first century parousia resurrection which occurred as prophesied and confirmed by Jesus Christ and all New Testament authors in 70 AD, that a person, including those “in Christ” (1Th.4:14ff & 5:10) who had died were considered to be in “sleep” awaiting the first century parousia resurrection, **which we now know was to, and did occur in 70 AD**. Paul confirms this understanding in 1Cor.15:18 by stating that without the first century parousia resurrection “Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished”.

Paul continues to effectively state that from Adam to Christ there was no resurrection but that the first century resurrection of Christ changed that, and potentially provided eventual resurrection for all men who had lived and died “but every man in his own order:” (1Cor.15:19-23a).

At the time of the first century **Parousia** resurrection (1Cor.15:23c) each person who had died “in Christ” was resurrected **in the likeness of Christ** (Ps. 17:15, et. al.).

At the same time that this resurrection of the dead in Christ occurred, which John refers to as “the first resurrection” (Rev.20:5), **each person then living in Jesus Christ was changed:**

Behold, I show you a mystery; ***We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed***, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and ***the dead*** (all those that died in Christ before the resurrection occurred in the first century) ***shall be raised incorruptible***, and ***we*** (the first century living) ***shall be changed***. (1Cor. 15:51-52, emphasis and comments added)

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, ***are changed into the same image*** (the likeness of Christ) from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Corinthians 3:18, emphasis and comments added)

What was **the change or transformation** that took place in that “moment, in the twinkling of an eye”?

Paul continued:

For this corruptible (the dead) must put on incorruption (through resurrection), and this mortal (the living) *must* put on immortality (by means of the transformation). 54 So when this corruptible (the dead) shall have put on incorruption (been resurrected), and this mortal (the living) shall have put on immortality (the change/transformation), then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory (for each one of those who were either resurrected or change in that event). (1Cor. 15:53, emphasis and comments added)

Paul wrote these words c. 59 B.C., several years before the event actually took place in 70 AD. When the 70 AD resurrection, and transformation events of Jesus Christ’s Parousia took place all persons then living in Christ put on immortality, thus passing from death unto *eternal* life (John 5:24) **and the words of Jesus Christ “whosoever lives and believes in me shall never die” became a reality** as John explains in Revelation 20:6:

“Blessed and holy *is* he that participates in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall kingdom with him thousands years.” (Re 20:6)

All those still living and all who would eventually live in Jesus Christ experienced an incredible “paradigm shift.” From that “moment” on no person alive in Jesus Christ would ever “sleep” in the context of the Old Testament meaning of that word. For each one of them that participate in the first resurrection the second death has no power over them. For them, the Adamic death curse is no more as, for them, “Death was swallowed up in victory.”

It is interesting to note here that John, after writing about the destruction of Jerusalem and the punishment of the people who worship the beast and receive his mark “in the presence of the Lamb,” records that he is directed to “write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.” (Rev. 13:14).

Those, “in the Lord”, have been transformed, **they have passed from the Adamic curse of death into the glorious life of the second Adam, Jesus Christ.** As a result of the full saving work of Christ, they simply shed this clay temple and metamorphose into their spiritual body into the presence of Jesus Christ; “bear(ing) the image of the heavenly” (1Cor.15:49) Jesus Christ without waiting (“sleep”) centuries or even years or days in the grave. Truly, they are blessed indeed. Victory over death through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1Cor.15:57) Amen!