

SIGNS IN JOHN'S GOSPEL

SEVENTH SIGN (11:1-44)

The Resurrection of Lazarus

By Arlen L. Chirwood

The sixth sign in John's gospel (ch. 9) shows Israel as having been *blind* from birth (vv. 1, 20), *blind* from the time of the inception of the nation. And this *blindness*, contextually, was relative to the message which Israel was called to carry and proclaim to the Gentile nations.

Israel, throughout the nation's 4,000-year history, *has never* gone forth to the Gentiles in this manner. Rather they have always been as Jonah, *disobediently going in an opposite direction relative to the Lord's clear command*.

The seventh sign in John's gospel (ch. 11) shows Israel relative to *the same thing* from another perspective. This sign shows the nation as having been in *the place of death for four days* (vv. 17, 39), pointing to the status of the Jewish people throughout their 4,000-year history relative to God's clear command concerning the message which they were to carry and proclaim to the Gentiles.

Once the blind man in chapter nine had received sight, he then carried a message which spoke volumes. Not only did he immediately bear a true message concerning the One Who had healed him, but his healing foreshadowed that which the entire nation could experience. The entire nation could experience that which this man experienced if, in accordance with the message being proclaimed, the nation would repent. *And repentance, followed by healing, would then be followed by the entire nation proclaiming the same message to the Gentile world which this man had proclaimed to the religious leaders in Israel* (vv. 17, 25, 27, 30; cf. Isa. 53:1ff).

And the seventh sign, the resurrection of Lazarus in chapter eleven, shows *exactly the same thing*.

through the sign, with the religious leaders in Israel wanting to put a stop to and do away with the whole of the matter.

The introduction to the sign though, unlike the previous sign, doesn't begin with the time of Israel's birth four days, 4,000 years ago. Rather, that seen in the introductory verses to the sign (vv. 1-7) begins at a time foreshadowed by the sign itself — a time, which today, would be both past and future, having to do with the present 2,000-year dispensation.

Thus, the introduction to the sign begins with *a two-day period*, which has to do with *the latter two days of the full four days*. It begins with a period foreshadowing the present two days, which, again, is the present 2,000-year period, the present dispensation.

"Two Days...in the Same Place"

As previously noted, *The two days* introducing the sign in the text foreshadow the two days, the 2,000-year period, comprising the present dispensation. This dispensation began on the day of Pentecost, fifty days following Christ's resurrection (Acts 1:4, 5; 2:1-4); and it will end with the removal of the Church into the heavens, "to meet the Lord in the air" (I Cor. 15:51-58; I Thess. 4:13-18).

The present dispensation comprises a time when God has temporarily suspended His dealings with Israel and has sent the Spirit into the world for a specific, revealed purpose — to call out a bride for His Son. The Spirit is presently taking 2,000 years to acquire the bride.

At the end of this time, after the bride has been procured, the bride will be removed from the earth, and God will then complete His dealings with Israel during seven unfulfilled years of the past dispensation, with Israel being brought to the place of repentance and the Messianic Era subsequently and resultingly being ushered in.

The present work of the Spirit is occurring in the antitype of that seen in Genesis chapter twenty-four. Abraham (typifying God the Father) sent his servant (typifying the Holy Spirit) into the far country (typifying this earth) for a singular purpose — to acquire a bride for his son, Isaac (typifying Christ). And this occurred in the type following the death of Sarah in chapter twenty-three (Abraham's wife, typifying the Father's divorced wife, Israel, being set aside) but before Abraham's marriage to Keturah in chapter

Though there is nothing recorded concerning anything Lazarus may have said following his resurrection, the sign itself, as the previous sign, spoke volumes concerning the matter at hand.

This sign foreshadowed life being given to the entire nation relative to *the same thing* seen in a foreshadowing of sight being given to the nation in the previous sign. Lazarus being in the place of death for four days foreshadowed Israel being in the place of death for 4,000 years. And Lazarus being raised following four days foreshadowed Israel being raised following 4,000 years.

In John chapter nine, the religious leaders in Israel *cast out* the man whose sight had been restored. In the Greek text there is a double use of "without," or "on the outside." The thought brought over into English would be, "They cast him out [out from the place where they resided], into a place on the outside [separate from the place where they resided]," with the text placing an emphasis on the latter — *the place outside*.

(In a respect, this would be similar to the expression, "the outer darkness" in Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30. The structure of the Greek text, in all three instances in Matthew's gospel, literally reads, "the darkness, the outer," with the emphasis placed on the thought of "outer." Then, with the repetition of the article before "outer," the reference is not to just any darkness but to a *particular darkness outside of a realm of light*.)

And the thought is somewhat the same with the double use of "without," or "on the outside" in John 9:34. It was not just any place into which the man was cast, but *a place outside of where the religious leaders resided* [outside of any affiliation with the religious life of Israel — outside of the synagogue, etc.]

And, following Lazarus' resurrection, the religious leaders in Israel sought not only to slay the One Who had raised Lazarus (11:53) but they even sought to slay Lazarus himself (12:10).

And the reason is given:

"Because that by reason of him [Lazarus, raised from the dead, as a sign, with the results of this sign being witnessed by many in Israel] many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus" (12:11).

This sign, as the previous sign, was *a testimony in itself*. And *many Jews believed because of that manifested*

twenty-five (typifying God restoring Israel in that coming day, following the Spirit's procurement of a bride for the Son).

(For a more detailed exposition of the preceding, refer to the author's book, *SEARCH FOR THE BRIDE*.)

In John 11:5, when Jesus heard that Lazarus was sick, "he abode two days still in the same place where he was" (v. 6). *Sickness* is a depiction of Israel seen throughout Man's Day in Scripture. The previous sign where the blind man was healed would afford one illustration, numerous signs which Jesus performed would afford others (e.g., Matt. 4:17, 23, 24; 10:5-8), and Isaiah's classic description of Israel in the opening verses of his prophecy would afford another (1:4-6). The Old and New Testaments are filled with this type information about Israel.

Then, another facet of the same word picture is seen in John chapter eleven — *death*. And this, as well, is something seen throughout different parts of the Old and New Testaments.

Ezekiel chapter thirty seven would perhaps be the classic depiction in the Old Testament. In this chapter *the dry bones in an open valley* are revealed to represent "the whole house of Israel," in a lifeless state. And after "sinews," "flesh," and "skin" had come upon and covered the bones, *breath, producing life*, entered into that which had been restored (vv. 1-14), which would be another picture of that seen through the resurrection of Lazarus in the New Testament.

Then, the resurrection of Israel had previously been depicted through Moses carrying the bones of Joseph out of Egypt at the time of the Exodus (Ex. 13:19), foreshadowing that prophesied in Daniel 12:2, 3, which will occur following the Tribulation (v. 1). This will occur at that future time when the One greater than Moses leads the Israelites out from that which the Exodus from Egypt typifies, out from a worldwide dispersion (cf. Isa. 52:2; also note the preceding discussion on Gen. 23-25).

In John chapter eleven, both *sickness* and *death* are used of Lazarus in a somewhat synonymous sense, showing, as in the previous passages cited, two different facets of the same word picture. In verse three Lazarus is said to have been *sick* at this time. But later in the chapter Lazarus is also revealed to have been *dead* during this same time (cf. vv. 6, 7, 14, 17).

And Jesus was about to do something concerning

the existing situation. But He had to remain "in the same place where he was" for *two days* before acting. *Time foreshadowing the dispensation in which the Spirit would procure a bride for God's Son must be allowed to run its course*. Then, at the end of this time, at the end of two days, foreshadowing 2,000 years, Christ will return to the land of Judaea for the purpose seen in the sign.

"Let Us Go into Judaea Again"

Within the scope of that foreshadowed by the sign, matters now move from the present to the future, to that time when Christ will return back to the earth at the end of the Tribulation. The Tribulation per se is not dealt with in the text. One would have to go to other Scripture, comparing Scripture with Scripture, to see how the Tribulation fits into this sequence of events.

The fifth sign in John's gospel, for example, covers the same time-period, deals with the Tribulation, and ends at the same place as seen in the seventh sign (John 6:15-21). Both of these signs, as well as the other six signs in John's gospel, simply present different parts or facets of the same word picture.

Jesus is presently in the heavens, at His Father's right hand, both *waiting* and *working*.

In the words of Ps. 110:1, Jesus is *waiting* until the Father brings His "enemies" *down from their present lofty positions to the position described as His footstool*, pointing to the impending transfer of regal power, pointing to that day when the Son will hold the sceptre and all things will be under His control and sway (cf. I Cor. 15:25).

And, during this same time Jesus is also seen *working*. He, during the present dispensation, is performing a work in the heavenly sanctuary. He is ministering in the sanctuary, *as High Priest, on behalf of the saved, on the basis of His Own blood on the mercy seat* (Heb. 4:14-16; 9:11, 12; 10:19, 20).

But the day is coming and cannot be far hence when Jesus will come forth from the sanctuary and hold the sceptre. The dispensation is *almost over*, the Spirit's work of procuring a bride for God's Son is *almost* at an end, and the completion of the last seven years of the previous dispensation is *almost* at hand. Vast changes are about to occur, something foretold millenniums ago in Moses, the Psalms, and the Prophets.

The two days, the 2,000 years, are *about to end*. Every second of every minute, every minute of every hour, and every hour of every day brings everyone that has ever lived or ever will live during Man's 6,000-year day that much closer to that multi-prophesied and long-awaited day. The day when the Son will say, "Let us go into Judaea again," is *not only rapidly approaching but it must and will come to pass*.

What time is it on God's prophetic calendar relative to the inevitable fulfillment of these events? There is only one answer to the question: It is *much later* than most in today's Christendom, or those in the world (which, in reality, is really where most Christians reside today) care to admit, or even consider.

But, then there is the other side of the matter. A segment of Christendom *longs for that coming day*. A segment is *eagerly watching and waiting for the Son's return*. A segment can be likened to those who joined themselves to David during Saul's reign, *dissatisfied with existing conditions in the camp of Israel, eagerly awaiting a change, eagerly awaiting that day when David would hold the sceptre in the stead of Saul*.

In that foreshadowed by this type from the Books of I, II Samuel, a number of Christians, though *by far a minority*, find themselves *dissatisfied with existing conditions in Christendom, or in the world at large*. And they have joined themselves to the One outside the camp, *eagerly awaiting a change, eagerly awaiting that day when Christ holds the sceptre in the stead of Satan*.

And for those Christians, the answer concerning *time* on God's prophetic calendar would be *entirely different*. Rather than thinking along the lines that it is much later than one would care to admit or consider, they would think more along the lines of the manner in which John was led to close the Canon of Scripture in the Book of Revelation:

"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. *Even so, come, Lord Jesus*.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen" (Rev. 22:20, 21).

The Lamp Broadcast, Inc.

2629 Wyandotte Way
Norman, Oklahoma 73071

www.lampbroadcast.org