

# The DAILY JESUS NEWS #217

## Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead Jesus Informs His Disciples That Lazarus Had Died JN 11.7-16

7 Jesus said to his disciples, *"Let us go back to Judea."*

8 "But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews were trying to stone you, and yet you are going back there?"

9 Jesus answered, *"Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not stumble, for they see by this world's light. 10 When a person walks at night they will stumble, for they have no light."*

11 After he had said this, he went on to tell them, *"Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up."*

12 His disciples replied, "Lord, since he is sleeping, he will get better."

13 Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep.

14 So then he told them plainly, *"Lazarus is dead, 15 and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."*

16 Then Thomas (also known as Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

=====

NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = <sup>MT</sup>, Mark = <sup>M</sup>, Luke = <sup>L</sup>, John = <sup>J</sup>, Acts = <sup>A</sup>. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	Somewhere in Perea
Timeline	March (Month 38)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage VII: Jesus' Ministry in Perea
	B. Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead
Title	2. Jesus Informs His Disciples that Lazarus Had Died

### COMMENT:

In addition to highlighting Jesus' love and grace, his 30<sup>th</sup> miracle also emphasized his omniscience and foreknowledge. Jesus deliberately stayed in Perea after hearing about Lazarus' illness. This cut him off from receiving new information about Lazarus' condition from Bethany. However, Jesus knew that his friend had died. He knew what only God can know--this is one of John's consistent insights into the divinity of Jesus.

We see Jesus' foreknowledge in the way he anticipated Lazarus' death, and knew in advance that his Father was going to glorify him by raising Lazarus from the dead. Staying in Perea set the stage for Jesus to perform a miracle far greater than healing Lazarus' illness-- it created the circumstance in which he could resurrect a man whose body had already begun to decompose. Jesus saw this as his Father's sovereign plan to glorify his Son.

## The DAILY JESUS NEWS #217

Jesus therefore spoke of Lazarus "sleeping." This is a New Testament term that describes the body (physical remains) of people who have died with faith in Jesus, whose spirits have already gone into his presence in heaven. They are spiritually "alive" in God's presence with their full personality and all of their cognitive functions, while their bodies await resurrection on earth. Their bodies (physical remains) "sleep" because they will "awake" at the resurrection. In other words, Lazarus' body was sleeping, but his spirit was alive in heaven.

This description describes the peace and confidence regarding death that is the birthright of those who believe in Jesus. Sleep is a welcome relief to us when we are weary and exhausted from the rigors of the day. We awake refreshed. Sleep blesses us with peace and comfort so we welcome it, rather than fearing it. This is how we view death when we belong to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Today's reading implies one reason why Jesus spent his final six months on the road, visiting the towns and villages of Judea and Perea. It was too dangerous to stay in Jerusalem. Thomas assumed that if Jesus returned there he would be killed. The Pharisees had already tried to stone him twice in the Temple and failed. Their intentions to kill Jesus were plain. Returning to Bethany--just two miles from Jerusalem--was tantamount to signing Jesus' death warrant.

In spite of the impending danger of returning to Jerusalem, Jesus had no fear. As long as he walked in the day--in the light of his Father's presence and leadership--he knew that all was well. He was not concerned about mere human plans to kill him, for he lived in his Father's sovereign plans.

Finally, we see Jesus rejoicing here because his disciples were going to have the opportunity to see his glory, and increase their faith. Though they could not yet believe in their Lord's death and resurrection, seeing the way Jesus would handle the death of Lazarus by resurrecting him would prepare the disciples to believe in his own resurrection after it had occurred. Jesus could rejoice in their future growth, long before they were ready to experience it. God does that.

These are just a few of the ways John described the divinity of Jesus in these verses. We see him thinking and acting in intimate fellowship with his Father, behaving as only YHWH--the great "I AM" can do. It is no wonder that Jesus makes another "I AM" statement in tomorrow's reading.

### APPLICATION:

Jesus is always rejoicing in the person he is making us into--someone like him. Just as he knew what he was going to do for Lazarus by resurrecting him, and the impact this would have on his disciples in advance--he knows everything he is going to do in us beforehand. He sees the completed version of us all the time, rather than the messy, still-in-process person we are now. Since HE can rejoice in the person he is changing us into, so should we.

Paul expressed this truth like this:

*"He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion..." Phil. 1.6*

*How will you rejoice today in God's perfect completion of his still-in-process work in you?*