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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A2011 ~ Lazarus Brought to Life.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

In today's *Bible Adventure*, a good friend of Jesus called Lazarus was raised back to life four days after he'd died. This miracle was done by the Lord Jesus to bring honour and glory to His Father in heaven, as well as to Himself. At some point years later and we don't know when, Lazarus died again.

How can we be sure there is life after death? For those who don't or won't read the Scriptures, there's still a large amount of evidence to consider. Since the 1970s with advances in medical science, there've been many books telling stories of people who were believed to be clinically dead, yet revived to then live on for years. People close to death can have what are called 'out of body' experiences. They report floating around the ceiling of the hospital room looking down at their own body and medical staff working on their body.

Some have had the experience of being drawn to either a white light or heaven itself while others have being dragged down to terror, fear and burning flames in hell for a short time. People spending only a little time in hell have been so terrified that once they returned to their bodies on earth, they've insisted that they never want to go there again.

Life after death is disputed by all those who deny the existence of a Creator God. They're sometimes called atheists and agnostics. The book of Romans says that in rebellion, any person who doesn't accept and believe what the Scriptures say actually push the truth of God away from themselves, as God instinctively gives them knowledge in their hearts that He exists. Unbelieving people prefer to believe that when life on earth comes to an end, there's nothing after this. If such a belief was true, all the people wronged in life would never see justice. Would this be fair? In God's eyes, no! Jesus is the final just judge and one day, a future judgment day is coming whether any of us like it or not.

Unbelievers can be so opposed to anything linked to God that sometimes their hatred blocks common sense. They find purpose in life by attacking the genuineness of the Bible. One of their most serious errors is an obsession with death. Even though unbelievers don't believe in a hell, most of them express a bizarre willingness to take a leap into such a lake of fire. This welcoming attitude toward death can be seen as a form of insanity and the result of demonic delusion. Even a godless, unbelieving mind should know that the one basic driving force in nature is preserving life – at all costs. One man has said that he was helped to remain confident that God exists by an understanding and experience that shows spiritual forces dedicated to attacking his beliefs are a reality. If God was a lie and there was no life after death, why would some people have such an angry reaction to a message of hope in Jesus that seems so reasonable, so needed? When this man, who is a writer, sees people blindly speak of embracing death, he's reminded of the evil one who brought death into this world. The Apostle Paul spoke about death in 1 Corinthians, Chapter 15: "When buried, it is a physical body; when raised, it will be a spiritual body. There is, of course, a physical body, so there has to be a spiritual body." How sad it is for those people who live to deny the truth and loudly proclaim error to deceive as many as who will follow their line of thinking!

In today's drama, the faith of Mary, Martha and Jesus' disciples was tested and strengthened by seeing Jesus' power over death in God's timing.

DRAMA - [The Bible In Living Sound](#).

The raising of Lazarus from death is one of the Lord Jesus' greatest miracles and the event is recorded in John's Gospel, Chapter 11. In Lazarus' family, it seems that the house they lived in belonged to Martha, who was likely a widow and the oldest person, while Lazarus was the youngest. They had Jesus to visit a number of times and so Jesus and Lazarus were good friends.

The Scriptures don't mention Lazarus of Bethany in any other place of the Bible but there must have been strong mutual loyalty and commitment between these two men. Bethany was only two miles from Jerusalem and the chief priests had already tried to kill Jesus there. It was getting more dangerous for Jesus to travel in these areas. The Jewish authorities had plans to arrest Jesus as soon as they could find a good enough excuse to convince the Romans to execute Him.

When sisters Martha and Mary sent messengers to the Lord Jesus, He was 16 miles away on the other side of the Jordan River. By the time the messengers reached Him, Jesus knew that Lazarus was already dead. For this reason, Jesus didn't leave immediately to go to Bethany. He knew that He was going to raise Lazarus from death so it didn't matter to Him if two days or even four days passed. He waited until the right time for Him to go, as the sisters hadn't requested He come immediately. They knew that He, as the Messiah, could heal Lazarus from a distance. He'd done this type of thing before. What we call 'death' and what the Lord Jesus called 'falling asleep' refers to the transition from one life to another.

In the meantime, Mary and Martha went through the process of the burial. They received many visitors who came to express their sorrow and comfort the women by being there with them. When Jesus did arrive in Bethany, He was met by Martha before He came to the house; even then, she didn't rebuke Jesus for being late. Martha said that she knew her brother would rise again at the resurrection on the last day.

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me will live, even though they die; and those who live and believe in me will never die." This means that Jesus is the power by which every grave will open, every sleeper is given life and is called forth to a new existence. The life that provides people with a permanent eternal reality resides in Christ and proceeds from Him.

Those who've placed their faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God who came into the world to save sinners, need have no fear in the presence of death. Those who trust in His salvation for their souls are assured of His presence and can rest in His promises. There's a little saying, "Teach me to live that I may dread - the grave as little as my bed."

On other occasions when Jesus had brought someone back from the dead, it was early after death had occurred. Jesus brought Jairus' daughter back to life when she'd been dead for only a few hours. He brought the widow's son back to life when his body was being taken to be buried. This would probably have been less than two days after the young man had died. As there was no refrigeration to keep dead bodies cool, the breakdown of a decomposing body would happen quickly. And the resulting smell would make people feel sick.

The thought of the strong smell of Lazarus' body decomposing caused Martha to warn the Lord Jesus not to ask for the stone to be rolled away from his tomb; by now, Lazarus had been dead for four days. It seemed impossible to Martha and Mary that anything could be done about the situation at this point. If Jesus had come earlier, they had believed He could have done something then, but not now so late after his death. Martha's faith in Jesus was strong until it was tested at the grave. As the resurrection of all people depends on Him, Jesus showed that it didn't have to wait until the last day. He had the power to do it now as well as then.

The stone in front of the tomb was taken away. Jesus prayed aloud to His Father in heaven so that the people listening would believe that Jesus really was the Messiah, the Son of God. Jesus didn't work on His Own – He'd been sent by God to do the works of God. Jesus called Lazarus to come out of the grave and to everyone's amazement, Lazarus did. All the witnesses to this event saw the glory of God and praised Him.

Some miracle workers try to glorify themselves when a miracle occurs, but Jesus always gave the glory to His Father in heaven. And we should follow His example and do the same. Although there will be times when we will grieve for dead Christian friends and loved ones, our grief is of a much different kind from those who have no hope of eternity with God in heaven.

Are you afraid of dying? There are three aspects to consider: the fear of the physical act of dying, the fear of finality and the fear of judgment. While some people go through great suffering in their last illness before death, the medical people say that in the last stages of life, the person dying often doesn't feel as much misery as those standing around the bedside. Certainly those in their dying hours, who have put their trust in the Lord Jesus, anticipate the joys of heaven before they leave this earth. Christians have no need to fear that death is the same as extinction, because in John, Chapter 14, Jesus said: "I am going to prepare a place for you ... so that you also may be where I am." Death serves the purpose of bringing believers in Christ into God's immediate presence and gives us an eternal place in our Father's house. For some believers, there will be no death; they will be taken directly off the earth by the Lord Jesus when He gives the shout for His loved ones to come up to Him in the clouds on their way to heaven.

As fewer people in church hear sermons about God's coming judgment, there is generally a decreased worry in society about what will happen on this Judgment Day. No man, woman or child who knows Christ as their Saviour need fear this coming judgment. As the Apostle Paul said in Romans, Chapter 8, Verse 1: "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."

If you've never asked the Lord Jesus to be your personal Saviour, do so today. Admit you have done many wrong things over the course of your lifetime and that your heart has not sought Him. Ask Jesus to forgive and cleanse your heart and mind inside. Thank Him and give Him the control all of your life and the decisions you make from this day forward. Jesus saves all those who choose to believe and willing trust Him for eternal life.

Is it possible to be sure of this eternal life? 1 John, Chapter 5, says: "And this is the testimony that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; and he who does not have the Son of God does not life."

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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