

Yochanan ~ Part 23

Far Warning: I did not want to break up Chapter 11 into two parts, but the following post is four pages long. You may want to download the PDF version at the bottom of the post.

Many Beyond the Jordan Believe in Yeshua

10 ⁴⁰ He went off again beyond the Yarden, where Yochanan had been immersing at first, and stayed there. ⁴¹ Many people came to Him and said, "Yochanan performed no miracles, but everything Yochanan said about this man was true." ⁴² And many people there put their trust in him.

He went off again beyond the Yarden. Because of the increasing hostility (see v. 39), **Yeshua** went from the region of **Judea** into the unpopulated area across the **Jordan** to the place where **Yochanan** was first baptizing. Cf. Mattityahu 3:1–6; Mark 1:2–6; Luk 3:3–6. This is probably a reference to either **Perea** or **Batanea**, the general area in the tetrarchy of **Philip** in the E and NE of the **Sea of Galilee**. The statement is ironic, since the area where **Yochanan** first began became the last area in which **Yeshua** stayed before He left for **Yerushalayim** and crucifixion. The people remembered **Yochanan's** testimony to **Yeshua** and affirmed their faith in Him (Yochanan 10:41, 42).

Lazarus Dies at Bethany

The resurrection of **Lazarus** is the climactic and most dramatic sign in this **Gospel** and the capstone of His public ministry. Six miracles have already been presented (water into wine [2:1–11], healing of the nobleman's son [4:46–54], restoring the impotent man [5:1–15], multiplying the loaves and fishes [6:1–14], walking on the water [6:15–21], and curing the man born blind [9:1–12]). **Lazarus'** resurrection is more potent than all those and even more monumental than the raising of the widow's son in **Nain** (Luke 7:11–16) or **Jairus'** daughter (Luke 8:40–56) because those two resurrections occurred immediately after death. **Lazarus** was raised after 4 days in the grave, with decomposition already having started (v. 39). **Bethany**. This **Bethany** is different from the other "**Bethany beyond the Jordan**" in 1:28. It lies on the east side of the **Mount of Olives** about two miles from **Yerushalayim** (v. 18) along the road leading toward **Jericho**. **Miryam ... Marta**. This is the first mention of this family in **Yochanan**. **Yochanan** related the story of **Miryam's** anointing of **Yeshua** in 12:1–8, but this reference may indicate that the original readers were already familiar with the event.

11 ¹ There was a man who had fallen sick. His name was El'azar, and he came from Beit-Anyah, the village where Miryam and her sister Marta lived.

Like a number of the incidents **Yochanan** reports, the events of this chapter presume knowledge of material found in the **Synoptic Gospels**. **Beit-Anyah** (Bethany) is mentioned in Mark 11:11–12 as the place where **Yeshua** and His **talmidim** stayed after making their triumphal entry into **Yerushalayim**. **Miryam** and **Marta** are introduced in Luke 10:38–42.

² (This Miryam, whose brother El'azar had become sick, is the one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.)

This is reported by Yochanan at 12:3–8; Matityahu 26:6–13 and Mark 14:3–9 say this occurred in the home of **Shim'on**, the man whom **Yeshua** healed of a serious skin disease; perhaps he shared quarters with the three siblings. A similar incident took place earlier (Luke 7:36–38).

³ So the sisters sent a message to Yeshua, "Lord, the man you love is sick."

Sent word to Him. Since **Yeshua** was in the **Transjordan** and **Lazarus** was near **Yerushalayim**, the message to **Yeshua** would most likely have taken one whole day to reach Him. Surely by omniscience, **Yeshua** already knew of **Lazarus'** condition (see v. 6 below). He may have died before the messenger reached **Yeshua**, since he was dead 4 days (v. 17) when **Yeshua** arrived, after a two-day delay (v. 6) and a one-day journey. *The man you love.* This phrase is a touching hint at the close friendship that **Yeshua** had with **Lazarus**.

⁴ On hearing it, He said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may receive glory through it."

The Son of God may receive glory. This phrase reveals the real purpose behind **Lazarus'** sickness, i.e., not death, but that the **Son of God** might be glorified through his resurrection.

⁵ Yeshua loved Marta and her sister and El'azar; ⁶ so when He heard He was sick, first He stayed where He was two more days;

The decision to delay coming did not bring about **Lazarus'** death, since **Yeshua** already supernaturally knew his plight. Most likely, by the time the messenger arrived to inform **Yeshua**, **Lazarus** was already dead. The delay was because He loved the family (v. 5), and that love would be clear as He greatly strengthened their faith by raising **Lazarus** from the dead. The delay also ensured that **Lazarus** had been dead long enough that no one could misinterpret the miracle as a fraud or mere resuscitation.

⁷ then, after this, He said to the talmidim, "Let's go back to Y'hudah."⁸ The talmidim replied, "Rabbi! Just a short while ago the Judeans were out to stone you - and you want to go back there?"

The **Talmidim** realized that the animosity toward **Yeshua** was so great that His return could result in His death because of the murderous Jews (cf. 8:59; 10:31)

⁹ Yeshua answered, "Aren't there twelve hours of daylight? If a person walks during daylight, he doesn't stumble; because he sees the light of this world. ¹⁰ But if a person walks at night, he does stumble; because he has no light with him."

During the light of the sun, most people did their work safely. When darkness came, they stopped. The proverbial saying, however, had a deeper meaning. As long as the **Son** performed His **Father's** will (i.e., during the daylight period of His ministry when He is able to work), **He was safe**. The time would soon come (nighttime) when, by **God's** design, His earthly work would end, and He would "stumble" in death. **Yeshua** was stressing that as long as He was on earth doing God's will, even at this late time in His ministry, He would safely complete God's purposes.

¹¹ *Yeshua said these things, and afterwards He said to the talmidim, "Our friend El'azar has gone to sleep; but I am going in order to wake him up."*

Fallen asleep means "died," as the following interchange makes clear (vv. 12–14). The **Tanakh** equivalent is "*slept with his fathers*." Occasionally, death is depicted as a deep sleep from which we will be awakened (Daniel 12:2).

¹² *The talmidim said to Him, "Lord, if he has gone to sleep, he will get better."* ¹³ *Now Yeshua had used the phrase to speak about El'azar's death, but they thought he had been talking literally about sleep.* ¹⁴ *So Yeshua told them in plain language, "El'azar has died.* ¹⁵ *And for your sakes, I am glad that I wasn't there, so that you may come to trust. But let's go to him."*

In view of **Yeshua's** relationship with **Lazarus** and his family, the statement that *I am glad that I wasn't there* shows how important the **Talmidim** faith was.

¹⁶ *Then T'oma (the name means "twin") said to his fellow talmidim, "Yes, we should go, so that we can die with him!"* ¹⁷ *On arrival, Yeshua found that El'azar had already been in the tomb for four days.*

El'azar had already been in the tomb for four days and had already begun to decay (v. 39). **Yeshua** raised others from the dead - **Ya'ir's** daughter (Luke 8:41–42, 49–56) and the son of the widow in **Na'im** (Luke 7:11–17). The **Tanakh** reports that **Elijah** and **Elisha** had raised people from the dead (1 Kings 17:17–24, 2 Kings 4:17–37). And indeed, doctors today bring back people who have been "clinically dead" for many minutes, perhaps hours. But nowhere in biblical or secular history is there an instance of anyone medically dead for four days - to the point where there would be an odor - being physically raised from the dead. The incident is reported in such a way that no one misses its significance: **Yeshua** has physically brought back to life a four-days-dead, cold, stinking corpse; and this miracle crowns **Yeshua's** career prior to His own death and resurrection. This is what produced the profound reaction among the populace and authorities reported in the rest of this and the following chapter.

¹⁸ *Now Beit-Anyah was about two miles from Yerushalayim,* ¹⁹ *and many of the Judeans had come to Marta and Miryam in order to comfort them at the loss of their brother.* ²⁰ *So when Marta heard that Yeshua was coming, she went out to meet him; but Miryam continued sitting shiv'ah in the house.* ²¹ *Marta said to Yeshua, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.* ²² *Even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you."* ²³ *Yeshua said to her, "Your brother will rise again."* ²⁴ *Marta said, "I know that he will rise again at the Resurrection on the Last Day."*

Many of the Judeans had come ... to comfort them at the loss of their brother ... Miryam continued sitting shiv'ah in the house. The word "**shiv'ah**" means "**seven**," and the phrase, "**sitting shiv'ah**," refers to the **Jewish** custom of sitting in mourning for seven days following the death of a deceased parent, spouse, sibling or child. The **Greek** here says **only "sitting,"** which is an unusual word if all that is meant is that **Miryam** stayed in the house when **Marta** went out. The **Orthodox Jewish** mourner sits unshod on the floor or on a low stool in the home of the deceased or his near relative and abstains from all ordinary work and diversions and even from required synagogue prayers, while friends visit him to comfort and pray with him. Both sisters observed the practice, which was not significantly different then from now; but

Marta, who evidently had digested **Yeshua's** counsel at Luke 10:41–42, was now the one willing to set custom aside and leave the house in order to meet Him.

²⁴ I know that he will rise again at the Resurrection on the Last Day.

How did she know this? From the **Tanakh**, which teaches it in Daniel 12:2. This was standard doctrine among the **P'rushim** (but not the **Tz'dukim**; see Mathew 3:7N, 22:23–32, Acts 23:6–9).

²⁵ Yeshua said to her, "I AM the Resurrection and the Life! Whoever puts his trust in Me will live, even if he dies; ²⁶ and everyone living and trusting in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

I AM the Resurrection and the Life. In addition to **Yeshua's** absolute **"I AM"** statements, Yochanan reports seven predicated **"I AM"** statements: ***I AM the bread of life*** (6:35), ***the light of the world*** (8:12, 9:5), ***the gate*** (10:7), ***the good shepherd*** (10:11, 14), ***the resurrection and the life*** (here), ***the way and the truth and the life*** (14:6), ***and the real vine*** (15:1). The book of **Revelation** adds that **Yeshua** similarly spoke of himself after the resurrection as the ***"A" and the "Z"*** (Revelation 1:8) and ***as the first and the last*** (Revelation 1:17).

²⁷ She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world." ¹

Martha's reference to the one who comes into the world took up the **Messianic** expression derived from Psalm 118:26 (cp. Yochanan 12:13).

If you're struggling with feelings of despair or grief at home, remember how **Yeshua** comforted **Marta** in her time of loss. Set aside designated times for family prayer and reflection, sharing doubts and burdens with one another. Discuss how past difficulties were transformed by **God's** grace to cultivate hope and trust in **God's** plan. Establish a 'gratitude board' in your home where all family members can write down blessings, thereby prompting discussions that lead to recognizing **God's** faithfulness in your lives.

In our next post, we will continue to explore the **Gospel of Yochanan**.

¹ Yochanah 10:40-11:27