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LAZARUS COME FORTH

John 11 records when Jesus was called to Bethany because His friend, Lazarus, was sick (v. 3). Jesus didn't leave immediately. He waited two more days and then left for Bethany (v. 6). When He left, Jesus knew that Lazarus was dead (v. 14), but made it clear that He would do something that would bring glory to God through Lazarus (v. 4, 15). I find it interesting that when Jesus came into the area, Mary and Martha met Him separately. Yet, upon seeing Him, they both responded the same way: "*Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died*" (v. 21, 32). These women had a high degree of faith in Christ. They believed He could heal any sickness a man had and could keep someone from dying. Yet, when Jesus spoke about raising Lazarus from the dead (v. 23), Martha's response was to talk about the

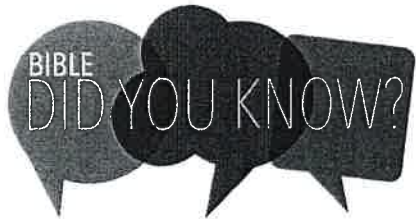
resurrection at the end of time (v. 24). In this text, we know Jesus didn't mean Lazarus would be raised years and years into the future. He meant Lazarus would rise that day (v. 25-26, 43-45). Of course, we know what happened next. Jesus, Martha, Mary, and the Jews grieving with them, went to the cave where they laid Lazarus' body (v. 38). He called for the stone to be removed, and when it was, He called for Lazarus to "*come forth*," and he came out of the grave (v. 38-45). Jesus shouted, "*Lazarus, come forth*" (Jn. 11:43)! These were three powerful words uttered by the Lord. When Jesus said this, He was calling a dead person out of the grave, reanimating him, and having him continue to live upon this earth. He not only brought a soul back into a body (Jas. 2:26), but He also stopped the

decomposition process
happening in Lazarus' body (v. 39), and made him fit for life on earth once more. There's an application to be made between Lazarus and us. Just like Lazarus, one day, those who are in the graves will hear His voice and "*come forth*" (Jn. 5:28-29). Except, on this occasion, folks aren't going to be fitted for longer life on earth, where they'll see death again. Instead, when people are called out of the graves on that day, they'll be fitted for a new life, an eternal life in Heaven (I Cor. 15:51-54). Are you ready for that day when all those in the graves shall "*come forth*"? Are you ready to be changed "*in a moment*"? At that time, will you be resurrected to go into life, or will you be lost in Hell (Jn. 5:29)? Will Jesus say to you, "*Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world,*" or, "*Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*" (Matt. 25:34, 41)? What Jesus says - to you then depends upon how you're living now! Are you ready for the Judgment Day? If not, then get ready while you still can (II Cor. 6:2; Mk. 16:16)! Tomorrow may be too late (Heb. 3:7-8)! - Jarrod Jacobs

Our title is found in Luke 18:13. In this text, the Lord spoke a parable to those who "*trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others*" (Lk. 18:9). His parable was about a Pharisee and publican who went to the Temple to pray to God (Lk. 18:10-13). The Pharisee spoke to God, bragging about how great he was. In contrast, the publican said, "*God be merciful to me a sinner.*" As He concluded the parable, Christ said that the publican was the one who was justified rather than the Pharisee (Lk. 18:14). What can we learn from the publican's prayer? First, let's understand that this isn't a prayer offered by an "alien sinner" to God. Some teach a false doctrine called "the sinner's prayer," where they say one can pray this prayer and be saved. This isn't taught in the Bible. This wasn't the spiritual condition of the publican, anyway. Remember, both he and the Pharisee were in the Temple (Lk. 18:10). Therefore, both men were children of God. The publican had come to renew a relationship with God. The publican's prayer isn't what someone needs to do to be saved from his past sins. This is because, in order to be saved, we must believe in Christ as the Son of God, repent of our sins, confess Christ as God's son and

be baptized for the remission of sins (Heb. 11:6; Acts 17:30; Acts 8:37; I Pet. 3:21). As we examine the publican's prayer, I suggest it reveals much about him and teaches us valuable lessons. First, he addresses his prayer to "God." He isn't praying to a pagan idol. He doesn't deny God's existence but looks to One higher and greater than himself for the blessing. In this petition, he then asks for mercy from God. Mercy is something that God has in abundance (Ps. 136). We, as well, need His mercy daily! The publican recognized he had sinned and needed God's forgiveness. Is this not the same with us? Who among us hasn't sinned (Rom. 3:23)? Seeing that this is true, let us never forget the true source of our mercy, and be thankful it is given to us. The publican made his prayer personal when he asked for God's mercy to be provided *"to me, a sinner."* I'm impressed that he didn't do as the Pharisee and look at others, noting their sin so he might make himself look better. Instead, he knew he had to look no farther than himself to see sin. May we learn this lesson (Rom. 3:23). It's easy to blame others for our problems. It's easy to try to discount or deny our sins by saying, "Look at him! He did worse than me!" What does this solve? Let's be honest and

admit we've sinned. Then, let's look to God for our strength and our salvation. If you need to be baptized, then do so before it's too late (Mk. 16:16). If you need to do as the publican and repent of past sins as an erring child, then please do this while you still can (Acts 8:22; I Jn. 1:9). God's mercy is abundant, but life on earth is temporary (Jas. 4:14). Tomorrow may be too late!! (II Cor. 6:2; Prov. 27:1). – Jarrod Jacobs



"In that day it will be said to Jerusalem: 'Do not be afraid, O Zion; do not let your hands fall limp. The LORD your God is in your midst, a victorious warrior. He will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy. I will gather those who grieve about the appointed feasts..."
Zephaniah 3:16-18

BIBLE TRIVIA

C H A L L E N G E

DIRECTIONS: After searching through your Bible, circle which answer is correct.

1. _____ was in hearty agreement with putting Stephen to death.

- a) Sapphira
- b) Saul
- c) Barnabas
- d) John Mark

2. Those who had been scattered went about _____.

- a) Hiding
- b) Crying
- c) Worrying
- d) Preaching

3. Beginning from Isaiah 53, Philip preached _____ to the eunuch.

- a) Jesus
- b) Doctrines
- c) The Church
- d) Commandments

4. Jesus said He would show Saul how much he must _____ for His name's sake.

- a) Prosper
- b) Gain
- c) Become Recognized
- d) Suffer

5. After regaining his sight, Saul got up and was _____.

- a) Baptized
- b) Successful
- c) Fast
- d) Slow

6. In Jerusalem Saul was trying to associate with the disciples but they were all _____.

- a) Rejoicing
- b) Praying
- c) Singing
- d) Afraid

7. The church increased when it was in the comfort of _____.

- a) Prosperity
- b) Nice Building
- c) Holy Spirit
- d) A Preacher

8. Dorcas was abounding with deeds of _____.

- a) Fear
- b) Kindness
- c) Guilt
- d) Worry

9. Peter stayed many days in Joppa with a _____ named Simon.

- a) Preacher
- b) Apostle
- c) Tanner
- d) Elder

10. Cornelius was a devout man who _____ continually.

- a) Sang
- b) Preached
- c) Taught
- d) Prayed

- 1) B, Reference: Acts 8:1
- 2) D, Reference: Acts 8:4
- 3) A, Reference: Acts 8:35
- 4) D, Reference: Acts 9:16
- 5) A, Reference: Acts 9:18
- 6) D, Reference: Acts 9:26
- 7) C, Acts 9:31
- 8) B, Acts 9:36
- 9) C, Acts 9:43
- 10) D, Acts 10:1-2