

RIVERBANK NEWS

A Publication of The Ol' Ship of Zion

October 1999

"ONLY BELIEVISM," NOT ENOUGH! YOUR OWN GRAVECLOTHES MUST BE REMOVED!

By Gordon Nelson

"And he (Lazarus) that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with GRAVECLOTHES." Jn. 11:44

"Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." 1 Cor. 15:12-17.

*"FOR IF THE DEAD RISE NOT, THEN IS NOT CHRIST RAISED." Did you ever think what would have happened if Christ failed to raise Lazarus from the dead? We could believe Christ rose from the dead because, after all, He is the Son of God: God can do anything! Mary and Martha of Bethany believed Jesus was the Son of God. They believed that their brother Lazarus would never have died had Jesus arrived earlier. But Lazarus is dead! *"And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?"* Jn. 11:37.*

The shortest verse in the Bible is Jesus crying concerning Lazarus. *"Jesus wept."* Jn. 11:35. Why did Jesus weep? It certainly wasn't because, like the others, he believed Lazarus was dead. Jesus did not believe this. *"Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep."* Jn. 11:11.

"Jesus saith unto her (Martha), Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus then makes the most positive revelation to Martha about Himself. "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" Jn. 11:23-26.

"He that believeth in me, though he were dead..." We can all associate with Lazarus. We were all *"dead in trespasses and sins."* (Eph. 2:1) *"But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth."* 1 Tim. 5:6. *"He that believeth in me, though he were dead..."* We were all dead in trespasses and sins when first we believed. *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live."* Jn. 5:25. The dead in trespasses

shall hear His voice and live. *“And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.”* Jn. 10:16. Did you hear His voice, or did you just sign up to join a spiritual crusade?

“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.” Jn. 15:16. Jesus calls his own sheep by name. *“But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.”* Jn. 10:2-3.

As a 21-year-old young dead man, I heard God’s voice. *“The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.”* Jn. 5:25. I was in a Salvation Army church meeting. Young people were present, invited from the Salvation Army Training Center. They gave their testimonies and were so happy. I could not feasibly explain the reason for their happiness, except for God. In this atmosphere, I heard God speak to a dead man--me. I had never ever heard the voice of God. It is evident that the hearing of this voice from God had a profound effect on me. I was 1-A already, merely waiting for a letter from Uncle Sam, saying, “Greetings!” God doesn’t preach sermons, but you get the message! God said to me, “This will be the last altar call for repentance that you’ll ever hear.” I knew immediately what He was talking about! In my rebellion, I’d only be a statistic of World War II. Suddenly, I saw my own epithet; dead on the battlefield of war. Don’t tell me that dead men cannot hear!

Christ was speaking of the resurrection in the same chapter, three verses later. Jesus speaks of the resurrection of the dead from their graves. *“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”* Jn. 5:28-29. This scripture addresses the dead in their graves!

Lazarus is also a type of the sinner *“dead in trespasses and sins.”* *“And when he (Jesus) thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.”* Jn. 11:43.

“Only believism” is not enough! You are still bound in your graveclothes! There remaineth something for you to believe: for the Holy Spirit to take off these graveclothes! I was alive by the “new birth,” but helplessly bound in my own graveclothes. I still needed help to become the Lord’s freeman. *“For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord’s freeman.”* 1 Cor. 7:22.

It was not enough for Christ to cry out with a loud voice, *“Lazarus, come forth.”* Hearing His voice was not enough! *“And he that was dead came forth* (the dead man came alive), *bound hand and foot*

with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin (towel to wipe sweat). Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.” Jn. 11:44.

You need help to get your own graveclothes loosed! The reason so many backslide is they were never free from the old habits and associates representative of these graveclothes. *“If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” Jn. 8:36. “If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.” Jn. 14:14. “Only believism” is the hearing of His voice; “Lazarus, come forth!”*

But who is going to rid you of your own graveclothes? *“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. But he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.” Matt. 3:11.* It takes this “fire” to burn up those old graveclothes that have had you bound. If you were raised a Catholic, as I was, you need the confessional booths, the holy water, the rosary, the Immaculate Conception of Mary, the infallibility of the Pope, etc. burned up.

Jesus said, *“I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened (Gk.-held together) till it be accomplished (Day of Pentecost--Acts 2:4)!” Lk. 12:49:50. “Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner (barn); but he will BURN UP THE CHAFF with unquenchable FIRE.” Matt. 3:12.*

Merely crossing the Red Sea, does not put one into the Promised Land! Those graveclothes are a type of the wilderness we must all go through. It all depends on how much you yield to this “fire of the Holy Ghost” as to the time you must spend in the Desert Sin.

It takes a labor of faith to obey the Lord. *“Loose him and let him go!” “Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest!” Heb. 4:11.* One cannot cease from labor (under the law) until the Holy Ghost has removed our own graveclothes.

We come to Christ as a sinner dressed in all manner of graveclothes. The graveclothes of the “traditions of men,” traditions of our mother’s religion, the graveclothes of cigarettes, liquor, sexual deviation, drugs, cursing God, hatred of opposite sex, resentment of authority or rebellion. We need these graveclothes burned up to become the Lord’s “freeman.” *“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” 2 Cor. 3:18.*

How are we to be conformed into the image of the Son of God, if we believe we received it all on the day we believed? What you received was Christ in your heart, and the forgiveness of sins! But, look at you. You’re still wrapped tightly in your graveclothes, with a “napkin” or towel over your mouth.

You can't even talk! *"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, TO THEM who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON."* Rom. 8:28-29. You need the fire of God to burn up the "chaff" which is in each of our lives. (Matt. 3:12)

We have an excellent example in President Bill Clinton, who is a member of the Emmanuel Baptist Church of Little Rock, Arkansas. We see a Baptist that doesn't know how to get rid of his graveclothes. As a Baptist, Bill Clinton received it all when he "only believed." Jerry Falwell keeps on being the mouthpiece for this segment of religion. "On the day you believed, Jesus forgave you of all your past, present, and future sins." Bob George, radio evangelist, of this same persuasion, says you only need to repent one time in your life. The sin question is settled! You hear young people phone the radio talk show host, still bound in their graveclothes, for answers from this false prophet. The stone these builders rejected is "the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire." Matt. 3:11.

Unconditional eternal security is not achieved until you have "entered into rest." (Heb. 4:11) Sorry, but one never entered into "that rest" without *stammering lips and another tongue.* Isa. 28:11-12. The graveclothes must first be removed before becoming the Lord's freeman. *"Loose him and let him go!"*

<i>"And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her. The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there. Selah." Ps. 87:5-6</i>
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