

the portico of Solomon. The Jews therefore gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Messiah, tell us plainly." Jesus answered them, "I told you and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these works testify of who I am.

"But you do not believe, because you are not one of My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

The Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, "I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?" The Jews answered Him, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God."

Jesus answered them, "Has it not been written in your Law, 'I said, you are gods'? If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), why do you say of Him, whom the Father set apart and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?"

"If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works I do, that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I am in the Father."

Therefore they were seeking again to seize Him and He eluded their grasp. He went away again beyond the Jordan to where John was first baptizing, and He was staying there. And many came to Him and were saying, "While John performed no sign, yet everything John said about this man was true." And many believed in Him there.

God has been speaking to humanity since His first act of creation. Astronomy, nature and animals, the oceans, and people...from the vastness of space to the complexity of our DNA - our Father is speaking. As powerful as His voice comes through the things we have just listed, Jesus, God's Son is the crowning jewel of His communication with mankind!

DAY TWENTY-NINE 29

RAISING LAZARUS

John 11:1-42

Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. And it was the same Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. The sisters therefore sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick." But when Jesus heard it, He said, "This sickness will not result in death, but is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified by it."

God seems to be quite comfortable answering people's hard questions. There really is a difference between asking questions and questioning God. Thomas goes through quite a process in dealing with his doubts about Jesus. Jesus seems to patiently and directly lead Him through, until he comes to the point of admitting that He is his King and his God.

To imagine God's Son having friends is a tough concept to grasp, but apparently this family: Mary, Martha, and Lazarus; become special companions of Jesus. They seem to be a part of His close circle of friendship relationships along with Peter, James, and John. Friendship and companionship were something God chose to enjoy - if not need, during His stay upon the earth.

Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When He heard that he was sick, He stayed two days longer in the place where He was. After this He said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." The disciples said to Him, "Rabbi (teacher), the Jews were just now seeking to stone You, and You are going there again?" Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him."

After that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going to him, that I may awaken him out of sleep." The disciples then said to Him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover." Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that He was speaking of literal sleep. Then Jesus said to them clearly, "Lazarus is dead, and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, so that you may believe; but let us go to him."

Thomas then said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go so that we may die with Him." When Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off; and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary, to console them concerning their brother.

When Martha heard that Jesus was coming she went to meet Him; but Mary stayed in the house. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You."

Jesus said to her, "Your brother shall rise again." Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

She said to Him, "Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, the One who comes into the world." And when she had said this, she went away, and called Mary her sister, saying discreetly, "The Teacher is here, and is asking for you." And when she heard it, she arose quickly, and came to Him.

Now Jesus had not yet arrived at the village, but was still in the place where Martha met Him. The Jews who were with her in the house consoling her saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep. When Mary came where Jesus was, she saw Him, and fell at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."

When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came

with her weeping as well, He was deeply moved in spirit and troubled, and said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to Him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus wept. And so the Jews were saying, "Behold how He loved him!" But some of them said, "Could not this man, who opened the eyes of him who was blind, have kept this man from dying as well?"

Jesus therefore was again deeply moved inside, and He came to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, "Remove the stone." Martha, the sister of the deceased, said to Him, "Lord, by this time the smell of death will be strong, for he has been dead four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you, if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" And so they removed the stone. And Jesus raised His eyes, and said, "Father, I thank You that You heard Me. And I knew that You always hear Me; but because of the people standing around I said it, that they may believe that You sent Me."

And when He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." He who had died came out, bound hand and foot with wrappings; and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

Many of the Jews who had come to Mary and witnessed what He had done believed in Him. But some of them went away to the Pharisees, and told them the things which Jesus had done. Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, "What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs. If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."

But a certain one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, nor do you take into account that it is necessary for you that one man should die for the people, that the whole nation should not perish."

Now he did not say this on his own initiative; but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but that He might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered everywhere. So from that day on they planned together to kill Him.

Therefore Jesus no longer continued to walk publicly among the Jews, but went away to the country near the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim; and He stayed there with the disciples. Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and many went up to Jerusalem from the country before the Passover, to purify themselves. Therefore they were searching for Jesus, and were saying to one another, as they stood in the temple, "Do you think He will show up at the feast?" Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where He was, he should report it, so they could seize Him.

The religious leaders of Jesus' day were so concerned with their national pride and their need to exist that they were blind to the truly miraculous authority that Jesus possessed. In some senses their power and position made them insane.

As Christ's conflict with the religious leaders intensified the danger of His being prematurely taken to be crowned or crucified increased. Therefore He spent more time in outlying areas.