



THE RESURRECTION

December 20, 2025 | *Numbers 17:1-10; John 11*

The Budding Staff

For the last two days, we've discovered that the Ark of the Covenant and the Mercy Seat were pictures of Christ.

God told Moses to store three items in the Ark — the tablets of the Ten Commandments, a jar of manna, and Aaron's staff (*Heb. 9:4*). We've looked briefly at the Ten Commandments and the origin and purpose of the manna, but why was Aaron's staff in the Ark?

God had chosen Moses to be His voice to the people of Israel; and He had chosen his brother, Aaron, and his sons as the first High Priests. But a contingent of Israelites, led by a wicked man named Korah, rebelled against their leadership and casted doubt in the people's minds about Moses and Aaron. The Lord dealt with Korah and his followers Himself. The earth opened up and swallowed them (*Num. 16:32-33*).

To prove that Aaron was God's choice for High Priest, Moses took a rod or staff from each tribe. He also took Aaron's staff, which represented the tribe of Levi. After Moses wrote names on each staff, he laid them in the tent of the tabernacle until morning (*Num. 17:1-4*). Whichever rod sprouted overnight was God's choice for High Priest (v.5).

"On the next day, Moses went into the tent. Behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi had sprouted and put forth buds and produced blossoms..." (v.8).

The results of the contest were clear. Aaron and the sons of Levi were God's choice for the priesthood. The Lord then instructed Moses to put the budding staff into the Ark of the Covenant for safekeeping, also to be "a sign against the rebels, that it may put to an end their grumblings" (v.10).

Aaron, and the position of High Priest, of course, were foreshadows of Christ, our Great High

Priest, the only way to have access to God. However, the budding staff was also a symbol of Christ, a picture of new life.

Imagine how odd it would be for a walking stick to sprout branches and fruit. Something dead produced life? This miracle foreshadowed Jesus' resurrection.

Lazarus

One day, Jesus was informed that Lazarus, one of His closest friends, was gravely ill (*Jn. 11:3*). Though Lazarus would die, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it" (v.4). He then delayed two more days, instead of traveling to see Lazarus and his sisters.

A few days later, Jesus told His disciples, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go so that I may awaken him out of sleep" (v.11). His disciples were confused when Jesus referred to death as sleep, thinking that he might recover, but then Jesus said plainly, "Lazarus is dead" (v.13-14).

So, Jesus and the disciples traveled to Bethany, where Lazarus lived. When they arrived, they found that Lazarus had been dead four days (v.17). Martha, one of Lazarus' sisters said to Jesus, "If you had been here, my brother would not have died" (v.21), thinking that He would've healed Lazarus and prevented his death. But Jesus had something else in mind.

Jesus said to Martha, "Your brother will rise again" (v.22). She acknowledged that Lazarus would "rise again in the resurrection on the last day" (v.24). But Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live even if he dies" (v.25).

Then, in front of a crowd, Jesus called Lazarus to come out of his tomb. "The man who had died came forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings; and Jesus said, 'Unbind him, and let him go'" (v.43-44).

The Resurrection

When Job endured his epic trial, he made some profound statements and posed an important question.

He said, "Man is short-lived... Like a flower, he comes forth and withers. He flees like a shadow and does not remain. His days are determined... so that he cannot pass."

He continued, "There is hope for a tree when it is cut down, that it will sprout again... But man expires, and where is he? As water evaporates from the sea... so man lies down and does not rise... He will not awake nor be aroused out of his sleep. If a man dies, will he live again?" *Job 14:1-14*

If a man dies, will he live again? No, unless he knows and believes in the Resurrection and the Life — Jesus Christ.

To make such a claim as Jesus did was extraordinary. He was not just claiming to give life but to be life itself. The resurrection is not just an event, but rather it is a person!

John wrote, “God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son does not have the life” (*1 Jn. 5:11-12*). Those whom the Lord has given life cannot be overcome by death. “Death has no sting. Death has no victory” (*1 Cor. 15:57*).

But how could Jesus defeat death if He Himself remained in the tomb? That’s just it. Jesus didn’t remain in the tomb. Just as Jonah (another type of Christ) was in the belly of the great fish three days and three nights, so Jesus was in the tomb three days and three nights (*Matt. 12:40*).

Three days after Jesus’ death on the cross, He was raised from the dead, and He appeared to more than 500 people. It would not make sense for the One who promised eternal life to be dead in the grave. However, He could promise His followers eternal life if He Himself defeated the grave.

On the cross, Jesus defeated the curse of sin. By His resurrection, Jesus defeated the curse of death. He was the firstborn from the dead (*Col. 1:18*), meaning that many more would follow. Because He did it, He would enable His followers to defeat death too. What a glorious truth!

Jesus is the resurrection and the life! Death is like sleep to Him, and “those who have fallen asleep in Him will rise again” (*1 Thess. 4:13*). Like Aaron’s staff, our dead bodies will have new life. Jesus will unbind us from death, and we will live forever with Him!

What Child is this in the manger? The Child is the Resurrection — our eternal life!

Ponder and Pray

Take a minute to read *1 Thessalonians 4:13-18*. What comfort do you find in this passage?

After reading today's devotion, how should you view death? Pray and thank God that He is the resurrection and the life!

**Have you missed some days?
Click [here](#) to access previously emailed devotions.**

The reading plan and devotions were developed by Aaron Ferguson, one of our Elders and author of the *Study Guide and Daily Reflections for the One Year Chronological Reading of the Bible and the New Testament*. For more details, visit his website at BiAY.org.



