

# Chapter 20: Thy Faith Hath Saved Thee

## Reading Outline:

- Matthew 20
- Luke 18:1-8, 35-43; 19:1-10
- John 11

1. Introduction
2. The Parable of the Unjust Judge and the Widow
3. The Healing of the Blind Man or Men
4. Jesus is Received in Zacchaeus' Home
5. Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead
6. Conclusions

## **1. Introduction**

In each of our lives, there will be times when we are in need of help beyond our own. When those times come, we will be scared and frightened regarding the outcome that is certain unless we receive help. It is reported that during the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln said, "I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom and that all about me seemed insufficient for the day."<sup>1</sup>

The following is the counsel a mother gave to her son, Hugh B. Brown, before he left on his mission (Gone from home for 2 years to the British Isles). His mother told him:

"Hugh, you remember when you were a little boy and you would have a bad dream or wake up in the night frightened? You would call from your room, 'Mother, are you there?' and I would answer and try to comfort you and remove your fears. Now as you go on a mission and out into the world, there will be times when you will be frightened, when you feel weak, inadequate, alone, and have problems. I want you to know that you can call to your Heavenly Father as you used to call to me and say, 'Father, are you there? I need your help.' Do this with the knowledge that He is there and that He will be ready to help you if you will do your part and live worthy of your blessings. I want to reassure you that He is there and will answer your prayers and needs for your best good."<sup>2</sup>

When you have those times when you are frightened and in need of help, I would suggest that you get on your knees and seek divine help from God. You will receive an answer regarding your plea for help. I have.

In this chapter we will address the parable of the unjust judge and the widow; the healing of a blind man, and the raising of Lazarus from the dead. In each of these circumstances, the common thread is the need for help and assistance when there was no one else to whom the individual could turn.

## 2. The Parable of the Unjust Judge and the Widow

The LDS Dictionary, under Harmony of the Gospels, references this parable as “Parable: The unjust judge” (“Harmony of the Gospels—LDS Bible Dictionary” in *Holy Bible*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979, 691).

J. Reuben Clark, Jr. references this parable as “The Parable of the importunate widow.”<sup>3</sup>

Luke is the only gospel writer to include this parable in his writings. While no questioner is identified, it would appear that this admonition is given specifically to Jesus’ disciples who had gathered in order to receive yet further understanding regarding the value and importance of personal prayer. Perhaps there may have been some who had offered their prayers, but had not received a reply and wondered what to do when this occurred. I believe that this parable also has general application to those who may feel that the heavens are closed, or that God has provided His word through His Holy Scriptures and, therefore is no longer responds or available to the petitions of the humble seeker of divine truth. Adam Clarke offers yet further insight.

Adam Clarke states,

*“Men ought always to pray. Therefore, the plain meaning and moral of the parable are evident; viz., that as afflictions and desolations were coming on the land, and they should have need of much patience and continual fortitude, and the constant influence and protection of the Almighty, therefore they should be instant in prayer. It states, further, that men should never cease praying for...the necessity of which God has given them to feel till they receive a full answer to their prayers.”*<sup>4</sup>

It seems to me that part of the message of the parable is found in the importance of the word, “importune” meaning “to press or urge with troublesome persistence; archaic: to request or beg for urgently.” (see *Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*. Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster Inc., 1983, [1991], 605). Some seem to have the attitude that all one must do is ask, and immediately the answer comes, almost like giving an order at a fast-food outlet. When the answer is not provided immediately or is delayed, often the conclusion of the individual is that not only is God not listening, but He does not care; He is not there! It is often difficult for us to comprehend that part of prayer involves both patience and persistence on our part, thereby manifesting our faith that God is there. He always listens to our pleadings and in His own time, an answer will be forthcoming. Another part of prayer is the acceptance of His answer, even when it is not the one previously determined. Your faith and trust tell you, however, that His answer is the best answer for you and in time, your faith will be confirmed.

Luke 18:1-3

- 1 And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;**
- 2 Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man:**
- 3 And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.**

There are only two participants in this parable. One is a local judge who makes his decisions without any fear toward others or God. The other is a widow who comes to him seeking justice for harm done to her.

Luke 18:4-6

**4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man;  
5 Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.  
6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.**

Note that the widow came to him frequently with her petition for justice, even though the judge initially gave no attention to her request. It is only with the passage of time that the judge determines to hear her petition. His reason for acting is not based upon personal threat or fear, but in response to her relentless persistence in pursuing her petition for justice.

Luke 18:7-8

**7 And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?**

There are certainly times when God’s response to the prayers of the righteous are also delayed for circumstances that are not always clear to the petitioner. In His own good time, and for His own purpose, the answer will come to the faithful and humble believer. It has been my experience that when the answer does eventually come, even when the answer was “No”, though painful to receive, it has proved over time, the correct answer for my circumstances. It is the ability of God to see into the future that adds to His perfect insight. The problem on our part is often one of limited vision and lack of trust.

Luke 18:8	JST, Luke 18:8
<b>8 I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?</b>	<b>8 <u>I tell you that he will come</u>, and when he does come, he will avenge <u>his saints</u> speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?</b>

The Joseph Smith Translation adds the assurance to the believer that though circumstances of this life may be difficult to bear, they are temporary. When Christ returns again to the earth He will come as King of Kings, and Lord of Lords and all wrongs will be made right. For now, however, we continue to walk in faith.

The following latter-day revelation as recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants was given to the prophet in response to the members of the Church having been driven from their homes in Missouri in the middle of winter. Many suffered great loss of property and possessions, including the loss of life. It was truly a great trial of faith to many of the members of the Church who greatly suffered at

that time. When their personal prayers were not answered, they turned to the prophet for guidance and direction regarding their dire circumstances. Those in the government, local, state and national offered no help nor assistance during these difficult times. The Prophet Joseph Smith petitioned the Lord for guidance and direction. This was the Lord's reply.

Doctrine and Covenants 101:85-94

**85 Thus will I liken the children of Zion. [The previous verse 81-84 reference the parable of the woman and the unjust judge]**

**86 Let them importune at the feet of the judge;**

**87 And if he heed them not, let them importune at the feet of the governor;**

**88 And if the governor heed them not, let them importune at the feet of the president;**

**89 And if the president heed them not, then will the Lord arise and come forth out of his hiding place, and in his fury vex the nation;**

**90 And in his hot displeasure, and in his fierce anger, in his time, will cut off those wicked, unfaithful, and unjust stewards, and appoint them their portion among hypocrites, and unbelievers;**

**91 Even in outer darkness, where there is weeping, and gnashing of teeth.**

**92 Pray ye, therefore, that their ears may be opened unto your cries, that I may be merciful unto them, that these things may not come upon them.**

**93 What I have said unto you must needs be, that all men may be left without excuse;**

**94 That wise men and rulers may hear and know that which they have never considered;**

As noted, the leaders were to be given the opportunity to repent from their grievous actions. If they did not take positive action on behalf of the Lord's people, then, in time, they would be held accountable by the Lord for their actions. Unfortunately, the petitions of the Latter-Day Saints to each of the noted leaders in Missouri as well as the President of the United States, did not bring the desired results, and no remuneration was provided for their losses. The people in Illinois, however, did give the members of the Church refuge from the cold winter and food to eat. As a direct result of their charitable actions, many lives of the early members of the Church were preserved.

Bruce R. McConkie states,

"...if the saints will continue to importune in faith for that which is right, and because their cause is just, though the answers to their prayers may be long delayed, yet, finally in the day of vengeance when he judges whose judgment is just, when he comes again to rule and reign, the faithful shall be rewarded."<sup>5</sup>

### **3. The Healing of the Blind Man or Men**

The healing of the blind man or men is found in Matthew 20:30-34; Mark 10:46-52, and Luke 18:35-43. In the incident reported by Matthew, the healing involves two men and occurs when Jesus is leaving Jericho. Mark and Luke each identify only one man, and Mark identifies him as Bartimaeus. Mark agrees with Matthew that the healing occurred as Jesus is leaving Jericho. Luke identifies only "a certain blind man" (Luke 18:35), and that the healing occurred as Jesus was entering Jericho.

James E. Talmage states,

“These slight variations attest the independent authorship of each of the records, and the apparent discrepancies have no direct bearing upon the main facts, nor do they detract from the instructional value of the Lord’s work. As we have found to be the case on an earlier occasion [see Matt. 8:28, compare Mark 5:1; Luke 8:27], two men were mentioned though only one figures in the circumstantial account.”<sup>6</sup>

We will reference the account provided by Luke, but will refer to the blind man as Bartimaeus.

Luke 18:35-37

**35 And it came to pass that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging:  
36 And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant.  
37 And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.**

How many blind men in Israel were also beggars? Being deprived of the ability to provide for themselves, the only means of income was to sit by the thoroughfare in hope that someone would have pity upon them. How long this had been the case with Bartimaeus is not known, but he was known as the son of Timaeus. There may have been many who passed along the dusty roads, but He who now passed was Jesus of Nazareth.

Luke 18:38-39

**38 And he cried, saying, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.  
39 And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried so much the more, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me.**

Bartimaeus’ reference to Jesus as the Son of David was a clear reference to his faith that Jesus was the Messiah and that He had the power to give him sight. His request could not be silenced.

Bruce R. McConkie states,

“Christ is the *Son of David* meaning he was born in mortality as the literal seed and descendant of King David...That the promised Messiah would be a descendant and heir of David was well known among the Jews in the meridian of time.”<sup>7</sup>

Luke 18:40-41

**40 And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto him: and when he was come near, he asked him,  
41 Saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? ...**

Having now gained Jesus’ attention by his persistent effort, Jesus asks him what he would like Him to do. Since the onset of his blindness, there has been only one thing that he desired. Each day of his

darkness, his desire grew increasingly stronger. His singular desire was to be released from his prison of darkness and to be brought into the light. He had heard by word of mouth the miracles that Jesus had performed, including restoring sight to the blind. Maybe Jesus would hear his plea and restore his sight. In answer to Jesus question, Bartimaeus had only one request of the one who he believe to be the promised Messiah.

Luke 18:41-42

**41 ...And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight.**

**42 And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee.**

Matthew's account states in response to Bartimaeus' request, "Jesus had compassion on them/him, and touched their/his eyes: and immediately their/his eyes received sight" (Matthew 20:34). Mark's account states, "And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight" (Mark 10:52). Only Luke's account states, "Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee" (Luke 18:42). Luke's singular reference to the word, "saved" causes me to wonder if maybe Bartimaeus received a double blessing.

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet state,

"The physical and the spiritual are inseparably connected...That is to say, the same power by which death is rebuked or ailments are cured is able to rebuke the evil one and cure a sin-sick soul. In like manner [and this is important], if one has the faith to be healed physically, he has the faith by which that cleansing and healing power can work a spiritual miracle and purify him from the stains of sin."<sup>8</sup>

It is my impression that not only the restoration of sight, but the purifying of his soul from sin, resulted in the joint statement by each of three gospel writers, Matthew, "they/he followed him"; Mark, "he...followed Jesus in the way", and Luke, "and followed him." Bartimaeus now having his eyesight restored, and possibly also being made spiritually clean, has no other desire than to enter into the waters of baptism and become a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Luke 18:43

**43 And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God, and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God.**

#### **4. Jesus is Received in Zacchaeus' Home**

This event is recorded only in Luke 19:1-10.

Luke 19:1

**1 And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho.**

Obert C. Tanner states,

“[This verse} evidently refers to the walled-in portion of the city. Only a small portion of the city at that time was within the walls. Jesus was not taking leave of the city, but seeking a place to abide.”<sup>9</sup>

Luke 19:2

**2 And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich.**

We learn that Zacchaeus was by vocation a publican or tax collector, and chief amongst them, or the one in charge of collecting taxes in this area of the country. He was also rich.

The LDS Dictionary states,

“**Publicans:** Men who bought or farmed the taxes under the Roman government were called *publicani*. The name is also used to describe those who actually collected the money, and who were properly called portitores. Both classes were detested by the Jews, and any Jew who undertook the work was excommunicated.”<sup>10</sup>

Emil Schurer adds,

“The tax-gatherers of Jericho (Luke xix. 1,2) and of Caesarea—Zacchaeus and John [Levi Matthew?—were therefore Jews. Since they are described as well-to-do and respectable people, they certainly cannot have belonged to the lowest class of publican---. The extent to which custom might be charged was indeed prescribed by the court; but since these tariffs, as we see from the case of Palmyra, were in early times often very indefinite, abundant room was left for the arbitrariness and the rapacity of the tax-gatherer. The advantage taken of such opportunities and the not infrequent overcharges that were made by the officials, made them as a class hated by the people. Not only in the New Testament are the terms ‘publican and sinner’ almost synonymous, but also in rabbinical literature tax-gatherers appear in an even less favorable light...one should not even receive money from the cash-box of the tax-gathers—should not even receive alms from them (because the money has been gained by robbery) ...therefore, tax-gatherers are placed in the same category as robbers.”<sup>11</sup>

It is important to recall that Levi Matthew, the writer of the gospel of Matthew was also a “publican...at the time of his calling to be a disciple.” (New Testament, Chapter 7, see also Mark 2:14).

The fact the Zacchaeus is noted as being “rich” only adds to the hatred the Jews felt towards one of their own who had accepted employment by Rome. It was generally concluded that all tax-gathers who were rich was due to their having defrauded the people as part of their hated occupation.

Luke 19:3-4

**3 And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press [around him], because he was little of stature.**

**4 And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way.**

Whatever the reason for Zacchaeus' desire to see Jesus, he was active in his determination to do so, including climbing a tree just so he could catch a glimpse of Jesus as He passed by.

Luke 19:5-6

**5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house.  
6 And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.**

Just as Zacchaeus tried to seek out Jesus, Jesus also wanted to meet with Zacchaeus. We know that Jesus was seeking lodging for the night, but He saw in Zacchaeus a soul that was good, and needed saving.

Luke 19:7

**7 And when they [those of the area who had surrounded Jesus?], they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he [Jesus] was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.**

They did not understand the mission of Jesus was to all that were in need of being healed, spiritually as well as physically.

Ezekiel 34:16

**16 I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.**

With Bartimaeus, it was his being blind that brought him to Jesus; with Zacchaeus it is the rejection he received due to his vocation and wealth. Regardless of the reason, Jesus had come to seek, bind up, and strengthen those who were receptive to His words.

Bruce R. McConkie states,

“In the self-selected abode there is time to relax and eat, to rest and to teach. Much is said by Jesus about the gospel and repentance and salvation and the glories of the eternal world. At a point of climax, Zacchaeus's heart is pricked. He stands.”<sup>12</sup>

Luke 19:8

**8 And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.**

James E. Talmage states,

“These were works met for repentance. The man realized that he could not change his past; but he knew he could, in part, at least atone for some of his misdeeds. His pledge to restore fourfold measure whatever he had wrongfully acquired was in line with the Mosaic law as to restitution, but far in excess of the recompense required. Jesus accepted the man’s profession of repentance.”<sup>13</sup>

Luke 19:9-10

**9 And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham.**

**10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.**

On both Bartimaeus and Zacchaeus, Jesus has wrought yet again His miracle of healing upon two who were in need physically and spiritually. Both were converted by His teaching. Both received a mighty change of heart. King Benjamin, a prophet/king in the Americas, after teaching his people the principles of the gospel, inquired of them if they believed his words.

B/M, Mosiah 5:2

**2 And they all cried with one voice, saying: Yea, we believe all the words which thou hast spoken unto us; and also, we know of their surety and truth, because the Spirit of the Lord Omnipotent, which has wrought a might change in us, or in our hearts, that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually.**

Such was the change that had come upon Bartimaeus and Zacchaeus. This is the change that can also come unto each of us if we are willing to follow Jesus and keep His commandments. If we are willing, then our spiritual eyes will be opened and as we enter the waters of baptism, we will also have our sins forgiven.

## **5. Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead**

We learn from the Harmony of the Gospels Jesus and His disciples were in Perea when Jesus first received word regarding Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha (see **Event:** Summoned to Lazarus. LDS Dictionary in *Holy Bible*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979, 692).

John 11:3-4, 6

**3 Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.**

**4 When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.**

**6 When he heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.**

It would seem unusual for Jesus, upon learning that someone for whom He cares is sick, and whom He knows is going to die, would delay His departure. Our usual response is to go immediately to the individual's bedside. Why did Jesus delay His departure?

The Life and Teachings of Jesus and his Apostles (Institute) Student Manual states,

“When Jesus and his apostles [finally] arrived, Lazarus' body had already lain in the tomb four days. The Jews entertained the common belief that the spirit of the deceased lingered around the body for three days, hoping to be able to enter it once again. After that, decay began to set in, and the spirit departed forever (See McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary 1:533*.) Jesus may have had this belief in mind in waiting four days to restore Lazarus to life.”<sup>14</sup>

Another reason might have been to further strengthen the faith of His disciples, as well as Mary and Martha.

John 11:7-8, 11-12, 14

**7 Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judea again.**

**8 His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?**

**11 ...Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.**

**12 Then said his disciples, Lord if he sleep, he shall do well.**

**14 Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.**

They had not understood that the purpose of delaying their return to Jerusalem was specifically related to Lazarus being dead upon their arrival. They did understand that it was not safe for Jesus to return again to Judea.

John 11:15-16 (underline added)

**15 And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.**

**16 Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow-disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him; [JST. for they feared lest the Jews should take Jesus and put him to death, for as yet they did not understand the power of God].**

Jesus confirms that one aspect for His delay was in order to further strengthen the faith of His disciples. Part of their reluctance for returning was the threats upon Jesus life (John 11:8). It is Thomas who speaks and encourages them to return to Jerusalem with Jesus, even if means they will be required to sacrifice their own lives.

Bruce R. McConkie states,

“The raising of Lazarus [was] the miracle that [Jesus] singled out as the chief one to bear witness that he is the resurrection and the life; that by him immortality and eternal life come; and that he would in due course perform the infinitely and miraculously great atoning sacrifice.”<sup>15</sup>

On two previous occasions, Jesus had raised individuals from the dead. These two individuals, the son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11-17), and the daughter of Jairus (Luke 8:41-42, 49-56), had only been dead for a period of no longer than 24 hours. By the time Jesus arrived, Lazarus had lain in the grave for four days! This miracle would convince, even the religious leaders, of His power and authority. But first, the test of faith for Martha.

John 11:20-22

**20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house.**

**21 Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.**

**22 But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.**

It is noteworthy that Martha, choosing the good part, hastens to meet Jesus while He is yet on the way. Martha’s faith is strong, but while she believed that if Jesus had been here, her brother would not have died, she knows that He has the power to perform miracles. It is doubtful; however, she fully understood the miracle that was about to occur. She was not alone, nor did anyone else, other than the Savior.

John 11:23-24

**23 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.**

**24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.**

Martha understood the doctrine of the resurrection which is because of Jesus’ Atonement, all would someday be resurrected from the dead.

John 11:25-26

**25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.**

**26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?**

Martha now understands. Her faith strengthened; she declares in words similar to the Apostle Peter (see Matthew 16:16).

John 11:27

**27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.**

**28 And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister...**

Martha, her faith now strengthened, goes and calls for her sister, Mary to come.

John 11:32

**32 Then when Mary was come where Jesus was and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.**

Bruce R. McConkie states,

“...the Lord Jesus may have said to [Mary] what he had already said to her older sister; and Lord Jesus may have said to her what he had already said to Martha about being the resurrection and the life, even receiving back from the younger sister the same inspired testimony of his own divinity. We have no reason to believe that Jesus would do other than treat his two friends with equal tenderness and solicitude, and that he would try the faith of each of them to the full in the same way.”<sup>16</sup>

John 11:33-37

**33 When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled,**

**34 And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.**

**35 Jesus wept.**

**36 Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!**

**37 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?**

In these brief verses, we see the manifestation of Jesus’ grief. The source of His grief is two-fold. He is affected by the grief of Mary regarding the loss of her brother. He is also concerned regarding the attitude of others who have not yet understood that the miracles He has performed, including the restoration of sight, were preceded by faith and belief in His divine Sonship.

Bruce R. McConkie states,

“We now see Jesus himself weeping, his eyes streaming with silent tears. Among the observing Jews are both friends and enemies. Those who are kindly disposed say: ‘Behold how he loved him!’ Others whose hearts are hardened and who seek to discount his powers say: ‘Could not this man which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this should not have died?’ It was as though they said: ‘True, this man opened the eyes of a blind man, whom he did not know, but he could not save his own friend from death. Perhaps after all his powers are of a limited, uncertain, and capricious nature.’ And so again, confronted with such a malignant outpouring of unbelief, Jesus groaned in himself.”<sup>17</sup>

John 11:39-40

**39 Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he had been dead four days.**

**40 Jesus said unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?**

For a moment, Martha's faith faltered. Was it possible, she must have thought, that one who had been in the grave for four days could come back to life again? No one had ever been dead for four days and then restored to life. The words Jesus had spoken strengthened her faith as she recalled, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John 11:25). Her faith strengthened, she instructed that the stone be removed from the cave where her brother laid.

John 11:41-43

**41 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.**

**42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.**

**43 And when he thus had spoken he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.**

Everything Jesus did was with the direct knowledge and authority of His Father. His will was one with the will of the Father. Their unity was perfect. Jesus always did the will of His Father. This is an area where we may yet emulate Jesus as we continue in our efforts to become like Him. Jesus calls Lazarus to come forth from the prison that had held him bond.

John 11:44

**44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.**

Bruce R. McConkie states,

"Lazarus lived and Lazarus died and Lazarus rose again--, that he might continue his mortal probation; that he might die again; that he might be, for his day and for all days, a living witness of the power of him who ministered in Bethany as the Son of God."<sup>18</sup>

Because Jesus had been given the power of life over death, the length of the individual's death whether it be a day, four or more, when the requisite faith was present, life was restored. It had been true for the widow's son (Luke 7:11-17) and for Jairus' daughter (Luke 8:41-42; 49-56). It was now also true for Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha. It was a witness to all, believer and critic alike, that He truly is the Son of God. No other had such power and authority over death as He exercised.

John 11:45-47, 49-51, 53

**45 Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.**

**46 But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.**

**47 Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What [JST. shall] we do? for this man doeth many miracles.**

**49 And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all,**

**50 Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.**

**51 And this he spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation;**

**53 Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.**

Jesus had just raised one from the dead. Some who were present recognized His power and authority and believed on Him. Others were threatened by His power and authority. They feared the loss of power they held as the religious leaders. United, they now sought more fervently to find ways to put Him to death! He who had come to restore life, both physically and spiritually to a nation in need, was to die Himself.

John 11:54

**54 Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.**

The LDS Bible Dictionary notes,

**“Ephraim.** “A city...probably in hill country northeast of Jerusalem, perhaps Ophrah.”<sup>19</sup>

While the exact location of this city is not known, we may be sure that it was of sufficient distance from Jerusalem that the religious leaders left Him alone. The Passover would soon be held and surely Jesus would attend. They could wait until then to put their plan into action. They would be ready.

John 11:55-57

**55 And the Jews' Passover was nigh at hand: ...**

**56 Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye that he will not come to the feast?**

**57 Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he were, he should shew it, that they might take him.**

It is important to understand that Jesus knew of their plans to put Him to death. He had averted their efforts to seize Him; He could have done so again. He had come to earth in order to be the Savior of all mankind. This meant that it would be necessary that He voluntarily offer Himself as the final sacrifice in order to be killed. As He stated, "No man taketh it [my life] from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." (John 10:18). He came to earth to die so that all may rise from the grave. He also prepared the way, based upon individual obedience to the principles of the gospel, and grace, that all would be able to return to live with His Father again.

## **6. Conclusions**

Bruce R. McConkie states,

"Which is the greatest miracle? 'Was it to open blind eyes, cast out devils, or cleanse lepers? Was it to calm storms, walk on water, or feed thousands with a few barley loaves and a little savory of fish? Or was it to raise from death the daughter of Jairus in Capernaum or the widow's son near Nain, thus giving life to cold corpses and calling back spirits from the realms of the departed? Perhaps the greatest miracles is none of these; perhaps it is the healing of sin-sick souls so that those who are spiritually blind and deaf and diseased become again pure and clean and heirs of salvation. Perhaps the greatest miracles of all is that which happens in the life of each person who is born again; who receives the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit of God in his life; who has sin and evil burned out of his soul as though by fire; who lives again spiritually, and, perchance, if need be, is also healed physically."<sup>20</sup>

We have examined the Parable of the Unjust Judge and the Widow. We have addressed also the healing of the blind man or men; the teaching and then conversion of Zacchaeus who was a publican and the raising of Lazarus from the grave. In each of these miracles, we have been taught important concepts that can also open our eyes or bring about a change in our heart and strength our faith in the life and mission of Jesus Christ. Some believed and their lives were greatly blessed. Others did not and still others wanted to put Him to death. Who is this man Jesus who restored sight or converted a sinner or raised a man from the dead? Is He the promised Messiah or just another impostor? The choice is also ours. It is also the most important choice we will ever make during our life.

## Footnotes

- 
- <sup>1</sup> Lincoln On His Knees. [www.middletonbiblechurch.org/newsads/lincoln.htm](http://www.middletonbiblechurch.org/newsads/lincoln.htm).
- <sup>2</sup> Quoted by Marvin J Ashton, "Know He Is There," *Ensign*, February, 1994, 50: see also *New Testament Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1997, [2002], 77.
- <sup>3</sup> *Our Lord of the Gospels*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1954, [Fourth Printing, 1974, 345.
- <sup>4</sup> *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*. Abridged by Ralph Earle. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Barker Book House, 1967, [Nineteenth Printing, March, 1991], 882-883.
- <sup>5</sup> *The Mortal Messiah: Book 3*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1980, 288.
- <sup>6</sup> *Jesus The Christ*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1915, [Thirty-fifth Printing, 1963], 505.
- <sup>7</sup> **Son of David**. *Mormon Doctrine*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966, [Second Edition], 741.
- <sup>8</sup> *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol. 3. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1991, [Third Printing, 1993], 115.
- <sup>9</sup> *The New Testament Speaks*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1932, [Revised Edition, 1935], 420.
- <sup>10</sup> **Publicans**. LDS Dictionary in *Holy Bible*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979, 755.
- <sup>11</sup> *A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ, First Division*, Volume 2. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1890, [Reprinted from original by Hendrikson Publishers, Inc., Third Printing, April 1998], 70-71.
- <sup>12</sup> *The Mortal Messiah: Book 3*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1980, 317.
- <sup>13</sup> *Jesus The Christ*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-days Saints, 1915, [Thirty-fifth Printing, 1963], 507.
- <sup>14</sup> *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and his Apostles (Institute) Student Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1978, [Second Edition, Revised], 125-126.
- <sup>15</sup> *The Mortal Messiah: Book 3*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1980, 269.
- <sup>16</sup> *The Mortal Messiah: Book 3*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1980, 277.
- <sup>17</sup> *The Mortal Messiah: Book 3*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1980, 278.
- <sup>18</sup> *The Mortal Messiah: Book 3*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1980, 280.
- <sup>19</sup> **Ephraim**. LDS Bible Dictionary in *Holy Bible*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979, 666.
- <sup>20</sup> *The Mortal Messiah: Book 3*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1980, 269.