



*January 11, 2009*

*Luke 6 – 8*

*“Life After Death”*

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Death is a sure thing for all of us; it's not if, it's when. We read in the Gospels that Jesus raised three people from the dead, albeit a temporary resurrection to life. The most notable was Lazarus in [John 11:1–16](#). The others are found in Luke: Jairus' daughter ([Luke 8](#), [Matthew 9](#) and [Mark 5](#)), and the widow of Nain's son in [Luke 7](#).

There's no doubt that thousands died in Israel during Jesus' ministry, however, Jesus only raised these three individuals from the dead, because it was not his goal to raise a lot of people from the dead...only to display his power over death. Don't forget, these three people eventually died again.

Why was it only a temporary miracle? The answer is a simple one. Jesus didn't come to give us longevity on the earth; he came to give us eternity in heaven. Sadly, the majority of people in the world are more concerned about the longevity of life than they are about eternity in heaven. So much time, attention and money are spent by people who are trying to prolong life, not realizing that everyone is going to face eternity at some future time.

When Jesus raised these people from the dead, he did it for the sake of their loved ones, not for the sake of the person. It goes without saying that they were in a better place and it probably grieved Jesus at some level to bring them back to this inferior place. In fact, the best-known verse of the Bible (“*Jesus wept*” – [John 11:35](#)) has to do with raising Lazarus from the dead. Jesus was probably shedding a tear for Lazarus...feeling badly for him that he was bringing him back to life. When you look at the text, you get an idea that it was Jesus' compassion for the survivors that prompted these miracles.

In this study, we'll learn important truths which make an eternal difference in the life of every believer: 1) this world is not our home. 2) When we die our spirit separates from our body. 3) Our spirit will either live eternally in heaven or in hell.

## The Widow's Son

1. Nain was a city about 25 miles SW of Capernaum, Jesus ministry headquarters, so to speak.
2. The scene for this miracle includes a funeral procession heading to a place of burial outside the town, which was done according to their custom and law.
3. The young man, the “*only son*” of this woman, was about 20-30 years old.
4. This woman was a widow and the death of her only son would have been extremely devastating, not only emotionally, but physically too, because she would have been destitute, since her survival depended on her son's livelihood.
5. In [Luke 7:13, 15](#), we read that Jesus' “*heart went out to her.*”
6. It's Jesus' statement that gives us the motive for this miracle.
  - a. [Luke 7:15](#) – “*Jesus gave him back to his mother*” so he would be able to care for his mother.

## Jairus' Daughter

7. [Luke 8:42](#) tells us this little girl was just 12 years old.
8. Jairus pleads with Jesus to come to his house because his daughter is extremely ill.
9. When Jesus enters the house, he sends the crowd outside and only permits her parents, Peter, James and John to go inside.
10. In [Luke 8:52](#), Jesus said, “*she is not dead, but asleep,*” which caused the crowd outside to mock and laugh at a ridiculous statement such as that, because they knew she was really dead.
11. Jesus used a euphemism (asleep versus dead), which was adopted by the early church, e.g. Paul used the word asleep in [1 Corinthians 15:6, 51](#).
12. Jesus and the early church used *asleep* as a way to indicate that death was not final for those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. There is eternal life beyond this life!
13. In [Mark 5:41](#), the tender words of Jesus in Aramaic – “*Talitha koum!*” – are literally translated “*My little lamb, arise!*”

## This World Is Not Our Home

14. The Old and New Testaments include accounts of a handful of people who were miraculously raised from the dead, but all of these are exceptions, and all of these people died again. (**Elijah 1 Kings 17 – Elisha 2 Kings 4 – Peter Acts 9 – Paul Acts 20**)
15. Death is no respecter of persons, it's, as they say, "One to a customer."
16. Death is not final, it is a transition from this life into the life to come – there is life after death!
  - a. **John 5:24** – *"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."*
17. This life is **not** as good as it gets for Christians!
  - a. According to **1 Peter 2:11**, we're *"aliens and strangers in this world."*
  - b. According to Paul in **Philippians 3:20**, *"our citizenship is in heaven."*
18. **1 Corinthians 15:19** says, *"If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men."*

## Our Spirit Will Separate From Our Body

19. As Jesus was dying on the cross he said, *"Father into your hands I commit my spirit."* (**Luke 23:46**)
20. We read in **John 19:30**, Jesus *"bowed his head and gave up his spirit."*
21. **Psalm 146:3–4** says, *"Do no put your trust in princes, in mortal men, who cannot save. When their spirit departs, they return to the ground."*

## Your Spirit Will Live Eternally In Heaven Or Hell

22. One of the most important theological truths concerning hell is that God doesn't, as a great many skeptics claim, "send anyone to hell," because hell was originally prepared for the devil and his angels.
  - a. **Matthew 25:41** – *"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'"*
23. God doesn't want anyone to perish.
  - a. **2 Peter 3:9** – *"The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."*
24. God made provision for everyone to go to heaven when he offered his son, Jesus, to die on the cross for us.

- a. **2 Corinthians 5:1** – “Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed [our body], we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.”

### Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read **Luke 7:11–17 and 8:49–56** to provide an overview of today’s study.
3. The tombstone in England Pastor Gary mentioned features these words: “Pause now stranger, as you pass by. As you are now, so once was I. As I am now, so you will be. So prepare for death and follow me.” Someone scratched this addendum: “To follow you I’m not content until I know which way you went.”
  - a. While the postscript is funny, it does make a powerful statement about the need to have your eternal destiny firmly established.
    - i. Do you think most people have real concerns about death/eternity or do most people choose to avoid thinking about the subject?
    - ii. Do you think those who do think about the life to come are convinced they’re going to go to heaven because they’ve trusted in Christ for salvation?
    - iii. Do you think there are a lot of Christians who don’t have a real assurance of the promise of heaven?
      1. Why don’t some Christians have assurance?
      2. Is it because they’ve been taught or learned a “works theology” which creates a sense of being in and out of right relationship with God based on what they have or have not done?
      3. Read and discuss **John 5:24**.
4. Spend time discussing the ways people you know spend time and money in an attempt to prolong their life.
  - a. You may want the people in your group to complete the [www.livingto100.com](http://www.livingto100.com)<sup>1</sup> study for the purpose of demonstrating that everyone is expected to die at some time!
  - b. Read and discuss **2 Corinthians 5:1**.
  - c. Read and discuss **1 Corinthians 15:19**.
5. Consider the bizarre story of Ted Williams’ children’s decision to put his body “on ice,” so to speak, so the possibility would exist for future scientific and medical discoveries to come along that might one-day bring him back to life.
  - a. What are your thoughts about such an otherworldly or science fiction account like this?

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<sup>1</sup> This link is for the Web site of Dr. Thomas Perls MD, founder and director of the New England Centenarian Study, the largest study of centenarians and their families in the world.

6. One of the most asked questions by those who doubt the veracity of Christianity is, “How can you believe in a God who sends people who don’t believe in Jesus to hell?”
  - a. Read and discuss [Matthew 25:41](#).
  - b. Read and discuss [2 Peter 3:9](#).
  
7. Close your time by allowing everyone in your group to: ask the Lord to help them live a life that’s based on the simple truth that this world is not their home, therefore, every decision and action needs to be made with eternity in mind; rejoice over the fact that believers will enjoy far more than this world could ever give when they transition from this life to the next.