

LAZARUS, MARY AND MARTHA



(John 11-12; Luke 10)

Lazarus, Mary and Martha were close friends of YAHSHUA. They lived in a village called Bethany on the slope of the Mount of Olives, two miles east of Jerusalem. Bethany is identified with the West Bank today, the city of Al-Eizariya- place of Lazarus in Arabic. Bethany is often mentioned in connection with important events in the life of our Lord, YAHSHUA. Lazarus, Mary and Marth, each had a memorable and personal experience with Him. Lazarus seemed to be the youngest of the three, for he was uninvolved, and passive. His name in Arabic was Eliezer, meaning, God will help. Eliezer was the name of Abraham's eldest servant; he was from Damascus. He was a trusted servant, who found Isaac a wife at the request of Abraham.

Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha fell ill one day. His sisters went to report the news to the Lord, hoping that He would come with them and heal their brother. They heard the many times when He healed all who came to Him. It was now their time to experience their miracle. YAHSHUA knowing that Lazarus sickness was for a reason, did not respond to the emergency of the moment fast enough to save Lazarus' life. Lazarus then died. What a sorrowful news for all who knew him! When finally, YAHSHUA came, about four days later, it seemed to be too late in the minds of all who were there. But God's plan for that hour was soon going to be manifested in the life of Lazarus. In their sorrow and frustration, some of them said, "Could not He Who opened a blind man's eyes have prevented this man from dying?" They did not realize the extent of the importance of His absence at the time of Lazarus' sickness. But that was for their own good, as they, as a nation, rejected YAHSHUA as their Messiah; greater signs then were important to bring them to believe in Him. YAHSHUA said, for your sake I am glad that I was not there; it will help you to believe. The glory of God was going to be revealed to that nation in a way they had never seen before. Lazarus had been dead not one day or two, but four days. When YAHSHUA followed Martha to his tomb, Martha exclaimed, But Lord, by this time he [is decaying] and throws off an odor, for he has been dead four days (vs. 39). There was a crowd there who had come to comfort Lazarus' sisters, so they were going to witness the most important miracle YAHSHUA had ever performed. The occasion then was perfect for YAHSHUA'S messiahship to be revealed, since Lazarus had been dead four days. The resurrection of Lazarus in that circumstance would have not been possible in the belief of the Jewish nation. YAHSHUA however, commands the stone to be removed and lifted a prayer to His Father: Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. Yes, I know You always hear and listen to Me, but I have said this on account of and for the benefit of the people standing around, so that they may believe that You did send Me. When He had said this, he shouted with a loud voice, Lazarus, come out (11:41-43). So it was that Lazarus experienced YAHSHUA'S resurrection power and through this experience many of those who had come to be with his sisters, believed in Him, although some went to report Him to the Pharisees.

Martha seemly, was the oldest of the three. She was hospitable, a leader and a doer. Her name meant lord or master. She well represented the meaning of her name, but at the presence of her Lord, she was found lacking the most important

thing, when she approached the Lord with the question, Lord, is it nothing to You that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me! But the Lord replied, Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things. Thinking about how difficult life was in those days in everything that involved making a living, one feels Martha's pressure. The Lord did not criticize her for all that she was trying to accomplish, He looked at her with His spiritual eyes and guided her to choose what her sister had chosen. In spite of that, Martha at the death of her brother, made a confession of faith to the Lord: Yes, Lord, I have believed that You are the Christ the Son of God, Who was to come into the world (John 11: 27). Her faith was like many of our faith today. Although we believe the Word of God, we still walk in worries and fear, and experience anxiety. All because we have not chosen the "good portion" that Mary had chosen.

Mary was spiritually inclined. Although there was a need from her in the kitchen, she decided to sit at the feet of YAHSHUA. One might think that she was insensitive to the needs of the moment and lazy, but YAHSHUA had this to say about her when responding to Martha's demand: There is need of only one or but a few things. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her (Luke 10:42). What Mary had chosen was of spiritual and eternal value. She was rewarded in heaven for her lasting choice. Her devotion for God caused her to anoint YAHSHUA with a very expensive perfume before His burial. This perfume was defined in Mark 14:3 as nard, a very costly and precious perfume. It could only be opened by breaking it and using it immediately. It is said to be imported from an Eastern country. This sacrifice of love resounded her gratitude and devotion for YAHSHUA. She showed with that action that material things are of value only when invested in the eternal things. To those who were offended by her action, YAHSHUA said, Let her alone, why are troubling her? She has done a good and beautiful thing to Me...she has done what she could; she came beforehand to anoint My body for the burial. And surely I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the entire world, what she had done will be told in memory of her (Mark 14: 6,8-9). The entire world knows her not only as Martha's sister, but for her devotion to the Lord. Her life is like a garden from where sweet and pleasing aromas flow constantly to the Lord. "Oh, I pray that the north wind and the south wind may blow upon my garden, that its spices may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden and eat its choicest fruits."

(Song of Solomon 5: 16)



The Bible says that YAHSHUA was comfortable being with these three friends. Their home was His home away from home. There lived Martha willing to take care of His physical needs, as she received and welcomed Him into her house; there lived Mary with listening ears, and a heart eager to receive His teachings. She had chosen the good part which will be never taken away from her. Mary's life is a type of a devoted believer, hard to

find today. The type that takes the time to sit at the Lord's feet, no matter what the circumstance, ready to hear His voice and obey His Word. Her life is a reflection of what all believers should be, always in love with the Lord. But many, if not the majority of Christians, although busy, supposedly serving the Lord, have forsaken the time alone with Him. It is easier being a Martha than a Mary. God's heart however, longs for us to be near Him, to hear His heart beat of love for us. May your life be a garden for the Lord from where beautiful fragrances rise to Him.

THINK ABOUT IT!