

Gospel of John: Chapter 11

Four Days of After Death – Four Stages of Death

Allegorically: four days in the tomb signifies four stage of spiritual death.

First: Original sin is the first death of the human race:

Second: violation of the natural law

Third: violation of the written law of Moses

Fourth: despising the gospel of grace

A preview of man's resurrection from this fourfold death is seen as Christ brings Lazarus to life after his four-day entombment.



Many are offended when they see any of those who are pleasing to God suffering anything terrible... Those who are offended by this do not know that those who are especially dear to God have it as their lot to endure such things, as we see in the case of Lazarus, who was also one of the friends of Christ but was also sick.

(Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of John* 62:1)



[F]or Christ it was more important to conquer death than to cure disease. He showed his love for his friend not by healing him but by calling him back from the grave. Instead of a remedy for his illness, he offered him the glory of rising from the dead.

(Peter Chrysologus, *Sermon* 63:1-2)

988 The Christian Creed - the profession of our faith in God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and in God's creative, saving, and sanctifying action - culminates in the proclamation of the resurrection of the dead on the last day and in life everlasting.

990 The term "flesh" refers to man in his state of weakness and mortality.⁵³⁶ The "resurrection of the flesh" (the literal formulation of the Apostles' Creed) means not only that the immortal soul will live on after death, but that even our "mortal body" will come to life again.

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991 Belief in the resurrection of the dead has been an essential element of the Christian faith from its beginnings. "The confidence of Christians is the resurrection of the dead; believing this we live."

How can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. . . . But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.



Lazarus, Come out!... As a friend, I am calling you; as Lord I am commanding you...Come out! ...Let the stench of your body prove the resurrection. Let the burial linen be undone so that they can recognize the one who was put in the tomb. Come out!... Come out of the tomb. Teach them how all creation will be enlivened in a moment when the trumpet's voice proclaims the resurrection of the dead.

(Andrew of Crete, *Homily 8 on Lazarus*)

11:48 the Romans will come: The statement is brimming with historical irony. The Romans did in fact destroy both Jerusalem and its Temple in 70 A.D., not because the Jewish authorities let Jesus continue his ministry in peace, but precisely because they condemned him to a violent death. In the end, it was not the acceptance of Jesus that threatened the city but the rejection of him that made its demise inevitable.

597 The historical complexity of Jesus' trial is apparent in the Gospel accounts. The personal sin of the participants (Judas, the Sanhedrin, Pilate) is known to God alone. Hence we cannot lay responsibility for the trial on the Jews in Jerusalem as a whole, despite the outcry of a manipulated crowd and the global reproaches contained in the apostles' calls to conversion after Pentecost. Jesus himself, in forgiving them on the cross, and Peter in following suit, both accept "the ignorance" of the Jews of Jerusalem and even of their leaders.

Still less can we extend responsibility to other Jews of different times and places, based merely on the crowd's cry: "His blood be on us and on our children!", a formula for ratifying a judicial sentence.³⁸⁷ As the Church declared at the Second Vatican Council:

. . . [N]either all Jews indiscriminately at that time, nor Jews today, can be charged with the crimes committed during his Passion. . . [T]he Jews should not be spoken of as rejected or accursed as if this followed from holy Scripture.

706 Against all human hope, God promises descendants to Abraham, as the fruit of faith and of the power of the Holy Spirit. In Abraham's progeny all the nations of the earth will be blessed. This progeny will be Christ himself, in whom the outpouring of the Holy Spirit will "gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad." God commits himself by his own solemn oath to giving his beloved Son and "the promised Holy Spirit . . . [who is] the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it."