

24- Raising of Lazarus

John 11:1-44

Until this point in our journey of Verifying the Messiah in John we have seen 6 of the recorded 7 sign miracles. Jesus preformed many miracles not recorded for us in John but these seven were recorded that we might believe that He was the Messiah. Or, as I have entitled it for this series, that He would be verified as Messiah.

This portion of Scriptures before us in this session has been said to be the most stupendous of the miracles. It certainly is the capstone of the signs that verify Christ.

I- The Request:

Joh 11:1 Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. 2 (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) 3 Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.

John carefully identifies who this man was by the family connections and the events that were well know of the anointing of Jesus feet. The anointing is recorded in

John 11:4 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. 5 Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. 6 When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

This is often thought of as the place that Jesus could come and go as a close friend and find shelter and food. These were His close friends and confidants. They send a message to Him telling Him Lazarus is sick. They never ask Him to come but we often think they did. They wanted Him to know. Perhaps there was the inference that He

should come but it is not implicitly stated. Jesus delays two days before He starts for Jerusalem.

II- The Purpose:

John has already told us that the purpose of this death was that it would bring glory to God the Father and the Son in verse 4 above.

John 11:7 Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judaea again. 8 His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?

The disciples understood that Jesus would be putting His life on the line if He went to Jerusalem.

John 11:11 ... he saith unto them, 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. 13 Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.

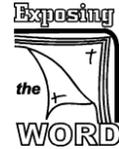
They thought that Jesus was only talking about physical sleep.

John 11:14 Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. 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.

Jesus tell them the purpose of His delay as well as the purpose of the death of Lazarus.

Merrill Tenney says in *John: The Gospel of Belief* the following about the delay:

The delay of Jesus in replying to the urgent pleas of the sisters is difficult to explain on any ground other than that of His complete mastery of death. Had he been only human, He would have hurried to the bedside of Lazarus to give What He could of



aid and comfort. Knowing, however, that He was the resurrection and the life, it was must as easy to raise the dead as to cure the sick, and far more necessary to His purpose which was the creation of a fixed faith in the souls of the sisters and of His own disciples.” (p 172)

John 11:16 *Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellowdisciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.*

The very fact that Jesus would go back to Jerusalem when His life had been in danger the last time He was there shows His love and concern for Lazarus. The fact His life was in jeopardy is well voiced by Thomas who said that we may die with him.

III- The Visit:

When Jesus arrives Lazarus is dead and has been for some four days. This leads me to believe that Lazarus was dead when Jesus got the message to come.

John 11:17 *Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already.*

Martha goes to greet Jesus and Mary stays at home. **John 11:20** *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.**

Martha states her belief that Jesus could have healed Lazarus. This was faith that was born of seeing the miracles of Jesus. Jesus enters into a dialogue with her about the resurrection. We will spend an entire session on the great reply He gives to her in our next session.

John 11:23 *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. She expresses faith in the resurrection.

John 11:25 *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? 27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.*

The fact that He was Messiah had resonated in her heart. She states her faith.

Jesus had not yet entered the town but stayed in the place where Martha had met Him. **John 11: 28** *And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee. 29 As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him. 30 Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him. 31 The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there.*

The Jews thought that she was going to the tomb of Lazarus to grieve.

John 11:32 *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. 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.*

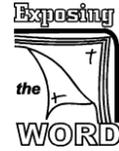
The reaction of Mary was much like Martha's. Jesus was touched in His heart by



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the hurts of the people. He asks to be taken to the tomb.

The heart ache that His friends were experiencing caused Jesus to weep. *John 11:35 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?*

It was evident to all around that Jesus loved Lazarus. They also ask if this death could not have been avoided if Jesus had been there.

This points us to the thought that many times the events that occur that we see as avoidable if God would only intervene in them are for His purposes. Remember what *Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

This does not say all things are good only that God uses them to bring about good for those who love Him.

IV- The Miracle:

Jesus arrives at the burial site of Lazarus. He was buried in the traditional manner of a cave with a rock over the entrance. *John 11:38 Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.*

Jesus issues a request that would meet with opposition. Opposition that was born of concern because of the time he had been dead. *John 11:39 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 hath been dead four days.*

Martha was a woman of strong faith yet she is not in favor of moving the stone. The decomposition of the body would be giving off a strong odor by this time she was sure.

The ever patient Jesus says in *John 11:40 ... Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?*

Jesus gently reminds her of the fact of faith that was previously expressed that He was the resurrection and the life. He reminded her that it was a matter of faith.

They comply with His request. *John 11:41 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.*

Again we see the purpose of this and all the sign miracles of John and that was that they would believe on Jesus as Messiah. Remember the last words of *John 20, But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life...*

The command is issued that Lazarus rise from the dead and come forth out of the grave. *John 11:43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.* What a moment this must have been. We can only image the pregnant silence as they waited to see what would happen.

John 11:44 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.

John said in *John 5:25-26 ...The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. 26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.*