

### **6.17.18 ~ John 11:37-57, The Dead Shall Rise Again.**

**Read John 11:37-40...** In last week's passage, Martha came to meet Jesus before He reached Bethany, saying to Him (**verse 21**), "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died." A little later, Mary came to Jesus, and there were many with her, loudly weeping, as she said to Jesus (**verse 32**), "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."

In **verse 37**, some of the people ask, "Could not this man, who opened the eyes of the blind man, have kept this man also from dying?" Jesus had the power to heal, He had proven that, so why had He not come to Lazarus immediately and healed him?

When Jesus was notified about Lazarus' sickness (**verse 4**) Jesus said, "This sickness is not to end in death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it."

Jesus was again deeply moved (**verses 38-39**) as He goes to the tomb where He commands that the stone from the opening be removed. Martha is shocked, I mean, her brother has been dead four days, she doesn't want the tomb to be opened, for Lazarus decaying body would surely stink (Jews did not embalm, but instead wrapped the body with linens, inserting many pounds of aromatic spices to cover up and conceal the odor).

Jesus seems to be telling Martha (**verse 40**) to not be concerned with her brother's body, reminding her that if she will just believe, "[she] will see the glory of God." The whole point of Lazarus' death is so that Jesus might raise him from the tomb, displaying the power of God, so that both the Father and the Son might be glorified.

**Read John 11:41-43...** Evidently Martha consents to having the tomb opened, at which time Jesus thanks His Father for hearing and granting His request to raise Lazarus; so that the people standing around the tomb might see and believe that Jesus is indeed the One and Only who has come from the Father.

Jesus now (**verse 43**) loudly calls for Lazarus to come out, and he does! Back in **John chapter 5**, after Jesus healed a man who had been an invalid for 38 years, Jesus said to those who were there (**John 5:25-29**), "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment."

Raising Lazarus previews God raising all the dead back to life (cf. 1Thessalonians 4:13-17; Revelation 20:1-14).

When Lazarus came out of the tomb (**verse 44**), he was wrapped with strips of linen cloth, from his head down to his feet. That had to be a frightful sight to some

of those who were there, for it must have looked like a film clip from the walking dead; some of those who were there probably took off running, having never seen anything like this before.

Jesus commands, "take off his grave clothes" (*wash him, get clean clothes and something for him to eat* (cf. like Jairus' daughter in Luke 8:41-42a, 49-55).

John doesn't tell us anything about Lazarus' reaction or his reunion with Mary and Martha; probably because that is not the priority or purpose of this miracle; but instead, John tells us (**verse 45**), "Therefore many of the Jews who came to Mary, and saw what He had done, believed in Him."

What a marvelous event, and it was witnessed by those who loved Jesus as well as those who hated Him.

**Read John 11:46-52...** Just as many of the Jews believed in Jesus, there were those who went to the Pharisees to tell them what Jesus had done, and perhaps, to get an explanation of how Jesus did this.

This is amazing, I mean, no one ever resurrected a man, let alone a man who had been dead four days; and yet, some of those who witnessed this miracle, evidently remained unbelieving.

When word reached the Pharisees they convened the Great Sanhedrin, for they were the sovereign authority on earth, in reference to all things civil, cultural, religious.

They ask themselves (**verses 47-48**), "What are we going to do? This man [Jesus] is performing many signs [attesting miracles]. If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."

The Religious Leaders are afraid that Jesus' popularity might cause a large riot or disturbance, for Passover is drawing near and Jerusalem will swell with large crowds of congregants coming to celebrate.

The Jews are afraid that any uprising by those who believe in Jesus will get the attention of Rome and will result in them losing their places of privilege and power over the people.

Caiaphas, the high priest, rebukes them, "You know nothing at all." He is frustrated with their whining about possibly losing their positions; so he proposes that they take the offensive (**verse 50**), "you [do not] take into account that it is expedient for you that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation not perish." Caiaphas makes it clear, either Jesus dies or the nation will fall at the hands of the Romans.

John clarifies for us (**verses 51-52**) that Caiaphas, "did not say this on his own," but God used him to prophesy that Jesus would indeed die, not only for the Jewish nation but also for "the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one."

This is so prophetic! Although unaware, he is speaking of Christ's sacrificial death (see **1Corinthians 15:3-4; 2Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 9:27-28;**

**1Peter 2:24**), but also of the destruction of Israel in AD 70, when Rome ransacks and burns Jerusalem, killing an estimated 1,100,000 Jews by sword and spear.

We see God's omniscience and omnipotence in that last verse, for all those who believe in and obey Christ will be brought into one family, i.e., those from within the nation of Israel, those Israelites scattered abroad, but also Gentiles who will believe (see **Ephesians 2:11-18**).

**Read John 11:53-54...** Evidently the proposal given by Caiaphas was accepted by the Sanhedrin, because we are told, "from that day on they planned together to kill [Jesus]."

But Jesus went away, toward the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim; and there He stayed with the disciples, for it was not yet time for Jesus to offer Himself up for the sins of humankind.

Jesus took His disciples to Ephraim, a city about 12 miles northeast of Jerusalem. Here Jesus would stay, except for a brief trip to Samaria and Galilee (cf. Luke 17:11-19:28), until time for Him to go up to Jerusalem for Passover [Passion Week].

**Read John 11:55-57...** This is the third Passover mentioned by John (**2:13; 6:4**). He tells us that many are going up to Jerusalem (as required, Numbers 9:6). It is estimated that there were over 1 million congregants crowding the city during Passover.

John tells us (**verse 56**) that many who are there are looking for Jesus, in fact, some who are at the temple are saying Jesus might not come because (**verse 57**), "the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that anyone who found out where Jesus was should report it so that they might arrest him."

It would seem that the resurrection of Lazarus had brought undo attention upon Jesus, in that, given the evidence of the once dead Lazarus who is now alive, people would now have to decide to either believe that Jesus is the One who came from the Father full of grace and truth, remain indifferent, or become hostile toward God's Son, the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Our next time together, we'll find Jesus returning to Bethany near Jerusalem, in order to visit and have supper with Mary, Martha, and even Lazarus (who had been dead but is now alive) sitting next to Jesus at the table.

The Jews want to kill Jesus, but also Lazarus (for he is living proof of God's presence and power in Jesus); only God can give life, Jesus is God's Son, and He is equal in nature, authority and power, to the Father.

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