

John 11 vs 28-57

The dead are raised to life!!

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Setting the scene

In our last study (the raising of Lazarus – part 1) we saw Jesus deliberately delayed going to Lazarus in order to show that Lazarus was definitely dead. Clearly we are told that Jesus' purpose with the raising of Lazarus is both to display God's glory in Jesus' work and to enable the disciples to believe in him.

The aim of this study is therefore the same. Jesus states it clearly:

ch 11 v 40: *Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?"*

ch 11 v 42: *"I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me."*

The study breaks into three parts:

- 1) Jesus' reaction at the death of Lazarus – his humanity and love
- 2) Jesus' raising of Lazarus from death – his divinity and power
- 3) The Jews plot that Jesus should die "**for the nation**" – his death

All the way though this study we should be asking:

- How does this reveal his glory?
- How does this help me to believe?

The humanity and love of Jesus – his reaction to Lazarus' death

Read ch 11 vs 28-37: *When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." ²⁹ And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. ³⁰ Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him. ³¹ When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there.*

³² Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." ³³ When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. ³⁴ And he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." ³⁵ Jesus wept. ³⁶ So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" ³⁷ But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?"

In our last study John showed us Jesus' love for Martha, Mary and Lazarus:

v 5: *Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.*

And now, given that Jesus is who Martha says he is in v27 - "**The Christ, the Son of God**" - his reaction in vs 33-36 is wonderful...

v 33: *When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled.*

- '**deeply moved**' – the Greek word for when horses snort in rage , as when they went into battle = in other words, furious ANGER!
- Also '**greatly troubled**' = stirred up/churned up inside

vs 35-36: *Jesus wept. ³⁶ So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"*

So this combination of ANGER/ANXIETY/GRIEF shows Jesus' humanity and his deep love and care for his friends. He is:

- furious at this imposter (Death) in God's world
- stirred up at the hurt that it causes!
- genuine in his grief at the death of his friend

Jesus' reaction to the death of Lazarus shows the kind of God we are dealing with:

- The God of LOVE - CARE - CONCERN
- Shows compassion, inclusive of the fury of God at man's fall.
- Knows grief - Jesus understands and feels what impacts us.

The fact that Jesus loves deeply is made clear...

But the question remains – can he do anything about death?!

- Mary makes the same point as Martha had made...

v 21: *Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."*

v 32: *Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."*

- ...and the Jews ask the same question.

v 37: *But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?"*

The divinity and power of Jesus – he raises Lazarus from the dead

Now let's read John 11 vs 38-44:

vs 38-44: *Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. ³⁹ Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be an odour, for he has been dead four days." ⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" ⁴¹ So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me." ⁴³ When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." ⁴⁴ The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."*

In the last study in ch 11 vs 25-27, Jesus claimed to be THE Resurrection: THE ONE who will one day summon all people from their graves to judgement.

He also claimed to be able to give spiritual life to his followers today so that:

v 25 : ***"...whoever lives and believes in me shall never die"***

How does this passage confirm everything Jesus claimed in vs 25-27?

ch 11 vs 25-27: *Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" ²⁷ She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."*

Martha and Mary knew Jesus cared. They knew he could prevent death. But surely death itself is a bridge too far..?

Decomposition had begun... yet Jesus can raise Lazarus! One wag has said that Jesus called Lazarus by name because if he hadn't specified Lazarus individually then ALL the bodies in the vault would have risen!!

- The point is that if Jesus can do this with Lazarus... then surely Jesus can raise the dead from their graves across all time?!

This incident is intended to reveal: (v4) ***"the glory of God"***

...and enable: (v15) ***"...that you may believe"***

Did the miracle actually happen? Was Lazarus raised?

Read ch 11 vs 45-53: *Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him, ⁴⁶ but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. ⁴⁷ So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the Council and said, “What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. ⁴⁸ If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.” ⁴⁹ But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all. ⁵⁰ Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish.” ⁵¹ He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, ⁵² and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. ⁵³ So from that day on they made plans to put him to death.*

v 45: ***“Many of the Jews...believed in him.”***

Don't forget that this is taking place in a hot country... Body preparation would take place on the day of death - so the body would have been closely examined, prepared and wrapped all in the same day. That process of embalment would have caused asphyxiation!

The people of the time were experienced in death, and the entire process was VERY public. No doubt therefore that he WAS dead!

Now look at how people responded... in the face of many believing in Jesus:

“BUT..!”

v 46: *... but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.*

Even his greatest enemies don't say: “He must have pulled a fast one!”

NO - rather they say:

v 47: *So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the Council and said, “What are we to do? For this man performs many signs.”*

In other words they put this miracle in the same category as all of Jesus' other “signs”...

...like making a man crippled for 38 years - get up and walk!

...and a man who was born blind – be able to see!

Look at what they're concerned about:

v 48: *“If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.”*

➤ They are NOT saying Jesus is a fraud, nor are they trying to expose him as a fraud!

Jesus' life-giving death – the Jews say he must die “for the nation”

So what is the Jewish leaders' worry?

- The loss of “**our place**” = THE TEMPLE!
- “**Our nation**” = Israel

So the Jews' fears stem from a concern for two things:

- THE TEMPLE – the place where God's relationship with his people was sustained (both by his revelation of himself, and through the sacrificial systems which dealt with sin and its punishment).
- THE NATION – they are God's people... his chosen race! They are concerned for their status as God's people!!

So that year's High Priest, Caiaphas, comes up with the solution:

vs 49-50: *But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all. ⁵⁰ Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish.”*

v50 is key: the word “**for**” in the phrase “**for the people**” is literally “on behalf of”. Caiaphas therefore announces that it is better that one man die “**on behalf of the people...**”

“Better for YOU that one man should die for the people”!!

Caiaphas' plan is that Jesus should perish, rather than have all the people perish...

In v51 John tells us what is going on:

v 51: *He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation...*

- It's a prophecy – Jesus will die on behalf of the nation!

v 52: *... and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.*

- BUTnot just for the Jewish nation – for “**the children of God who are scattered abroad**”

v 53: *So from that day on they made plans to put him to death.*

- The fact is, Jesus “perished” on the cross as a substitute in the place of the people. We will come back to this in ch 18...

This section is absolutely crucial in John's Gospel. Even as the Jews plot Jesus' death, Caiaphas the High Priest has (unwittingly) prophesied precisely what the death of Jesus was going to achieve... he has prophesied THE CROSS!

...the substitutionary death of Jesus for all mankind

It is worth thinking about the difference between what Caiaphas meant and what Caiaphas prophesied...

➤ Caiaphas meant that it would be better to find some neat way of disposing of Jesus in order to avoid his teaching - which was in danger of causing great damage to his view of the Temple and the Nation.

...In effect, Caiaphas was proposing a politically expedient solution: MURDER!!

Yet Jesus has already pointed out that his death is an intended part of God's plan:

Read ch 10 vs 17-18: *For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.*

➤ Caiaphas prophesied that Jesus would die a substitutionary death on behalf of "**the nation**" and "**the children of God who are scattered abroad.**"

This is deeply ironic!! In attempting to SAVE the Nation and the Temple by plotting to kill Jesus, Caiaphas and the Jews actually achieve everything that the Temple sacrifices and the Jewish nation were pointing towards!!

Jesus' death on the cross will bring life...

It achieved:

- Payment for God's anger at sin
- Life for his people as their sins are dealt with
- A "new people" of God from all the nations

And all of this is achieved even as Caiaphas plots his death..! You simply could not make it up!!

This is THE GLORY OF CHRIST...the very heart of the gospel - the Cross of Christ

- It's not about us being good enough or being born into it!
- It's not about what we DO... it's that through Jesus it's DONE!
- He died as a substitute on our behalf, so that we would not perish under God's judgement.
- It's about accepting in FAITH and leaning on (putting our weight upon) the ALL-SUFFICIENCY of the Cross.

And finally let's read ch 11 vs 54-57:

Jesus therefore no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there to the region near the wilderness, to a town called Ephraim, and there he stayed with the disciples.

⁵⁵ Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves. ⁵⁶ They were looking for Jesus and saying to one another as they stood in the temple, "What do you think? That he will not come to the feast at all?" ⁵⁷ Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where he was, he should let them know, so that they might arrest him.

Again Jesus goes to be with the disciples... until the 3rd Passover of the book.

Next time...

The hour has come!!

John 11 vs 28-57

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