

The Miracles Of Jesus Christ: The Resurrection Of Lazarus (Part Two)

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Christ's conduct just prior to raising Lazarus from the dead is instructive and inspiring: "When Jesus saw [Mary] weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled" (John 11:33). This scene of death and despair deeply moved and upset Him, even to the point of indignation. Lazarus was dead because sin had entered the world and brought death and the sorrows that follow. Sin does not bring life; it always results in death. Our Savior's weeping shows the pain of sin.

Today, we laugh and joke about things that caused even God Himself to weep. When we are tempted to sin, we must remember verse 35, "Jesus wept." It succinctly emphasizes the curse of sin.

1. What does Jesus' weeping reveal about Him? John 11:35.

Comment: The Greek verb translated "wept" is found only here in the Bible. Its root means "tears." His were not the tears of a sentimentalist, but those of a pure, righteous, sympathizing High Priest (Hebrews 4:15). The word twice translated "weeping" in verse 33 is not the same word, meaning "to lament loudly, to wail." Unlike these others, Jesus did not wail but wept quietly with tears flowing.

It is often supposed that Jesus wept only because He had lost a friend to death and because of the deep mourning of Mary and Martha. However, even before Lazarus had died, He knew that He would resurrect Lazarus to glorify His Father and as a sign of His Messiahship (John 11:4, 15). He was in complete control of the situation.

His weeping does show Him as a compassionate friend, and from this we learn that it is right and natural for us to sympathize with others in their afflictions. "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep" (Romans 12:15). Sorrow at the death of friends is not improper, yet we should not belabor it but help others who grieve to find peace in the God of all consolation.

We see in this miracle an instance of the tenderness of the character of Jesus, the same Savior who wept over Jerusalem and felt deeply for others even in their sins. To the same tender and compassionate Savior we may now come, knowing that He will not cast us away. His example shows that heartfelt mourning in the face of death does not indicate lack of faith but honest sorrow at the reality of suffering and death.

2. Why did Christ have others do the physical work? Did He need help?

Comment: This miracle was one of His Father's works, so Jesus prayed and thanked God for the answer He knew would follow. It did not require the disciples' help, yet Jesus commanded them: "Take away the stone" and "Loose him, and let him go" (John 11:39, 44). Jesus always used His power wisely, never wastefully, frivolously, or

unnecessarily. By involving His disciples in the event, He shows that we participate in God's way of life with Him.

3. What was the intended result of this miracle?

Comment: After His prayer, Jesus, in whom is life (John 1:4) and who is the Life (John 14:6), shouts to Lazarus with a strong, confident voice, and he walks from his grave alive. It is an almost incredible thing to read. Can we imagine the effect it had on those who witnessed it?

As the conclusion of the chapter shows, this miracle had diverse results. Many Jews believed in Him, but it only angered His enemies, making them more determined to rid themselves of Him. The high priest, Caiaphas, a dupe of Rome and a Sadducee, who did not believe in resurrection, suggests to the Council that they must kill Jesus rather than lose their positions. The words and works of Jesus divided light from darkness, the believing from the unbelieving. There is still division because of Him (Luke 12:51).

The word John uses thirteen times for "miracles" in his gospel and in Revelation suggests "wonders," "foreshadows," or "signs," and not "mighty works." E.W. Bullinger explains it as

a signal and ensign, a standard, a sign by which any thing is designated, distinguished or known; hence, used of the miracles of Christ, as being the signs by which it might be known that He was the Christ of God, a sign authenticating Christ's mission; a sign with reference to what it demonstrates. (*A Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament*, p. 503)

As John sees them, Jesus' miracles are symbols, proofs, messages, and object lessons of spiritual truth embodied in the wonders themselves. They are living parables of Christ's action, embodiments of the truth in works. They are not merely signs of supernatural power, but dramatic indications of the goal of His ministry and of His own all-loving character. His visible works of power and mercy foreshadow the spiritual restoration of all things. Because of these elements, a lesson, discussion, or sermon usually follows them.

John recorded only eight of Jesus' miracles, choosing typical ones to elucidate while recognizing their greater extent: "And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book" (John 20:30). In the next chapter, he provides a glimpse of the fullness of His ministry: "And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen" (John 21:25).