



JOHN 11:1-46 | THE SEVENTH SIGN: THE RAISING OF LAZARUS

- Verses 1-26 included on session 45
- Verse 27 –
  - This powerful testimony by Martha is equal to Peter's (and others).
    - Be reminded that this belief was understood and accepted by many, even early on in His ministry.
    - For example, Philip introduced Nathanael to Jesus as the one **of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write** (Jn. 1:45), and Nathanael himself proclaimed, **thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel** (Jn. 1:49).
  - Martha's understanding of the identity of Jesus as Messiah is unquestionable.
    - The phrase "He who comes" or "the Coming One" is always a reference to the Messiah.
    - We must remember, however, that Martha is *not living in the age of Grace*, where belief alone saves. Furthermore, even in the age of Grace, belief in the *identity* of Jesus is not a saving faith.
- Verses 28-31 –
  - These verses contain connecting information giving detail to the scene and are self-explanatory.
- Verse 32 –
  - Like Martha (v. 21), Mary expresses great faith in what Jesus *could have done* had He been there.
  - Also like Martha, it simply is not in her realm of thinking that Jesus would raise him from the dead.
- Verse 33 –
  - It was the **weeping** which caused Jesus to be **groaned in the spirit**.
    - This is likely (though the text does not explicitly say so) because death itself is an enemy that came from Adam's sin.
    - When Jesus saw the sting of death (1 Cor. 15:56), He **groaned**, even though He knew what was about to happen (see v. 4).
  - Jesus also **was troubled**.
    - The Greek says, "he troubled himself." The meaning is not perfectly clear.
    - However, if the interpretation above is correct, then this would align with passages like Genesis 6:6, where the state of the world in Noah's day **grieved him [God] at his heart**.
- Verse 34 –
  - It was customary for a well-to-do family to lay their dead loved ones in a tomb. Many times it was a family tomb. The loved one would lay there until decomposed, and then the bones would be gathered into a *sarcophagus* (bone box), making room for the next generation.
- Verse 35 –
  - In 1551 this became the shortest verse in the Bible (only because that is the year that versification was added to the Bible).
  - The Greek verb translated **wept** is a word that involves tears.

- Verses 36-37 -
  - There is a mixed reaction from Jesus' display of emotion. The majority (it seems) commented on the deep love Jesus had for Lazarus. Could he have been the one **whom Jesus loved** (Jn. 13:23)?
  - Others made the somewhat natural response, just as Mary and Martha had done, that questioned why Jesus had not done something to heal Lazarus before he died.
- Verse 38 –
  - Graves of this nature were common in ancient Israel, always for the wealthy.
- Verse 39 –
  - Martha still does not appear to have any idea why Jesus wants the stone taken away but appears to think it is for sentimental reasons. She discourages the removal because **he hath been dead four days**.
  - *The Companion Bible* (Bullinger) notes a common teaching, "The Rabbis taught that the spirit wandered about for three days, seeking re-admission to the body, but abandoned it on the fourth day, as corruption began then."
    - While this may be the case, it is doubtful that Martha was communicating that it was too late for resurrection. Rather, she was saying, "it is too late for you to say your final goodbyes."
- Verse 40 –
  - Jesus reminds her of a previous statement. This statement is not recorded, so we do not know the circumstances. However, we can simply take the text at its word that Jesus had previously told her that her belief would be rewarded with a manifestation of **the glory of God**.
  - In verse 4, Jesus had displayed His own knowledge that the death of Lazarus would end in a display of God's glory.
- Verses 41-42 –
  - The conversation between verse 40 and 41 is not given, but **they took away the stone**. With this Jesus prayed a public, verbal prayer.
  - This is the second longest prayer of Jesus in the Bible (ignoring the "Lord's prayer," which was a teaching and not a prayer. John 17 is the longest.
  - Jesus begins thanking God because **thou hast heard me** (v. 41), indicating that he had previously asked the Father for what is about to happen.
  - The ultimate goal in the prayer is not Lazarus' resurrection, but **that they may believe that thou has sent me** (v. 42). This is the overarching purpose of the fourth Gospel.
- Verses 43-44 –
  - Often the greatest events of history are accomplished with the fewest words. This event will never be forgotten, and is accomplished with three words (both in Greek and English). The most literal translation is, "Lazarus, Come out!"
  - Lazarus came out **with graveclothes** on his body and **a napkin** on his face. The English word **napkin** had a broader meaning in 1611 than it does today, originally it was "a small cloth."
  - The command of Jesus to **Loose him, and let him go** should not be allegorized for sermonic material. Its meaning is plain and simple, and allegorizing robs the story of its value.
- Verses 45-46 -
  - The belief is to be expected, for the event was undeniably miraculous.
  - The magnitude of the miracle, however, would not convince those who had already made their own assumptions, and who would treat those assumptions as final reality.

