

The Death and Resurrection of Lazarus; Conspiracy Against Jesus

John 11

Outline

- 1-16 | Jesus informed of Lazarus' sickness & death
- 17-27 | Jesus met by Martha
- 28-29 | Martha tells Mary of Jesus' arrival
- 30-37 | Jesus is met by Mary
- 38-44 | Jesus at the tomb
- 45-46 | Many believed; Others informed the Pharisees
- 47-53 | The Conspiracy to Kill Jesus
- 54 | Jesus limits His public appearances
- 55-57 | Anticipation of the Passover (Jesus' last)

Reflections

This chapter has two major events from Jesus' life that illustrate how Jesus understood the time in which He lived and was not following man's schedule but His Father's. I'll highlight a couple of passages that help illustrate this.

When Jesus was told that Lazarus was sick, he waited an additional two days and then left for Bethany.

John 11:6 NASB So when He heard that he was sick, He then stayed two days longer in the place where He was.

It wasn't that Jesus didn't love this family because in the preceding verse John writes about Jesus' love for them. Throughout his gospel, John is seeking to show that Jesus wasn't working on any man-made schedule of when things should happen but on the course mapped out for Him by His Father. He could have left immediately but instead He waited for two more days. In the mean time, Lazarus dies.

When Jesus gets ready to leave, His disciples question Him about returning to Jerusalem because the last time He was there, He was almost stoned. Jesus is unafraid of any conspiracies that men might be plotting. He was more intent on fulfilling the schedule His Father had ordained for Him.

As Jesus approached the town, Martha runs out to meet Jesus and tells Jesus of her wish that He had been there sooner. Jesus reassures her that He is greater than her brother's current state. He also reveals an important concept about the afterlife.

John 11:21-27 NASB Martha then said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. **22** "Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You." **23** Jesus *said to her, "**Your brother will rise again.**" **24** Martha *said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." **25** Jesus said to her, "**I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?**" **27** She *said to Him, "Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, even He who comes into the world."

Martha affirms her belief that Jesus was the Son of God and that God the Father hears His prayers but doesn't yet realize the full extent of Jesus' divine nature. Jesus also offers one of the "I AM" statements that are found in the gospel of John—I am the resurrection and the life. Connected with this statement is the promise of life after death for all believers.

Paul points out that the resurrection is one of the most important events in Jesus' life and that if it never happened, the gospel is not true, and the apostles were to be pitied.

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1 Corinthians 15:12-19 NASB 12 Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; 14 and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. 15 Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; 17 and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.

Jesus is going to show God the Father's power over sin and the result of sin, death. This is all taking place in a very short time before the last Passover celebration that Jesus would have with His disciples before His crucifixion and resurrection.

I don't know this for sure, but I would imagine that this took place so that His disciples would see beforehand that Jesus had access to power greater even than death. In a very short time He too would be dead and they would need to be reassured that when He said that He would rise after three days, it would happen.

Skipping ahead in the story, Jesus prays to God the Father, loud enough for all to hear, and then calls for Lazarus to come out of the tomb, which he does. What a scene! Talk about a dead man walking. Jesus then gives instructions that Lazarus should be unbound.

There is also another metaphor that can be seen in this. Lazarus was dead and bound in burial cloths and upon being called back to life, is freed from those burial cloths.

Before we came to saving faith in Jesus, we were dead in our sins and bound in the burial cloths of our sinful lives. But upon being called back to life by placing our faith in Jesus, we are set free from our past lives of sin. We now begin to live and throw off the sins which entangle us and hold us back.

Hebrews 12:1-3 NASB Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

The chapter closes with the council conspiring to have Jesus killed. Without knowing it, they were fulfilling their role in God's ultimate plan for the salvation of the world.

John 11:49-52 NASB But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, 50 nor do you take into account that it is expedient for you that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation not perish." 51 Now he did not say this on his own initiative, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation, 52 and not for the nation only, but in order that He might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.

The main principle to take from this chapter is this, our limited perspective of the events surrounding us is limited to the time and world we live in. God's perspective is one outside of time and on a much higher level than ours.

Isaiah 55:6-11 NASB Seek the LORD while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near.

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7 Let the wicked forsake his way And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the LORD, And He will have compassion on him, And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon. 8 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. 9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts. 10 "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, And do not return there without watering the earth And making it bear and sprout, And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; 11 So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.

God's plans will always be accomplished and His word always produces the desired effect. Place your faith in God, seek Him and you will find the answer you're looking for.

Lord, You know the times and seasons and can see things that we can't in this life. Daily we live in a spiritual battle that is being played out in the world around us. Help us to have the patience to persevere and not lose hope, fixing our eyes on Jesus and the eternal hope of glory in heaven. May Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven, in Jesus' name. Amen.

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