

Raising Lazarus from the Dead

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: John 11:38-44

Throughout Jesus' earthly ministry, He performed various miracles to demonstrate His divine power. The miracle we are discussing here was when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. As we study this miracle, as with every Bible passage, it is important to understand the context. This miracle teaches us certain things about Jesus and provides an important lesson for us.

The Context

- Jesus had a personal relationship with this family (John 11:1-3) – He loved them (John 11:5); Lazarus was a “friend” (John 11:11); this explains His emotion when He saw their mourning (John 11:32-36); He was moved with emotion even though He knew what He was going to do (John 11:11-14, 23)
- After receiving the news that Lazarus was sick, Jesus stayed two days longer (John 11:6) – He had a reason for this (John 11:7, 11); He did not want to heal Lazarus; He had done this for others, but this was going to be different
- When Jesus met Martha, He told her that Lazarus would rise again (John 11:23) – she believed this (John 11:24); “I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25); she confessed her faith (John 11:26)
- After the miracle, the chief priests and Pharisees met (John 11:47-48) – they could not deny the miracle, but they determined to kill Jesus; this was to save their place and nation (John 11:49-52); this was selfishness on their part, but they would have claimed to have noble intentions

The Miracle

- When they came to the tomb, Jesus commanded for the stone to be removed (John 11:38-39) – God always has man do what he can do before doing for man what he cannot do (cf. Matthew 6:11; 2 Thessalonians 3:10; Acts 14:16-17)
- Martha cautioned Jesus about having the stone removed (John 11:39) – the natural process of decay would have started; remember how Jesus waited before coming (John 11:6); He reminded her of what He said (John 11:40, 23-26)
- Jesus prayed to the Father (John 11:41-42) – not for His benefit, but for the people; the Father always heard Jesus (cf. John 10:30, 38; Hebrews 5:8); this was to prove this to the people
- Jesus commanded Lazarus to “come forth” (John 11:43) – Lazarus obeyed (John 11:44); Jesus had power over Lazarus' spirit (cf. James 2:26); this proved what He said to Martha (John 11:25-26)

The Lesson

- At the beginning, the desire was that Jesus would come to keep Lazarus from dying (John 11:1-3, 21, 32) – Jesus had already healed so many people; they knew He could do the same for Lazarus; yet His purpose was not just to keep people from dying, it was to remove the fear of death (Hebrews 2:14-15)
- The lesson for us is that Jesus is “the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25) – this was a foreshadowing of Jesus’ own resurrection (Romans 1:4); not even His death could stop Him; we have hope if we believe (more than a mere mental assent; includes obedience – Romans 6:3-6); warning against rejecting Jesus as the rulers did (John 11:47-48); they rejected Jesus in favor of their preferred life and we can do the same (cf. 2 Timothy 4:10)

Conclusion

- Even with all the people He healed, Jesus did not heal everyone – this was not His purpose; but this showed what He came to do and His power to do it; He came to provide life after death
- This hope is for all of us if we truly believe in Him (John 11:25-26) – complete, faithful obedience (Romans 6:3-6)