

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #220

Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead Miracle #30: Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead JN 11.38-44

38 Jesus was deeply moved once more as he came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone lying across the entrance. 39 *"Remove the stone,"* he commanded.

"But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a horrible odor, for it has been four days already."

40 Then Jesus said, *"Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?"*

41 So they removed the stone.

Then Jesus looked up and said, *"Father, I am thanking you that you have heard me. 42 I, myself knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people who are standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me."*

43 When he had said this, Jesus called out in a loud voice, *"Lazarus, I command you to come out now!"*

44 The dead man came out, his hands and feet still wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth tied around his face.

Jesus commanded them, *"Set him loose and let him go."*

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	Bethany, Near Jerusalem
Timeline	March (Month 38)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage VII: Jesus' Ministry in Perea
	B. Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead
Title	5. Miracle #30: Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead

COMMENT:

John made several important points in his invigorating narrative of Jesus' 30th miracle. The first has to do with the degree of supernatural power evident in this miracle. In verses 39 and 44, we see the phrase **"dead man"** used twice to describe Lazarus. This is an especially powerful expression in John's Greek, for he used the perfect tense for the verb "died." In other words, Lazarus was permanently dead—it was not just a "swoon," or short-term loss of consciousness that was mistaken for death.

The reference to the stench caused by the decomposing body further emphasized the irrevocable permanence of the death of this corpse. Though it is extremely rare, people who have not breathed for twenty or thirty minutes

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are sometimes resuscitated. These are "near death" experiences. John's point was that Lazarus was not like that. He was truly, fully, permanently dead, in a state of decomposition. His resurrection was therefore the greatest physical miracle of Jesus' ministry.

John also pointed out the foreknowledge of Jesus again here, at the climactic moment of the miracle. Jesus prayed, and thanked his Father for having already heard his prayer. In other words, when Jesus first heard that Lazarus was terminally ill, he had prayed and received the assurance that Lazarus would be resurrected. It was already a done deal. The resurrection of Lazarus was actually accomplished in prayer while Jesus was still in Perea, several days before it happened in Bethany.

Jesus was illustrating the prayer principle that he would soon teach his disciples during Passion Week: **"Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have already received it, and it will be yours."** MK 11:24

John also paid special attention to the role of Lazarus' **"grave clothes"** after his resurrection. Because he was resurrected in his flesh and blood body, Lazarus was still wrapped in about 70 pounds of cloths and burial ointment. He had to be released from the "tomb" of those cloths quickly, or else he would have suffocated and died again, just after being resurrected.

This established an important point of contrast to Jesus' own resurrection, which occurred in an entirely new form of a "spiritual body." This new kind of body is not subject to the laws of physics that control our flesh and blood bodies. Jesus' resurrection body passed straight through his burial clothes, and fell in a still-rolled state in his tomb as clear evidence that no human had unwrapped those cloths. The contrast between Lazarus' resurrection body and circumstances, and Jesus' spiritual body was an important point for John to make in his gospel.

Finally, John used the resurrection of Lazarus to point straight to the upcoming resurrection of Jesus. Unlike the synoptic gospels, which record about 30 miracles of Jesus, John limited his narrative to just seven, especially important sign-miracles. The resurrection of Lazarus was the last, and climactic of the seven, because it was a pre-enactment of Jesus' own resurrection. The One who said, **"I AM the resurrection and the life"** obviously had the power to resurrect Lazarus, since he was "the LIFE"--the very eternal life of God who created the entire universe out of nothing (JN 1:3)

When we look back in retrospect on the resurrection of Lazarus, we can see that it had to happen. It was inevitable. The revelation of God's glory in his Son Jesus could have ended in no other way. In fact, it was a good thing that Jesus began his call into the tomb with "Lazarus," for if he had not done that, every dead person in the world would have simultaneously come out of their graves when HE said "Come out!"

APPLICATION:

Whatever Jesus says, it happens. That is the way it is when you are the omnipotent Creator of everything that exists. The resurrection of Lazarus is a glorious illustration of this truth.

Once Lazarus died his sisters gave up hope on what Jesus had promised them. A stinking, decomposing corpse seemed to prove that it was too late for Jesus' promise to be fulfilled. The truth is that it is never too late for God to do what he says. Never!

What promise or command of Jesus to you seems circumstantially impossible?

How can you remind yourself today that God is not a liar, and all his words stand true?