

# Jesus Raises Lazarus, Part 1

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[ 0 : 00 ] We are going to be continuing now our consideration of the miracles of our Lord. And even though we've departed a little bit and dealt somewhat with parables, we are going to return to the miracles and the one in particular that we plan to undertake this morning has to do with the raising of Lazarus.

It is generally considered to be Christ's greatest miracle, but I would dispute that. I'm satisfied that his greatest miracle had to do with the resurrection of his own body from the grave and fulfillment of what he meant when he said, No one takes my life from me. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it up again.

And that will probably be our final study or almost our final study in regard to the miracles of our Lord. So what I would invite you to do is what we talked about last week.

Continue to give it some thought of what will be our undertaking when we finish this series on the miracles. We'll need a new subject and I've asked you to kick that around among yourselves and give it some thought.

And maybe today we'll be able to have a little bit of feedback on that. But I told you I've got a host of subjects that are, of course, my favorites that I would like to teach.

[ 1 : 24 ] But I am committed to scratching where you itch. And that means I want to give first consideration to areas that are of interest to you or questions or issues or problems or whatever that are peculiar to you.

And I think that could make this whole study a lot more worthwhile. So I want you to feel free to share that. And by the way, it might be a good idea if, you know, I think I'll probably do this.

I'll do this next week. I'll just distribute some slips of paper and allow each of you an opportunity to write down any question or any issue that you would like to hear addressed.

Because given what's going on in our culture today, there are some very, very thorny and unusual type problems out there. And I want all of you guys to be able to have some input if there are areas or difficult situations that trouble you that you would like discussed, but you would prefer to remain anonymous.

Because there are some sensitive issues that could be undertaken that might be of great benefit to everyone. But understandably, a guy might be embarrassed or reluctant to share it because of its nature.

[ 2 : 53 ] And I fully understand that and I want to respect that, but I don't want that itch to go unscratched. So we'll just take a few minutes next week. I'll just distribute a blank sheet of paper.

And nobody signs it. But if you have a question or issue that you would like discussed, I want you to feel perfectly free to just jot it down and fold it up and we'll collect them and it won't matter as to who wrote it because nobody will know or suspect it.

Anyway, it maintains privacy, but it can get into areas that would be otherwise perhaps just looked over. And we don't want to do that because I'm convinced, I'm convinced that the Word of God is more than capable of tackling and addressing any question or any issue that any human might arise.

So give that some thought, if you will. You may be thinking, well, there's something I've always really wondered about or would like to know about, but I'm not going to bring that up, you know. Bring it up!

Bring it up! We'll pull our ignorance if necessary and we'll just jump into it and see what comes out of it. All right, so now we are going to undertake a life and death issue and I'm looking up a song that I remember hearing Nelson, Eddie, and others sing a long time ago and some of you young pups don't know this, you don't have enough maturity on you, but some of you do and it is, Ah, sweet mystery of life, at last I've found thee.

[ 4 : 31 ] Ah, I know at last the secret of it all. All the longing, seeking, striving, waiting, yearning, the burning hopes, the joy, and idle tears that fall.

For tis love and love alone the world is seeking and tis love and love alone that can repay. Tis the answer, tis the end of and all of life, of living.

So, ah, sweet mystery of life. So, we're going to be looking at two areas that comprise the greatest mystery of humanity. And the first is life and the second is death.

Those are the two. They are the two greatest mysteries that we know the least about. Now, some are perhaps thinking right now, well, you can forget about the first one because I already know all about life.

If you think you know all about life, my friend, you don't know anything. And death still remains a great mystery. But the Bible addresses both life and death.

[ 5 : 43 ] For instance, have you ever considered the possibility that there is no such thing as dead people? I'm convinced of that.

There's no such thing as dead people. There are dead bodies, but there are no dead people.

because personhood is distinct from your body. You, as a person, are comprised of two entities.

One is material, the body, with which we're all familiar. And the other is the human spirit. Everybody has one. And we're not talking about the Holy Spirit.

We're talking about the human spirit because it is your spirit that makes you who and what you are coupled with your body. So, when God created Adam, we are told that he fashioned his body after the dust of the ground.

[ 6 : 54 ] And then he breathed into his nostrils. It really sounds like mouth-to-mouth resuscitation is what it sounds like.

Adam was a body, marvelously constructed body, that lacked everything, I guess you'd say lacked nothing, but life.

And a Christophany, I believe, a pre-incarnate Christ who fashioned the body of Adam after his own body.

And we're talking about a pre-Bethlehem body. We're talking about the body that our Lord indwelt when he was one of the three visitors that stopped to visit with Abraham.

Remember the two destroying angels that went on to Sodom and Gomorrah? And the third was a Christophany. The third was God in the flesh.

[ 8 : 00 ] And they looked just like three men. And Abraham thought they were just three men. And they were dressed like three men. And they ate like three men. And one of them was Christ pre-incarnate.

And he is the one who told Sarah that she was going to have a child and so on. And Sarah laughed. And then remember he said, and I will come back about this time next year and Sarah will have a son.

Well, that was a wonderful miracle. But this Christophany thing is just marvelous. So, when God breathed into Adam's nostrils, and the text said that very clearly in the Hebrew, breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.

And Adam became a living soul. And that means, again, and I don't want to split hairs here, but I think it's, semantics are important.

We do not have a soul. We are a soul. And the soul represents the totality of our personhood comprised of materiality with a physical body and immateriality with a non-physical spirit.

[ 9 : 26 ] And when you came to faith in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, it was that immaterial part of your being that nobody has ever seen that was regenerated.

It was your human spirit that was regenerated. Your body was not changed at all. And when you die physically, it is, as the Apostle Paul said, it is your human spirit that exits the body.

nobody sees it leave. But it's real. Your spirit is just as real as your physical body. Our problem is, we tend to attach reality to physicality.

But God is spirit, not material. God is spirit. And they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. so you cannot even worship God if you do not have a spirit that enables you to worship Him.

And that's something that's peculiar only to believers who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit who quickens our spirit. It is His spirit that bears witness with our spirit that we are a child of God.

[ 10 : 45 ] And we've got the Holy Spirit dwelling within us. and we've got the human spirit that every believer has or every human being has and that is what is regenerated.

So, the body will, the body is not regenerated, that's why we die. And Paul talks about that in Romans chapter 8 when he talks about the time is coming when our bodies, when the regeneration process will be applied to our body not just our spirit and we will become a glorified body with that human spirit like Christ was when He came out of the grave.

So, we're going to be talking about about life and about death and the marvels of it is just I've been thinking about this for some time now and I reach a certain plateau in my mind and that's where I just drop out.

I can't, I can't go, can't go any further or can't go any deeper. So, this is a subject that is just absolutely magnificent and all that we do know about it we know from the scriptures.

You, you know as well as I that we, we all tend to be so fixated on these bodies and well we should because the body too is not to be depreciated it's a gift from God but it does not constitute the more strategic important part of your being that is your spirit and that's the very part of our being that gets short shrift.

[ 12 : 35 ] we spend so much time and effort on the outward appearance of these bodies on the clothes we put on it and, and the things that we attire it with and, and the workouts that we go through and the way we feed ourselves and care for and this is all with the body and we tend to get sidetracked from what is really the most important and it isn't your body it's your spirit and if there were some way of successfully communicating that to humanity in general the world would change overnight I can assure you that but it doesn't because we are tactile and we are visual and we know what we feel and we know what we see and that does not pertain to the spirit so the tendency is to just kind of yeah, you know, dismiss it yeah, well I guess so yeah, well I guess we all have one of those but, and we just but those who are believers know how important the spiritual is and the Bible makes a great deal of the fact that that there is a spiritual counterpart to just about everything that matters there's there is physical water how dependent are we on that but there is spiritual water

Jesus said the water that I have to give is such that it will leave you never thirsty again well that's not H2O that's spiritual water and the food the bread the bread of life that we place such importance upon physically that we need to sustain our bodies and stay alive there is spiritual bread and the spiritual bread is the word of God it comprises nourishment that we take in or ignore and if you ignore it to the wrong extent you will have a very lean spiritual part of you there are a lot of believers who are on a diet spiritually and their spirit is so lean they are spiritually undernourished and it keeps them from being the full person that they could be because they ignore the greater part of their being and they put all of the emphasis on the physical and the material so in connection with the raising of

Lazarus from the dead we're going to be looking at that and I know we won't get through it in one session because it's a pretty lengthy miracle and it's just wonderful it is absolutely so let's go there first before I ramble on anymore and go to John chapter 11 and John is the only one that records the raising of Lazarus from the dead and you need a little bit of background regarding Lazarus because he obviously along with his sisters Mary and Martha enjoyed a special kind of connection with the Savior and we do know that on more occasions than one he resided at their home they had meals together and I don't think there is any way that we can deny or should deny that Lazarus and Mary and Martha had a special place in the heart of Jesus you know he had a special connection with the twelve with Peter

James and John especially but with these three he had a real affinity for them and they no doubt spent a great deal of time together as he had opportunity so John tells us as he opens a certain man was sick Lazarus of Bethany I'm not going to refer you to the map but if you have a map and you want to look at it you can see where Jerusalem is and you'll note that Bethany is just a very few miles maybe five four or five miles at the most from Jerusalem so that's a very close proximity here and they are very near Jerusalem in the little town of Bethany it's the village of Mary and her sister Martha and it was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair whose brother Lazarus was sick the sisters therefore sent to him saying Lord behold he whom you love is sick well didn't

Jesus love everybody well of course he did but again this just brings out the point that there was a special connection with this man Lazarus and with his sisters and when Jesus heard it he said this sickness is not unto death well it almost makes it look like Jesus was wrong because he died so the sickness is unto death but what the Savior means is that this sickness that Lazarus is undergoing is not going to be culminated in death so that that's the end in other words the death that is going to be involved here is just an interim kind of thing so Jesus I assure you is not speaking out of ignorance he knows full well of what she's speaking and he says this sickness is not unto death in other words it is not for the purpose of death or the purpose that is usually served by death this is something special but contrast the conjunction of contrast but on the other hand this sickness is for the glory of

[ 18 : 44 ] God that the son of God may be glorified by it and here once again our Lord is referring to himself in third person singular he could have just as easily said but for the glory of God that I may be glorified by it but Jesus very very seldom spoke that way in fact the favorite designation that he gives dozens and dozens of times about himself is the son of man the son of man he keeps calling himself the son of man in the third person and I suspect that the reason he does that is because he is trying to establish in the hearts and minds particularly of the disciples the fact that he is not merely a son of man he is the son of man and he is not merely a son of God he is the son of God big difference the article makes all the difference that definite article the son of man and as the son of man he is the representative individual of the whole human race such as

Paul refers to him in 1st Corinthians 15 and he calls him the last Adam as opposed to the first Adam Jesus the Messiah son of God son of man is the last Adam not the second Adam he's the last Adam and he is charged with the responsibility of literally undoing the works of the first Adam and that's precisely what he is going to do as the last Adam it's just such a beautiful thing and you know you realize of course you don't get this anywhere other than the scriptures you will not find this truth in the Encyclopedia Americana or Britannica you only get this in the scriptures and this blessed book was it

Dr. Lewis Ferris Schaefer said the Bible is a book such as man would not write if he could and could not write if he would that's the nature of this book it is just well it is it is the breath of God let us go on here Jesus said this sickness is not unto death but for the glory of God or for the recognition of God for the honor of God so that the son of God meaning himself of course third person may be glorified by it and indeed he is going to be glorified and by the way to be glorified means to be recognized to be exalted we we talk we talk about the glory of God means the recognition that is due his name the acknowledgement God's glory the credit the credit that is accrued to him and that we assign to him now

Jesus loved Martha and his sister and Lazarus and when therefore he heard that he was sick he stayed then two days longer in the place where he was now is that any way to act on behalf of a friend that you have heard about who is ill and the text doesn't say it but and I'm sure our Lord already knew it but Lazarus was not just ill he was gravely ill and it's going to end in his death his physical death that's how sick he is and Jesus appears to be what shall I say we would use the expression killing time Jesus appears to be killing time waiting for nature and for death to take its course and capturing the life death that last enemy capturing the life of

Lazarus he deliberately waits two more days and the normal human response to this would be of one who is not in control of everything like our Lord is you drop everything and you run and you go and you try to get there while he's still alive but our Lord of course knew about this whole situation and in fact the entire matter was fulfilled on orders from heaven and we'll see that he stayed two days longer and after this he said let us go to Judea again the disciples said to him rabbi or teacher the Jews were just now seeking to stone you and are you going there again this is a curious expression because in this context these people were all Jews there were virtually no Gentiles involved at all and

[ 24 : 18 ] John in his gospel continually makes reference to the Jews and more often than not it is not in a good light because the Jews of whom he is speaking for the most part constitute what we would call the Jewish established in Israel which was thoroughly corrupt headed by Caiaphas and Annas the high priest and his son in law and they were in cahoots with the Romans and the Romans allowed these high priests to stay in power with the proviso that they would keep the Jews under control and keep them settled so that Rome won't have to bring the hammer down so that there won't be any riots or whatnot so the people respected religious authority even when it was invested in those who were undeserving of it such as

Caiaphas and Annas but we've got a political system here to account for also and when John refers to the Jews so often and he's the only one that does by the way I mean the other gospels mention it too but not like John does and I suspect that it is due to the fact that John's gospel is targeted for a greater Gentile recipient or population now all of the gospels are going to everyone but some of these gospels will have a more direct impact and have better understanding from those who are not familiar with Judaism and Jews and all the differences and everything so John is using this expression the Jews frequently because Gentiles would need that for the enlightenment and some of our Jewish friends really dislike

John's gospel well most of them at least the orthodox they reject all of the gospels all of the New Testament they don't accept it at all but they have a special revulsion for John's gospel because John does seemingly put the Jews in a bad light all the time and yet you've got to remember that John is a Jew John the Baptist is a Jew John the writer of the gospel is a Jew Jesus is a Jew the twelve apostles are a Jew and by the way I just want to say something about this one morning when we were here we had a visitor and I do not know his name I remember he was from Yellow Springs he drove up Yellow Springs and his name was I never did get his last name I don't remember I can't even think of his first name now but in the study that morning I made mention of the fact that all of the writers of scripture were

Jews they were all Jewish contributors they were all Jews and the man seemed so interested in the class up until that time and then I don't know he just didn't he didn't come back and he was at church one Sunday too I remember that and I wish I knew his last name so I could contact him but I don't his first name was Chris Chris something and I tried to look back and he seemed so interested and so with us and everything and I was racking my brain trying to come up with what I might have said that could have really turned him off because he just never came back to church never came back to here and it dawned on me that that particular morning that he was here I made emphasis of all of the writers of scripture being Jews and I got to thinking for somebody that doesn't have a background or maybe for somebody that is relatively untaught or even a new

Christian you might really take offense to that because who do most of us think wrote the Bible or at least the New Testament Christians Christians and that's a misunderstanding they were not Christians what they were at least most of them I mean Matthew Mark Luke and John and Acts and Paul and Peter they were all Jews they were Jews who had been regenerated by Jesus Christ and had been given new life in him but that did not mean they were no longer Jews if you're born a Jew you're going to be a Jew for all your life in the same way that if you're born German or Dutch that's what you're going to be for your whole life that isn't change but conversion and I got to thinking about that and maybe that's something that set him off because we tend to think that all the writers of the

[ 29 : 37 ] New Testament they were all Christians well in a certain sense they were Christians in that they they possessed the person of Jesus Christ and they were saved individuals they were still Jews and they are those who wrote the scriptures all of the scriptures well let's go on the Jews okay Rabbi the Jews were just now seeking to stone you and are you going there again what's he talking about talking about going to Bethany which is a suburb of Jerusalem and the disciples are really concerned because Jesus you're not going back into that hotbed I mean the last time you were there they were ready to stone you and you're going back there now it's kind of interesting well let's go on I don't want to get ahead of myself so they were just ready to seek and stone you you're going there again

Jesus answered are there not twelve hours in the day if anyone walks in the day he does not stumble because he sees the light of this world but if anyone walks in the night he stumbles because the light is not in him I'd really like to explore that that's great but I just can't we've got to get through this in verse 11 this he said and after that he said to them our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep but I go that I may awaken him out of sleep and Jesus of course is using sleep as a euphemism which means it is a way of toning down the harsh reality of something that we'd rather not say so when we talk about a certain person we say well you know he passed away no really why do we say he passed away because that's a euphemism a euphemism made up from the

Greek word you and it means good it means it's kind of like a eulogy good words you use good words instead of a harsh word instead of saying he's dead we say he passed away it's a little gentler a little easier and Jesus said our friend Lazarus is sleeping that's a euphemism he's not talking about the eight hours of night variety he's talking about death Lazarus died and of course didn't pick up on that and when Jesus said our friend Lazarus sleeps one of them chimed in and said well everybody knows that sleep a night's rest is a wonderful healer that's the best thing you can do for your body when you're ill is sleep and quite naturally that's what they thought he meant but

Jesus simply said well verse 13 tells us that they thought he was speaking of literal sleep and Jesus therefore said to them with the plain hard cold reality Lazarus is dead no guys you don't understand he died Lazarus is dead and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there what do you mean by what he meant was I am glad for your sakes he's talking about and talking to the twelve that I was not there and the reason he said that is because Lazarus death is something that God has orchestrated from the beginning for this specific purpose because long story short there's no way that I could raise him from the dead if he hadn't died and this whole thing is staged deliberately by the father with the full knowledge of course and involvement of the son and it is intended to put a new kind of backbone into the twelve because these men have been with

Jesus for three to three and a half years they've seen all kinds of miracles and healings and apart from apart from the raising of Jairus' daughter and apart from raising the son of the widow of Nain they did not have the kind of witness or miracle or information that would put the steel in their backbone that Jesus knew they were going to need in other words healing healing the daughter of Jairus some people thought she wasn't even dead and one reason some of them thought that was because Jesus said well she's not dead she's just sleeping and what he meant was she's not dead dead but she's asleep in the sleep of death and when

[ 35 : 32 ] Jesus said she's not dead but sleeps those who were there who knew death when they saw it they actually laughed at him they laughed him to scorn because they thought she really was dead they knew death when they saw it and she was dead and maybe who knows maybe rigor mortis had even set in and is there anything that can remove all doubt when rigor mortis sets in and the body becomes stiff Jesus said she's not dead but she's sleeping and he meant that in the same way as Lazarus and he said maiden arise and she got up I don't know how long she had been dead but she was dead or as they say down south she was plum dead and so was the son of the widow of Nain the stretcher bearers were carrying him out on the beer and he was her only son and

Jesus Jesus ruined every funeral he ever attended he just brought the corpse back to life that's the end of the funeral okay shows all where everybody can go and he touched the beer where that young man was and he rose and the disciples saw that and yet the raising of Lazarus is going to be different three days the Jews had a thing about three days and this is also why our Lord was dead I think in the tomb for three days and three nights is because there was a common belief among the Jews that actual literal real honest to goodness death I mean death dead can't really be verified until the corpse has been dead three days boy that removes all doubt and in the case of

Lazarus rigor mortis had not only set in but so had the decomposition of the body and one of the sisters said no you don't want to open that tomb the odor of decomposing flesh would be overwhelming and you don't want to do that and she of course was speaking with authority and with accuracy but our Lord had something different in mind so he says this is kind of humorous too I kind of get a chuckle out of this Jesus said I'm glad for your sakes meaning the apostles that I was not there so that you may believe well didn't they already well yes and no all of these disciples are going to have lapses in their faith and perhaps none will be as dramatic as Peter and he's going to have some serious second thoughts

Peter well I don't want to go there let's go back to the text I'm glad for your sake so that you may believe but let us go to him Thomas therefore who is called Didymus Thomas and that's a word for twin Thomas had a twin brother well I assume it was a twin brother but maybe it was a twin sister I don't know maybe it's a boy and a girl who were born as twins but anyway Thomas was a twin and he said to his fellow disciples this is this is kind of funny let us go also that we may die with him Thomas was a this was a real downer you know I could just see old Thomas kind of showing up Thomas is the doubter you know and what Thomas is doubting is if we go with

Jesus to where Lazarus is they're going to kill all of us we'll all be dead you know so he just kind of throws up his hand well if that's what he's decided to do okay let's go we'll all die together they're going to take us all out and that's obviously what he was thinking and he's going right into this hot bed you see this is getting very very near in fact fellas the text will make it clear a little later in John's gospel that it was the raising of Lazarus that was the final straw for the deep state and they are going to say later in John's gospel they're going to say later after the raising of Lazarus they're going to say confide have a little meeting they're going to say you know what this thing is getting out of hand and if we let this go on everybody is going to believe in this

[ 40 : 53 ] God and then what's going to happen Rome is going to sit up and take notice and this thing is going to change real quick from a religious thing that Rome has no interest in at all to a political thing because people are going to be saying this is Messiah Yeshua Hamashiach he's the Messiah Messiah and what does that mean he's going to take charge he's the king but Rome already has a king and there isn't room for two kings and when these people start remember one crowd wanted to take him and make him king wanted to crown him right then and there because of his miracles and because of the feeding of the 5,000 and all the rest they were ready and the intelligentsia the deep state of Israel knew how this would play with

Rome and it wouldn't play at all and if we let this man continue everybody is going to believe on and he said and then the Romans will come and take away our nation and our place what was their place their place was one of prestige of perks of benefits of all kinds of things that they enjoyed under the authority of the Romans that the average Jew of course did not enjoy so these guys are afraid that their cushy lifestyle is going to be disrupted and they're going to be a big brawl and the Romans are going to come down with a hammer and we've got to prevent that so that's partly why they were involved so Thomas says let us go so we'll die with him so when Jesus came he found that he had already been in the tomb four days so the three day thing has been met and then some

Bethany was near Jerusalem we'd call it a suburb of Jerusalem about two miles off maybe two and a half three miles and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother we don't know how many the many are because the text just doesn't tell us but Martha therefore when she heard that Jesus was coming went to meet him she heard that he's coming so she leaves the house and heads down the road that she knew they would be coming on and Mary still sat in the house and Martha approached Jesus we don't know how close he was to the house but probably not very far and he was getting closer all the time and Martha said to Jesus Lord if you had been here my brother would not have died and it was a very legitimate statement on her part because she knew about

Jesus healing miracles and she was thinking in terms if you could have only gotten to him before he died you could have prevented his death but we know of course from what we read earlier that that was not the plan at all and yet she was speaking from the only vantage point that she had and putting two and two together that she thought equaled four but in this particular case it didn't well I would love to go on with the text but I cannot compete with the food so we will continue this in our next get together thank you for your kind attention