

## **1040 The miracle of Lazarus' resurrection and a related testimony** (Verses refer to those in NASB unless otherwise specified, and by Whirlwind.)

First, we will talk about the time and background when the miracle happened. Second, we will see that the reaction of Jesus was very different from ordinary people. He knew that the Jews were seeking to stone Him at that time, but He still went to Judea. Why do we know that He was not committing suicide? Through an example in the Old Testament, we can see that God doesn't like people to commit suicide. Although He has absolute authority, He is full of mercy and grace. Thirdly, the Bible says clearly the He foreknew what He would do. Fourthly, we can see what happened outside when Jesus was outside Bethany. Fifthly, we describe how the miracle was performed. Sixthly, quite a few became believers because of this miracle, and we will mention why. Finally, we'll briefly describe a related testimony.

### **1. The background of this miracle and the response of Jesus**

The time when the miracle happened is clearly said in John 12:1, "Jesus, therefore, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead." Here is the background in John 11:1-3, "Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. It was the Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. So the sisters sent word to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick.'" The response of ordinary people is to go as soon as possible, but that of Jesus is very different as described in John 11:4-6, "But when Jesus heard this, He said, "This sickness is not to end in death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it." Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when He heard that he was sick, He then stayed two days longer in the place where He was." From the viewpoint in the aspect of human, the two-day delay ensured that Lazarus died thoroughly. But that in the aspect of God, life is up to the God, the Holy Trinity. So, it really has no problem for Him.

### **2. Jesus going to Judea isn't an action of committing suicide**

Then His action and what He said are described in John 11:7-10, "Then after this He said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." The disciples said to Him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone You, and are You 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.'" "

He obeyed the guidance of the Holy Spirit unto death, and died on the cross, and completed the salvation. He knew that His time was not yet coming, so He wasn't going to Judea to commit suicide. God doesn't want us to commit suicide, which was said clearly in the Old Testament. Let us take a look at one of the verses saying this in 1 Samuel 21:11-13, "But the servants of Achish said to him, "Is this not David the king of the land? Did they not sing of this one as they danced, saying, 'Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands'?" David took these words to heart and greatly feared Achish king of Gath. So

he disguised his sanity before them, and acted insanely in their hands, and scribbled on the doors of the gate, and let his saliva run down into his beard." David pretended that he was crazy. Isn't it against the law to lie? However, if he didn't think of this method of pretending being crazy, it would have been the same as committing suicide in that situation. God didn't blame him for that.

We repeat that God has absolute authority. The sins mentioned are not comparable with the sins of David committing adultery and using the sons of Ammon to kill Uriah the Hittite. Yet, He still gave no death penalty to David as said in 2 Samuel 12:13, "Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord." And Nathan said to David, "The Lord also has taken away your sin; you shall not die." We really need to know what God emphasizes when reading the Bible. Christians studying the Bible should take viewpoints in the aspect of God, not always in the aspect of human just because we are human. From Psalm 51, we see that David truly repented for this, not only in front of God, but also before people since this psalm was for the choir director. But he couldn't avoid the penalty, and the penalty was so very great.

Also, we can see that although God has absolute authority, He is the God who is full of mercy and grace. Because of this, we have the plan of salvation; otherwise, we would have no chance at all. In the New Testament, there is a way left for our feebleness as described in 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." There is only one God in the New Testament and the Old Testament. Through the Bible, what God tells us is consistent. This is just one example to tell us that He is the God who is full of mercy and grace.

### **3. Jesus' foreknowledge regarding what He would do**

It is described clearly in John 11:11-16, "This He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I go, so that I may awaken him out of sleep." The disciples then said to Him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover." Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that He was speaking of literal sleep. So Jesus then said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, so that you may believe; but let us go to him." Therefore Thomas, who is called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, so that we may die with Him.""

### **4. What happened when Jesus was outside the Bethany**

"So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off; and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary, to console them concerning their brother. Martha therefore, when she heard that Jesus was coming, went to meet Him, but Mary stayed at the house. Martha then said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never

die. Do you believe this?" 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." (John 11:17-27)

It is said in John 11:28-37, "When she had said this, she went away and called Mary her sister, saying secretly, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." And when she heard it, she got up quickly and was coming to Him. Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha met Him. Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and consoling her, when they saw that Mary got up quickly and went out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. Therefore, when Mary came where Jesus was, she saw Him, and fell at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and was troubled, and said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to Him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus wept. So the Jews were saying, "See how He loved him!" But some of them said, "Could not this man, who opened the eyes of the blind man, have kept this man also from dying?""

Someone asked why Jesus was troubled and wept. So the Jews were saying, "See how He loved him!" Is it the truth just because they said so? Not really. Others may say that He saw people's unbelief that He could revive Lazarus from death. Someone might also say that He saw the end of human was death. In fact, the Bible didn't say clearly which one was correct. In fact, it may have even been something else. No matter how much we guess, we cannot get a conclusion. There is no need for any guesses.

##### **5. The miracle of Lazarus' resurrection**

What happened is described clearly in John 11:38-45, "So Jesus, again being deeply moved within, came to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, "Remove the stone." Martha, the sister of the deceased, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there will be a stench, for he has been dead four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" So they removed the stone. Then Jesus raised His eyes, and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. I knew that You always hear Me; but because of the people standing around I said it, so that they may believe that You sent Me." When He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." The man who had died came forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings, and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go." Therefore many of the Jews who came to Mary, and saw what He had done, believed in Him."

Please notice that the resurrection of Lazarus was very different from that of Jesus, not really comparable. Lazarus was a human being, and he died again eventually. But Jesus lives forever.

## **6. Aftereffects after the resurrection of Lazarus**

**There were quite a few who believed Jesus because of this miracle, as said in John 11:45, "Therefore many of the Jews who came to Mary, and saw what He had done, believed in Him." Among other verses are in the following. "So they made Him a supper there, and Martha was serving; but Lazarus was one of those reclining at the table with Him. ...The large crowd of the Jews then learned that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He raised from the dead. But the chief priests planned to put Lazarus to death also; because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and were believing in Jesus."(John 12:2-11) "So the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead, continued to testify about Him. For this reason also the people went and met Him, because they heard that He had performed this sign."(John 12:17-18)**

**The New Testament doesn't record even one word from Lazarus, but many believed in the Lord because of him! He himself is the testimony. Here, we can see how important it is to do what you believe yourself. Just like what is said in James 1:22, "But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves." Being a doer is superior to being merely a hearer.**

## **7. A related testimony**

**At the funeral of a friend, she was laid in a coffin. Near the end of saying goodbye, there were two sisters telling her to raise up in the name of Jesus. Of course, she didn't. This is a very rare event. The brother with me thought that they had great faith. My thinking was the opposite. How come their teachings make them understand the Bible to such an extent? This was really a bad testimony before unbelievers.**

**This is not faith. It is said clearly in the New Testament, "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." (Hebrews 11:1) In the Old Testament, it also said clearly in Deuteronomy 18:22, "When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him."**

**This happened a long time ago. I remember that the time between her passing away and the funeral was very short. I tried to ask several people who might know it, but no one remembers. They should have a burden doing so. But they must make sure that the burden is real! Lazarus resurrected, but he only died four days ago. If the time difference was beyond that, apparently it was not a real one. If within it, they should know that it was a fake at least now since anything from God will be fulfilled. They should know ahead of time that they were not given such an authority to have power to do such a thing, although I understand that one may have to make sure by actually doing it in some cases. Just like the testimony shared before, not all supernatural things come from God. We must know this point and be careful.**