

# THE MESSAGE OF THE GOSPELS

Great Victory: Jesus and Death

John 11:38-46

May 11, 1986

## INTRODUCTION

1. The problem regarding Lazarus' sickness and death is neatly presented in the Word (vv. 1-16). This is followed by the great revelation of Christ as the resurrection and the life (vv. 17-27).
2. The involvement of Mary, Martha, the Jews, and Jesus in sorrow over Lazarus' death is patent (vv. 28-37). It was supposed that Jesus would have intervened in Lazarus' death (v. 37). True, but He didn't. Scripture teaches: "He giveth not account of any of His matters" (Job 33:13).
3. Now the account comes to the critical stage. Jews had asked to go to the grave site (v. 34). Now He is there (v. 38). That the Lord felt the apparent unbelief of the Jews (v. 37) is clear by the phrase "therefore again groaning in Himself" (v. 38). "Therefore" points back to the previous verse. That which was contrary to His holy nature moved Him deeply. But the verb "groan" has been previously used to express our Lord's feelings (v. 33). In an attempt to withhold His emotions, our Lord felt a deep displeasure over the attitude expressed (v. 37). The verb strictly means to "snort with indignation" as a horse and indicates displeasure (cf. v. 33; Mt. 9:30; Neh. 1:43; 14:4).

NOTE: While John emphasizes our Lord's deity, His perfect humanity is ever so clear (v. 5--His affection; v. 35--His sympathy and sorrow; vv. 33, 38--His indignation). Elsewhere in John, His humanity is evident: His weariness (4: 6); His thirst (4:7; 19:28); His love for his disciples (20:2); His special affection for "His own" and John (13:2, 23; 19:26; 21:7, 20).

4. Consider the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead:-

1. THE COMMAND v. 39

a. Stated

An aorist imperative verb is used. The verb indicates removal of the stone (cf. Lk 24:2 where the verb "roll away" is used). What man can do, he is required of Christ to do. How magnificent.

b. Reviewed

It is Martha who speaks up. She is said to have a settled faith (v. 27), but here it exhibits some doubt. The remark is natural for Martha rather than from the

reserved Mary. She says her brother is a "fourth-day" man i.e. the one which was supposed to hover over the body for three days had now gone. The verb "stink" is present tense.

2. THE REMINDER v. 40

There is question as to what our Lord has reference here by the verb "said." It probably refers to v. 4 and also to vv. 25, 26. What a phrase "the glory of God." Moses asked for this (Ex. 33:18). It was God's glory which came in Christ Jesus (John 1:14, 18; 2 Cor. 4:6; Heb. 1:3). So now, Martha was about to behold God's infinite glory in the undoing of sins work in death. Jesus makes a point here: "believe" comes before "see." Man reverses that order

3. THE PRAYER vv. 41, 42

a. Prepared

The removal of the stone came "then." This was after the comments of Martha. How slow people are to believe His command!

b. Heard

The Lord's prayer in this instance is not recorded, but twice it is acknowledged that the Father hears the Son. Why? Because of John 8:29. He is always in harmony with the Father (Psa. 16:8).

c. Proposed

The verb "stand" is perfect, hence, they had taken their stand. Jesus wanted them to know He was the Sent One of God (cf. 1 Kings 18:36, 37). The authentication of His mission was critical.

4. THE POWER vv. 43, 44.

a. For resurrection v. 43

Two adverbs are used: "hither, out." There is no verb. The loud voice was for the crowd. Lazarus is called personally, otherwise more would have responded. It is a great picture of the rapture (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

b. For release v. 44

Bands and a napkin still bound Lazarus. The people were told to loose him (better: let him go, cf. 18:8). Two imperatives indicated Jesus' intention. The miracle was complete. What a sign of His deity.

CONCLUSION As with all the events in the life of our Lord, some believed (v. 45) and others disbelieved (v. 46). There is always a division over Christ (7:43; 9:16; 10:19). Note there were two influences: Mary and the things Jesus did (v. 45). God still uses means to accomplish His goals.