

JOHN 11

Up From the Grave he Arose

Thus far, we have encountered numerous “I AM” statements (see our study on chapter 8) including the claim that Jesus is the Bread of Life (6:22), the Light of the World (8:12), and the Good Shepherd (10:11, 14). The last significant I AM statement comes with the penultimate “sign” in John’s Gospel, “I AM the resurrection and the life.”

Among Jesus’s closest followers was a family from Bethany – Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. They are vital eyewitnesses in the Gospels and play significant roles in the unfolding narrative. The death of Lazarus is the climax before the climax. It is the final unveiling of Jesus as Logos, Life, Light, and Lamb prior to his own resurrection.

What is most striking to readers is Jesus’s willingness to allow him to die. No doubt this is consistent with his message in chapter 9 that even moments of suffering and sorrow allow for God’s glory to triumph. Lazarus’s untimely death is no different.

Nevertheless, when Jesus arrives four days after the burial, he finds a scene of great mourning. His arrival is announced using **Light** language, “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.”¹⁰ But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him” (vs. 9-10)

The delay of four days is purposeful. The Jews believed the soul hovered near the body of the deceased for three days finally escaping on the fourth day. Thus, Jesus’s miracle is unmistakable, inexplicable, and undeniable. Jesus’s message to Martha is proven by raising of Lazarus, “I am the resurrection and the life” (vs. 25).

The meaning of raising Lazarus is equally clear. “Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die” (vs. 25-26). Throughout John, the spiritual is confused with the physical (“you must be born again” and “eat my body and drink my blood” are just two examples). Yet in John 11, Jesus is being both literal and spiritual. Lazarus will physically rise, but its meaning is deeper than a single resuscitation. Lazarus, though raised, would die again. But as the **Life**, he offers more than temporal reprieve, but eternal security. Lazarus was raised and died again, but Christ was raised and lives forevermore. Our future, by faith, matches that of Christ.

The raising of Lazarus is a clear demonstration of Jesus as **Logos**, yet the text spends little time on exploring the specifics. Rather, it zeroes on Christ’s crucifixion. Following the triumph over death,

the Pharisees sought even more to execute him. What madness! He who conquers death will not fear it.

Regardless, the High Priest, Caiaphas, articulates the meaning of the cross perhaps the clearest in John's Gospel. "[I]t is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish" (vs. 50). That is the meaning of the cross. At Calvary, Jesus paid a price he did not owe to pay a price we could not pay. He truly is the **Lamb** of God who takes away the sins of the world.

The Logos becomes Lamb.