

# Christ Verifies Every Claims

## John 11:38-45

**Introduction:** How many would say that John Eleven is about the resurrection of Lazarus? Yes....I would have said that too. It is what we focus on. It is mind boggling miracle, but in reality there are only eight verse our of fifty-seven that talk about it. 14% of the chapter talks about this event. There is a lot more going on here than just an astounding miracle....which it certainly was.

Why did Jesus raise Lazarus? Is there a larger purpose than what meets the eye? Does that purpose extend to us today? These are some of the questions we want to answer as we look at this familiar and yet astounding miracle.

It is clear that Jesus did not do miracles for the spectacle of it. He did not do them for personal acclaim or to become rich, be famous or even to become The King.

**Luke 5:12-14** <sup>12</sup> While He was in one of the cities, behold, *there was* a man covered with leprosy; and when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and implored Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean." <sup>13</sup> And He stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." And immediately the leprosy left him. <sup>14</sup> And He ordered him to tell no one, "But go and show yourself to the priest and make an offering for your cleansing, just as Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

Jesus healed out of compassion and love for men rather than fame. Although few people in His day knew about this healing, it was recorded for the entire world to see in Scripture. And this brings us to the fundamental reason for Christ's miracles. He does them to reveal God fully and clearly to humanity. By becoming a man, Jesus brought God down to man.....where man could see Him, touch Him, know Him and experience Him. Men have always known that God is all powerful, but they did not know that HE was also all loving and gracious. Without Christ Jesus, God is a concept, a thought or a religious entity. Through Christ men and women can see the glory of God.

**John 1:14** <sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

AND....This "bringing of God into the human world" is what the Glory of God is. It happens whenever God is revealed for who He actually is and not what men imagine Him to be.

This is why the Bible is important to you. It is not a religious book of instructions. It is the written revelation of who God is. Christ Jesus was the living human revelation of who God is. The two are merged in purpose and result. The Man Christ Jesus for His generation and the Scripture for all subsequent generations. It is the Holy Spirit who energizes this in our day. Here is how:

- Jesus sent the Holy Spirit into the world to continue what Jesus started.

**John 16:7** <sup>7</sup> "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.

- The Holy Spirit wrote the Scripture by matching up the thoughts and the revelation of God with human words that would most perfectly communicate God's thoughts.

**1 Corinthians 2:13** <sup>13</sup> which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*.

- The Holy Spirit makes us spiritually alive to God by regeneration.

**Titus 3:5** <sup>5</sup> He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.

- The Holy Spirit assists us supernaturally to understand the thoughts and revelation of God.

**John 16:13** <sup>13</sup> "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

- The Spirit uses both means to reveal or glorify Christ to us

**John 16:14-15** <sup>14</sup> "He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose *it* to you. <sup>15</sup> "All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose *it* to you.

Today, by means of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Scripture, we can and will see this awesome spectacle of Christ's Deity at Lazarus' tomb. Not a miracle for its own sake, but for a much grander purpose.....The Revealing of God's Sovereign Power and Love.

**John 11:38-45** <sup>38</sup> So Jesus, again being deeply moved within, came to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. <sup>39</sup> 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." <sup>40</sup> Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" <sup>41</sup> So they removed the stone. Then Jesus raised His eyes, and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. <sup>42</sup> "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." <sup>43</sup> When He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." <sup>44</sup> 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." <sup>45</sup> Therefore many of the Jews who came to Mary, and saw what He had done, believed in Him.

## **God cares deeply about our human condition and suffering [38]**

**John 11:38** <sup>38</sup> So Jesus, again being deeply moved within, came to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone was lying against it.

**So Jesus, again being deeply moved within, came to the tomb:** Jesus is still upset. This is the same word used in verse 33. There he was angry to the point of wanting to rebuke the people for all the wailing and pseudo mourning that was going on. People were hired to come in and wail loudly and lament loudly at the grave. Those who came to pay respects joined in with this spectacle of hopelessness, darkness and death.

The word “deeply moved” means to be angry and about ready to issue a rebuke. These are folk who believe in the resurrection like Martha confirmed when she said....

**John 11:24** "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day."

But this “doctrine” that she believed in provided no comfort and no hope and certainly no life. The same is true of religion today. You can believe all you want that you are going to heaven but that will not ever get you there. You can believe that at some distant time in the future there will be a resurrection, but that will not help you now when death appears like it did for Martha and Mary.

Jesus was irritated to the point of wanting to rebuke them all. I believe He is angry with His church today for a similar reason. We tell people to believe in doctrines and say wrote prayers or to join something or sign something in order to get to heaven. These are shallow, externals that can do nothing for our inner man. When John saw Jesus on Patmos, His eyes were literally shooting fire as He prepared to address His Church.

**Revelation 1:13-14** <sup>13</sup> ..... in the middle of the lampstands *I saw* one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash. <sup>14</sup> His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire.

**Now it was a cave, and a stone was lying against it:** The scene is much like His own burial place will be. The stones were large and required several men to move them. The stones were often like a millstone so that they could be rolled across the entrance of the cave, sealing out animals and birds. Inside there were benches or shelves for the bodies would have been hewn into the rock walls. It is a pretty typical scene in Israel.

## **God’s care is most clearly revealed in times of trouble and trials [39-40]**

**John 11:39-40** <sup>39</sup> 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." <sup>40</sup> Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?"

Jesus was deeply troubled that people had no faith in God while being profoundly religious. The things they believed were of no comfort and no value in times of trial,

grief and death. After that flash of anger **Jesus wept** for the loss of his friend and the sting of death that Adam's hopeless race is shackled with. He did not wail or yell or carry on like a madman. As Jesus began to walk toward the tomb He simply burst into tears. Everyone could see that it was an entirely different thing than what they were doing. He was still upset and angry and stricken with true human sorrow when He arrived before the tomb....but now He is about to do what He purposed to do since eternity past. He is going to use this circumstance....this death....to put God on display, to reveal beyond any shadow of a doubt that He is the Son of that Living God and to create genuine belief or faith or trust in the people watching and reading. He says simply....."**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.": Always the pragmatic spokesperson, Martha states the obvious. "My brother has been in a tomb for four days and decomposition has already set in." Have you ever asked yourself what Martha thought the Lord was planning to do? She certainly did not think He was going to resurrect Lazarus, but she might have thought Jesus wanted to heal him. Remember that the Jews believed that the spirit of the departed stayed around for three days looking for a way to return to the body, but on the fourth day, when decomposition set in the human spirit departed permanently. So she instructs the Sovereign Omniscient Savior about the particular details of death and decomposition. "Lord.....He can't be healed.....He is really, really dead now."

**Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?":** Jesus answers her unasked question which was, "Lord? What do you think you are doing?" I am doing what I have intended to do. I am using this circumstance, over which I am in complete control, to put God on display to you. This exaltation, would also extend to Jesus Himself, because He is truly God the Son in human form.

This does not mean that this miracle was in any way dependent upon the faith of Martha or Mary. It was certainly not dependent upon Lazarus" He has been in the tomb for four days now! Listen to how the Bible commentator Leon Morris explains it:

***"For Jesus the "glory of God" was the one important thing. This means that the real meaning of what He would do would be accessible only to faith. All who were there, believers or not, would see the miracle. But Jesus is promising Martha a sight of the glory. The crowd would see the miracle, but only believers would perceive its real significance, the glory!"***

This is true of us today. Christianity is a mixed crowd today just like Judaism was in Christ's time. There are people who can read this story and hear it preached and they see nothing spectacular or glorious in it. Why? Simply because.... they do not trust Christ. They think He was not or could not have possibly been eternally existing with God before the world began. They do not think that He could have actually created the Universe and everything in it. They do not think it possible that the Omnipresent Creator could or even would enter the womb of a woman and be born as a living, flesh and blood man. They see Him instead as a good man, even a great man. He founded one of the world's great religions and taught moral principles. No one is going to say that Christ was a bad person! BUT....they do not believe anything Jesus said about Himself. About who He was or where He really came from. C.S. Lewis wrote about them in *Mere Christianity*.

*"I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to. ... Now it seems to me obvious that He was neither a lunatic nor a fiend: and consequently, however strange or terrifying or unlikely it may seem, I have to accept the view that He was and is God.*

Among the spectators at the tomb then, were those who enjoyed the miracles, partook of the healings, ate the freshly created bread and fish, but bristled and became angry when Jesus said things like:

**John 6:51** <sup>51</sup> "I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh."

**John 7:29** <sup>29</sup> "I know Him, because I am from Him, and He sent Me."

**John 8:58** <sup>58</sup> Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am."

### **God's care was most perfectly revealed in Jesus our Savior [41-42]**

**John 11:41-42** <sup>41</sup> So they removed the stone. Then Jesus raised His eyes, and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. <sup>42</sup> "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."

**So they removed the stone. Then Jesus raised His eyes, and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me:** Jesus prays to the Father before the open tomb. This, Jesus admits is for their benefit. He wants them to hear Him speak to the Father. He wants them to know that THE GOD that they say they believe in has sent Him into the world. This is Jesus' constant and unrelenting assertion. I have come from heaven and I was sent here by the Father. Or....

**John 10:30** <sup>30</sup> "I and the Father are one."

**"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.":** He re-asserts that God has sent Him. He wants to hear them speak to the Father....The One True and Eternal God whom they

claim to believe in. The entirety of Salvation and the Gospel swings on this hinge...."Who is Jesus Christ really?"

When Jehovah's Witness, Mormons, or Liberal Denominational Christians say they believe in Jesus that should be challenged. Christ isn't looking for people who believe He existed. Every person in Israel knew that Jesus existed. That is irrelevant and insufficient faith. Rather than believe in Jesus men and women must believe Jesus. They must trust what He says about the God and man and the way of salvation. They must believe they can trust His Word, His Love for them and His Sovereign power to do all that He has said He can and will do. So....let me ask you....if you had heard stood in the crowd and heard Jesus say...

**John 6:40** <sup>40</sup> "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."

**John 6:44** <sup>44</sup> "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day."

What would it have taken for you to believe a man who said something like this? Yes...He can heal. Yes He has power over nature, wind and water and gravity! BUT does He really have power over death? Can He really give life to the dead? Will He reassemble my dust and make me live physically again? What would it take to believe? Let's see what Christ was willing to do to help men believe His Words.

### **God's care is Sovereign over our physical and spiritual lives [43-44]**

**John 11:43-44** <sup>43</sup> When He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." <sup>44</sup> 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."

**When He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth.":** Jesus had been weeping quietly before they rolled away the stone. Then He was praying to the father when suddenly He shouts at the top of His voice. His words are simple....Literally...."Lazarus, come outside." The sheer volume was startling and now had the attention of anyone who had not been engaged until now.

He calls only Lazarus. In the future Paul taught the Thessalonians He will shout for all those who have died believing Him and trusting in Him.

**1 Thessalonians 4:16-17** <sup>16</sup> For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

John MacArthur notes that *"it has often been observed that the Lord's power is so great that had He not addressed Lazarus by name, all the dead in all the graves would have*

*come forth. One day in the future, that is precisely what will happen. Earlier in John's gospel Jesus said,*

**John 5:28-29** <sup>28</sup> *"Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, <sup>29</sup> and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.*

*Jesus' raising of Lazarus was a preview of the divine power He will display when He raises all the day on the last day."*

**CONCLUSION:** In a few minutes in a burial garden Jesus has dealt a lethal blow to every excuse of men. He has stripped away all pretense of ignorance or sincere unbelief and it has been replaced by complete and definitive polarization. By that I mean...Men are either for Christ having believed everything He said about Himself, or they are opposed to Him having rejected Him as the living God that He has shown Himself to be. This is exactly what He intended when He said...

**Luke 11:23** <sup>23</sup> "He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me, scatters.

There is no fence sitting....no ambivalence.....no neutrality about the person of Jesus Christ. It is not allowed. Jesus never intended it to be an option. Jesus so thoroughly revealed His deity here that no other possibilities exist. John summarizes...

**John 11:45** <sup>45</sup> Therefore many of the Jews who came to Mary, and saw what He had done, believed in Him.

What does this mean for you and me? Well even more than the resurrection of our bodies. What else has Jesus said that is absolute truth. What has he said about your marriage or job or attitude toward worry. What does He promise about financial care or food, clothing or shelter?

When death is conquered that leaves only life. It is eternal life that begins when we trust in Christ's words and works to us and for us. When Paul contemplated this truth the Spirit moved him to write this to the Corinthians...and to us....

**1 Corinthians 15:51-58** <sup>51</sup> Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, <sup>52</sup> in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. <sup>53</sup> For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. <sup>54</sup> But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory. <sup>55</sup> "O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?" <sup>56</sup> The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; <sup>57</sup> but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>58</sup> Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not *in vain* in the Lord.