



Jesus Raised Lazarus From the Dead

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Jesus loved His friends Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. When the sisters sent word that Lazarus was sick, Jesus did not come right away to help. For two days, Jesus remained where he was, and the disciples thought they knew why. Some people did not like Jesus or His teachings. Mary, Martha, and Lazarus lived in Bethany which was just a few miles from Jesus' enemies, so it was dangerous for Jesus to travel there. His enemies wanted Jesus dead. The disciples didn't believe that Lazarus would die, so when Jesus told them He was going to Judea after all, they were surprised. Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus has died. I'm glad for you that that I wasn't there so that you may believe. But let's go to him." When the disciples prepared to follow Jesus to Judea, they knew that they could face death, too.

By the time Jesus got there, Lazarus had been dead in the tomb for four days. That's a long time. It was such a long time that no one had any hope that Jesus could help Lazarus. When Martha saw Jesus, she said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn't have died." Jesus responded, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in Me, even if he dies, will live. Everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die -- ever. Do you believe this?" She answered, "Yes, Lord, I believe You are the Messiah, the Son of God, who comes into the world." Martha knew Jesus was powerful. She had seen Him do great miracles, but she didn't understand what Jesus was about to do.

Martha's sister Mary didn't understand either, and when she saw Jesus, she fell at his feet and wept. Jesus was deeply moved when He saw Mary's grief. When they took Jesus to the grave, Jesus also wept. His tears were different than those of Mary and Martha. Jesus knew He was about to call Lazarus out of the tomb. Jesus had power over death. Mary and Martha wept because they thought death had won, and they would never see their brother again. Jesus knew that Lazarus' death was just temporary. Still, Jesus saw how grief affected His friends, and He shared their sorrow.

"Take away the stone," He said. Then Jesus lifted His eyes and spoke to God. "Father, I thank you that you heard me. . ." And then with a loud voice, Jesus said, "Lazarus, come out." And he did! Lazarus, who had been dead for four days, walked out of the tomb.

We don't know what immediately happened next. We don't know how the sisters reacted when they saw their brother brought back to life, or how Lazarus described his experience to the people around them.

We DO know that when Lazarus left the tomb, many more people believed in Jesus, but some did not and were upset. Jesus' enemies began to plot how they could kill Jesus. They were afraid that the Roman soldiers would come, take the temple, and destroy their land. The high priest said, "... it is to your advantage that one man should die for the people rather than the whole nation perish." They would rather Jesus die than face the Romans.

The religious leaders thought they were in charge, but they weren't. Jesus already knew what was going to happen. He knew He would die as a sacrifice, the final Passover Lamb, and that His death would pay the price for our sin. It was all happening just as God had planned because God loved us too much to let our sin separate us from knowing His love. The death and resurrection of Jesus would ultimately bring glory to God and salvation to God's people! And now we see that Jesus has power over death and gives eternal life to those who believe in Him.