

Signs
Raising the Dead
John 11:1-44

August 20, 2017 pm

HDBC

He was born in 1460 during an era when all kinds of theories were circulating concerning the size, shape and nature of the planet. He caught the exploration bug, so in 1493 when Columbus sailed on his second voyage to America, **Juan was on board.**

Built settlements on modern day **Haiti** and **Dominican Republic**. He established a lucrative business selling produce and livestock to ships returning to Spain.

When it was reported that **gold had been discovered on Puerto Rico** he was commissioned to lead an expedition to find and secure it. He conquered Puerto Rico for Spain and was declared governor of the island from 1510 to 1512.

The Spanish crown encouraged him to continue searching for new lands. In that search he landed on what is now Florida, giving it the name it is still called. **Juan Ponce de Leon** was a Spanish explorer, conquistador and pioneer.

But he will forever be tied the myth of the Fountain of Youth.

There has always been a fascination with the hope of ending the aging process and remaining young. Death is the great enemy and a mythical fountain of youth holds out the hope of robbing death. But we all grow old and die.

Cryonics is the low temperature storage of the body after death, in hopes that medical technology will one day develop a process of resuscitation and restoration.

As of 2016, four facilities exist in the world to retain cryopreserved bodies; three are in the U.S., and one is in Russia. As of 2014, about 250 people have been cryogenically preserved in the U.S., and around 1,500 more have signed up to be preserved.

Death seems to be a constant cloud hanging over the head of every living being. It is always there, hovering, waiting, lurking. For some it is right around the corner. For others, it is way down the road. But all of us have an appointment with it. And none of us have any power to do anything about it. We will all die.

Sound hopeless? It is not. Jesus Christ has conquered death. He has rendered it powerless. Yes, the body still dies, but the soul lives continues to live. And even the body that is deposited into the ground will one day live again.

Greatest demonstration is the resurrection Christ Himself. He was the first to be resurrected, never to die again. But in bringing His friend, Lazarus back from the dead, he offered a glimpse of the great victory over death that was to come.

John's purpose in writing the story of Jesus' life is to show that Jesus was the long-awaited messiah. He was the divine, Son of God.

He demonstrates this by recording seven of the miracles of Jesus. He calls them **Signs**. Each one points to the deity of Christ. He is the son of God.

Jesus turned **water into wine** during a wedding in Cana.

Jesus **healed a man's son** who was sick with a serious fever.

Jesus **healed a man** who had been an invalid for 38 years.

Jesus **fed 5000 men** with a boy's lunch

Jesus **walked on water**.

Jesus **healed a blind man**.

Once again we find Jesus performing the ultimate act of healing - resurrection.

1. The Hesitation (1-17)

Jesus had 12 men who were apostles. They went where he went. They were his pupils. But beyond that circle there were **other friends**. One family in particular lived in Bethany. Lazarus, and his sisters, Mary and Martha. They were all deeply devoted to Jesus. In their home he was "at home."

Lazarus has become deathly sick. (1-3) They send for Jesus. One would have expected Jesus to drop everything and go straight there. But he hesitated two more days before beginning the journey (6). Why? He was more concerned with the glory of God than with the physical condition of a man (4)

This hesitation was a big deal. They all knew how close He was to this family. But the truth He was about to teach was an even **bigger deal**. God's timing is not always the same as our timing. Sometimes He hesitates to do what we think He should do. Whenever He does, it is for a good reason.

2. The Consolation (18-23)

So by the time he arrives, Lazarus is dead. From the perspective of Mary and Martha He was too late. Both ladies begin their conversation with Jesus by sharing their despair over the death of their brother and their frustration that Jesus had not been there to prevent it. **(21 and 32)**

Note verses 20-23

Consolation is just another word for encouragement. If someone comes to you when you are down and discouraged and puts arm around you, that's consolation. That's what Jesus does for Martha.

Note how he consoled her. ***He will live again.*** What Martha heard was ***there will be a resurrection day and then you will see your brother again.*** That is not exactly what He meant, so when she offered a word assuring Jesus that she knew about the resurrection, He used her comments as a springboard to a great declaration.

3. The Declaration (24-26)

Martha said, ***I know there is a resurrection and Lazarus will live in that day.*** Jesus responded with great declaration.

A. There is a Resurrection

When He declared that He was the resurrection, He was first of all declaring the reality of the resurrection.

400 years before Christ Socrates drank the poison hemlock. One of his disciples asked, "***Shall we live again?***" Socrates responded, "***I hope so, but no man can know.***" We shall live again, and Jesus knows it.

B. Jesus is in Charge of It

Yes, Martha there is a resurrection and the one who is in charge of it is standing beside you. I'm the author of life itself and I'm here.

Extra Note: There is a resurrection for every person. Every soul will live for eternity. But not every soul will live for eternity in Heaven. Some will spend it in Hell. Some Heaven, some Hell. What makes the difference? **Jesus!** He is the one who makes the difference. He is in charge of the resurrection. If you have a personal relationship with Him. If you are trusting Him with your soul, you have nothing to worry about.

4. The Compassion (27-36)

Key verse is verse 35. **Jesus Wept.** He was a man of great compassion. When he looked around and saw the hurt that was around Him, it caused great pain in His heart. He felt for them, and hurt with them. He is not some cold, mechanical God-man, but one who feels our pain with us.

5. The Resurrection (37-44)

Lazarus was dead! Been dead four days.

Note some things about the command of Jesus

A. Personal - *Lazarus*

Some have speculated that if Jesus had simply said “come forth” without specifying that He was speaking to Lazarus all the dead would have obeyed.

B. Clear - *Come forth.*

Come out of the grave. Leave the dead behind. Come to life. Jesus was calling the soul of Lazarus to leave Heaven, re-enter that corpse and then walk out of that tomb. **Talk about a shock.** Hear the words of Jesus reverberating through the halls of Heaven. Angel tells Lazarus that Jesus is calling. And what does he do? He obeys.

C. Liberating - *Unbind him, and let him go.*

He came out with the grave clothes. Get them off. He is no longer among the dead, but the living.

Amazing that no one interviewed him. I bet they did. Why no record? I think God gave Lazarus an important case of amnesia. If not, his life would have been miserable.

Picture of salvation. Lazarus was dead. Paul said we were *dead in our sins*. Lazarus was called to leave the grave. Christ calls us to place our faith in Him and follow Him, leaving behind the cemetery. Once he was brought back to life, grave clothes were no longer appropriate. There were some things that needed to be laid aside. Likewise, Paul has written that we are to lay aside the old garment of sin and flesh and to put on Christ.

Interesting how different people die. Not the cause, but how they approach it and more how they do it. How they handle the last few moments of life in the body.

Voltaire, the man who fought Christianity and tried to destroy it shared these words on his death bed.

I am abandoned by God and man. I would give ½ my wealth for 6 months to live. But I will die and go to Hell.

Newport, another atheist who fought God.

You need not tell me there is no God, for I know there is, and I'm in His angry presence. I know there is a Hell for I feel my soul slipping into its fires.

Christian Lady.

Glory, Glory, Glory, Glory, . . . Last 25 minutes of her life.

What makes the difference? JESUS