

God With Us

A Study of John's Gospel: "Lazarus, Come Out"

John 11:38-44

The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "*Unbind him, and let him go.*"— John 11:25

I. He Still Calls Many to Come Out

- a. It is important to remember that v.37 ends with the mourners questioning Jesus' power. Therefore, it was a tense situation when Jesus arrived at the tomb.
- b. The grave site (v.38) was usually formed from hollowed out caves, some had multiple horizontal or vertical vaults dug out from the main chamber. The entrance was sealed by a large circular stone.
- c. The point of this text is to demonstrate God's matchless power and grace that would only be eclipsed by Jesus' own resurrection.
- d. Decay had set in, but Jesus, who is the Resurrection and the Life, reversed the process.
- e. Surely it may have been easier to make a new man from the earth than to take a corrupted corpse and make it live again. This was the amazing miracle of divine power which the Lord performed.
- f. Here is our first lesson. The Lord can change the vilest of the vile into the most holy of the holy!
- g. No matter how far gone a person may be, they are not beyond the reach of the Lord's power and mercy. Physically or spiritually, He reaches to the lowest valley or the deepest pit.
- h. This text provides perfect illustration of Jesus' humanity and divinity for witnesses to see.
- i. The same voice they heard weeping over Lazarus also called forth life to overcome death.
 1. Jesus did not have to use a "loud voice." He cried out so that others could bear witness. It was a demonstration of God's power. Jesus could have whispered, looked or snapped His fingers.
- j. Imagine the reaction of witnesses as the body all wrapped in burial clothes rose out of the vault and shuffled toward them. Some of them probably ran away.
- k. When Lazarus came struggling forth, he was bound in the grave wrappings.
- l. Imagine the joy of Martha and Mary after seeing their brother walk.
- m. When Jesus gave the second command, *Unbind him, and let him go*, He invited the on-lookers to participate in and bear witness to the miracle.
 1. No Jew would touch decaying flesh. To obey the command they had to be convinced that Lazarus was alive, not to mention that Lazarus no longer had the stench of death.
- n. The question is sometimes asked, *When Jesus resurrected Lazarus, did he have a perfected body?*

II. Reflection and Application

- a. Lazarus had the strength to come out, but he needed help to be loosed from His grave clothes.
- b. Death was loosed, but not the linen; motion was given, but not the power to undress himself.
- c. Why were these bandages left?
- d. Jesus used this "planned miracle" to invite others into His work.
 1. The newborn life is so fragile like a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes.
 2. With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we assist those *new lives* to be loosed from doubt, fear, evil habits, and dead thoughts. (Eph 4:22-24)
- e. Who among us would want Lazarus to continue wearing his grave clothes? Do we see the saved walking with grave clothes, falling into evil habits?
- f. Let us tear off every bandage from *ourselves* that we may be ready to help others stay free.