Grief Gives Way to Glory

John 11:38-57

Introduction:

I. An Amazing Resurrection – 11:38-46

A. The Challenge of Death – 11:38-40

1. An Explanation from John – 11:38

a. The Emotions of Jesus – 11:38a --

“Then Jesus, again (v. 33) groaning in Himself, came to the tomb.”

“Groaning” – could be and probably is “angered”. Remember from 11:33 that: He created all things - John 1:3; Heb. 1:10-12. Satan had, from the beginning, brought ruin to that creation – animate and inanimate. Death was the result of his scheming.

b. The Eternality of the Grave – 11:38b

“It was a cave, and a ﻿﻿stone lay against it.”

The stone was not to keep the dead in; but to keep the living out. To touch anything inside meant defilement and required a sacrifice to become clean again. More than that, it had a note of finality. There was nothing any human could do. But, Jesus was not just any human.

2. Instruction from Jesus – 11:39

a. Concerning the Stone – 11:39

“Jesus said, “Take away the stone.”

Open up that defiling place? But it was a command from Jesus.

b. Concerning the Sister – 11:40

“Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, “Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been *dead* four days.” (40a)

I like the KJV translation, “he stinks,” but the New KJV is accurate as well. Martha may have thought that Jesus wanted to view the body of His friend one more time.

“Jesus said to her, “Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would ﻿﻿see the glory of God?” (40b)

Less than an hour ago, He told her. “He who believes in Me, though he may ﻿die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?” (11:26)

Did she believe? Listen to her reply: She said to Him, “Yes, Lord, ﻿﻿I believe that You are the Christ, (the throne of David) Son of God, (the throne of the universe) who is to come into the world.”

B. Conquest of Death – 11:41-44

1. A Harsh Move – 11:41a

“Then they took away the stone ﻿﻿*from the place* where the dead man was lying.”

Sometimes God’s moves in our lives seem harsh. Do we want to see – and have others see - the glory of God in our lives?

2. A Heavenly mediator – 11:41b-42

a. His Trust in God – 11:41b

“And Jesus lifted up *His* eyes and said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.”

This prayer to the Father was proper, but it did not have to be audible and visible. Jesus wanted them to see and hear that prayer

b. His Testimony to Man – 11:42

“And I know that You always hear Me, but ﻿﻿because of the people who are standing by I said *this,* that they may believe that You sent Me.”

He wants the people to believe that He is working this miracle in the power of the Father. (As He did all of His miracles).

Jesus had already said (in John 5:28-29), “Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will ﻿﻿hear His voice ﻿﻿﻿and come forth…”

3. The Historic Miracle – 11:43-44

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“Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth!” ﻿

Someone has suggested that, if Jesus had not said, “Lazarus,” every person in that grave and perhaps all graves, would have come forth. – So much for speculation!

﻿“And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with ﻿﻿grave clothes, and ﻿﻿his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Loose him, and let him go.” (44)

Jesus wanted them to see that this was, indeed, the same Lazarus who had died. He hadn’t just gone in the tomb and stayed for 4 days. Note that Jesus did not do what they, themselves, could do, loose him and let him go

See Peter in Acts 12 - an angel delivered Peter from prison. He opened the doors and gates, but he told Peter to put on his sandals and robe and follow him.

They did as they were instructed; they loosed him and let him go. What a miracle!

But just as with every revelation of Jesus: There are some who believe and others who see the same event and are hardened in their unbelief.

4. An Honest Move toward Him – 11:45

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“Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, ﻿﻿and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him.”

This miracle was the most dramatic of all and He leaves it to the last – just a few days before His death. Many did believe.

5. A Horrible Move Away from Him – 11:46

“But some of them went away to the Pharisees and ﻿﻿told them the things Jesus did.”

The record indicates that there were more who believed (many- Πολλοὶ) than those (some - τινὲς) who did not.

Note: The text does not say that these did not believe. The “but” could be translated as “and”. It is possible that they went to share the “good news.” In any case, the Pharisees did hear about the miracle and that many believed.

II. An Amazing Reaction – 11:47-57

A. The Jewish Priest – 11:47-54

1. His Associates – 11:47-48

a. What They Declared – 11:47

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“Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, ﻿﻿“What shall we do? For this Man works many signs.”

These were the signs that Messiah was supposed work. But these religious leaders should have rejoiced. Instead they feared.

b. What They Dreaded – 11:48

“If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.”

Their place could be their position or temple. That is the logical response they could expect. But if Jesus is really the Messiah, Son of God, what is there to worry about?

I hope that the leaders don’t think that way at the Second Coming. Of course, Jesus said they won’t see me again until they say, “Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord.” (Matt. 23:39)

2. His Advice – 11:49-52

a. His Position – 11:49a

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“And one of them, ﻿﻿Caiaphas, being high priest that year.”

Originally the high priest held his position for a lifetime, but the Romans were afraid of letting a man gain too much power. So the Romans appointed high priests at their convenience. Caiaphas had the office from ad 18 to 36.

b. His Pride – 11:49b

“said to them, “You know nothing at all,”

What he means is that you are looking only at the one possibility: what Rome will do. There is another one.

c. His Procedure – 11:50

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“nor do you consider that it is expedient for ﻿﻿us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.”

If we convince the Romans that Jesus is the enemy of Rome, They will kill Him and the nation will be saved. One man will die in place of the nation; A substitutionary death. However, the Jews did not escape the wrath of Rome. They kept following false shepherds until they were led into a war with Rome in A.D. 66-70 and the nation was destroyed.

d. His Prediction – 11:51-52

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“Now this he did not say on his own *authority;* but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation,”

Being the high priest at that time, unknown to himself, he was really making a prophecy by the authority of the office. God used unbelieving Caiaphas as His mouthpiece.

Note: God used a heathen king, Cyrus, for His purposes and called him, “My anointed” (Isaiah 45)

“and ﻿﻿not for that nation only, but ﻿﻿also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.” (11:52)

He went even farther and prophesied that He would die for God’s people outside the nation of Israel, both Jew and Gentile.

3. His Assault – 11:53-54

a. Motion was Passed – 11:53

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“Then, from that day on, they plotted to ﻿﻿put Him to death.”

So, who killed Jesus? The Jews did not do the deed; the Romans did. But the Jews were behind it all the way.

b. Murder Postponed – 11:54

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“Therefore Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there into the country near the wilderness, to a city called ﻿﻿Ephraim, and there remained with His disciples.”

Ephraim was about 15 miles north of Bethany. It was near the wilderness in case escape was necessary. It is now only a few days until Passover when Jesus will die for the entire world.

B. The Jewish Passover – 11:55-57

1. The Pilgrimage – 11:55

﻿﻿“And the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went from the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to ﻿﻿purify themselves.”

2. The People – 11:56﻿

“Then they sought Jesus, and spoke among themselves as they stood in the temple, “What do you think—that He will not come to the feast?”

They hoped to see Jesus, but from the form of their question, they thought that they might not. He went to most of the feasts during His ministry.

3. The Priests – 11:57

“Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a command, that if anyone knew where He was, he should report *it,* that they might ﻿﻿seize Him.”

The word is out. The Jews are going to do everything they can to get Jesus crucified.