

Remnant Life Church
April 18, 2021
“Supernatural: The Work of Jesus
The Raising of Lazarus”
Part I
John 11:1-10

We are working our way through some of the supernatural events that surrounded Jesus’ ministry

- Specifically, what can we learn from what Jesus did as we are moving into a better understanding of the supernatural

We talked several weeks ago before Holy week that the supernatural...

- ...is the created realm of God, not of satan
 - Both exist there but it is the creation of God, not satan
 - That means that we do not need to be fearful
 - But we also need to cut off the filth and evil-propaganda of Hollywood that saturates the minds of the young and the general public
- ..is not a show or designed to feed our emotion – it has a heavenly purpose
 - Now, there is a emotion when the supernatural is involved, but it is not what is most important
 - Jesus had compassion on the people and wanted to meet their needs
 - The supernatural was a means to accomplish that
- ...is a lesson in faith
 - The disciples often missed this in their time with Jesus
 - But that did not prevent Jesus from doing what needed to be done
- ...gives glory to God and God alone
 - Not even Jesus took credit for what was happening
 - Any glory ever given to the one being used by God is dangerously and wrongly misplaced

This morning we look at yet another very familiar miracle of Jesus – the raising of Lazarus from the dead

- It is a robust and full story taking up the first 44 verses of the 11th chapter of John
- Because there is much of the supernatural to examine here, we are going to take our time moving from part to part of the account

Chapter 11 of John’s Gospel marks a shift in the ministry of Jesus

- It signals the end of His public ministry and begins a brief time of private ministry leading into the final, or Holy Week
- Because of the power of Lazarus’ resurrection and the threat that He was to the religious leaders, Jesus could no longer move about in public
- Instead, He focused His time on the disciples as they withdrew from Bethany to a region near the desert to a place called Ephraim (**John 11:54**)
 - Ephraim was a village named for the second son of Joseph and an Egyptian wife given to him by Pharaoh

- It was located in Jesus' time about 13 miles northeast of Jerusalem in the Jordan Valley
- Provided distance between them and a new plot to kill Jesus

READ – John 11:1-44

This particular miracle has served historically as a flash-point for biblical scholars

- The reason for that is that it forces the reader to come down on one side or the other regarding the supernatural
- There is no middle ground
 - Either you do not believe in the spiritual supernatural, meaning you do not accept this account as historical
 - Or you do hold to the literal truth of the account which then establishes the path for the resurrection of Jesus Christ, in and of itself the greatest miracle of them all

To do justice to this important event means we must break it down into segments

The first segment is **John 11:1-10**

Verse 1-2

- The family at the center of this account are 2 sisters and a brother who Jesus is very close to
- We know this because Mary and Martha are referenced at other times in Jesus' ministry in the Synoptic Gospels
 - For this to be true is to imply that they were disciples of Jesus
 - Yes, there were women disciples
 - As you know, disciple is not an office or title, it simply means follower
- The town where they live, Bethany, is on the east side of the Mount of Olives less than 2 miles from Jerusalem
- It also lies on the road to Jericho so it was heavily traveled with many transients moving through
 - Especially at this time as the Feast of Passover is approaching
 - 100's of thousands coming

Verse 3

- This now gives added weight to the relationship between Jesus and these three
- "The one you love is sick"
- Jesus' personal relationships are all but ignored in the Gospels
 - I believe the reason for that is because the demonstration of love for others, was not being seen in how Jesus treated His friends, but how He dealt with those who came against Him
 - So, this one-verse reference to the friendship between Lazarus and Jesus is rare

Verse 4

- Jesus said, *"This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it."*

- What is the glory Jesus is speaking here?
- Most, when reading this, focus on the first line where Jesus says that the sickness of Lazarus will not end in death
 - Note that Jesus does not say the sickness is not fatal
 - He is saying that it will not, ultimately, lead to death
- Jesus insists it is for God's glory
 - Again, look carefully at how Jesus says this
 - He does not say that God will be glorified but that it is for His glory
 - What is the difference?
 - Going back to **John 9** helps us to see more clearly what Jesus is saying
 - **John 9:1-3** – *As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.*
 - Like the blind man, the death of Lazarus is for God's glory and that will be seen in the work of His Son
 - God the Father's self-disclosure was to take place then, as it does today, through His Son
 - God the Father and God the Son are mutually committed to the other's glory.
 - For they are, as Jesus said, one
- Why is this so important a point to understand?
 - Because, as we reviewed at the beginning, a primary characteristic of the supernatural realm of God is that it all brings glory to God and God alone
 - Again, that is why we should live in expectation of the supernatural, not fear
- While the glorification of God will take place in the power of Lazarus' resurrection, the supreme glorification of God is still yet to come in a second resurrection, that of Jesus Christ

Verses 5-6

- These two verses, at first reading, would seem to be in opposition to each other
 - If Jesus loved this family, why would He delay the start of His return by two days?
 - There is an interpretive license here that causes the reader to read something that was not intended by the author
 - In the original language, verses 5 and 6 are connected in thought but not in the way we read this morning
 - In the NIV – verse 6 begins with the word "Yet" which connects it to the preceding verse – there is no literary defense for this decision
 - By including the word "yet," it changes verse 6 to begin, "In spite of this.."
 - By doing that, the translator sets those two verses into opposition with one another rather than what John recounts