

We come this morning, for the fifth time to Jesus and Lazarus, and this time to the actual miracle itself—there are basically three scenes in this passage—Jesus talks to Martha, His Father, and Lazarus, or else, there is a sense in which we behold Christ in all three of His offices—in speaking to Martha (we see Him as prophet), in speaking to His Father (we see Him as priest), and in speaking to Lazarus (we see Him as king)—prophet, priest, and king...

- I. Jesus Talks to Martha as Prophet—vv38-40
- II. Jesus Talks to His Father as Priest—vv41-42
- III. Jesus Talks to Lazarus as King—vv43-44

I. Jesus Talks to Martha as Prophet—vv38-40

1. We learned last week, having beheld everyone weeping, our Savior asked, v34—"Where have you laid him? They said to Him, Lord, come and see..."
2. Then in v35 John records for us that Christ wept in rout to the tomb, and in vv36-37 he describes the Jews reaction...
3. V38—"Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it...."
4. Here we find our Savior at the tomb—it was common practice for the Jews to burry their dead in caves or holes in the side of mountains...
5. These caves were then covered with a large stone—these stones were intended to keep things out and things in...
6. They were intended to keep vandals and wild animals out—and, they were intended to keep the stench (smell) in...
7. V39—"Jesus said, Take away the stone. 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..."
8. V40—"Jesus said to her, Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?..."
9. There is some debate as to what our Savior meant by—"Did I not say to you"—He likely is thinking of verse 4...
10. V4—"This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it..."
11. Our Savior of course said this to Martha through the messengers, that Mary and Martha sent to Him four days earlier...
12. Now—the first thing that needs clarifying is—Jesus does NOT mean, Martha's faith was necessary for the miracle...
13. Our Savior is NOT saying—If you believe Martha, I will perform this miracle, but if you do not believe, then I won't...
14. No—our Savior was going to perform the miracle regardless—her faith was not the cause of this final sign miracle...
15. But, our Savior meant—to the degree that Martha believed, she would be able to behold the glory of God in the miracle...
16. In other words—faith enables us to behold the glory of God—it opens the eyes to who God is and what He does...
17. V40—"Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God"—believing is seeing...
18. The Greek word rendered "glory" refers to the—"splendour, grandeur, majesty, or magnificence" of something...
19. The other night at my house we had a discussion of ducks, and how beautiful, especially the male ones are...
20. We could even say, they are glorious—they are grand and majestic—but how much truer is this of God Himself...

21. Thus—the glory of God is the revelation or manifestation of His glorious characteristics, perfections or attributes...
22. A.W. Pink—"The glory of God is the revelation of His excellencies, the visible display of His invisible perfections..."
23. Thus, our Savior means—if Martha believes, she would behold the majesty of God's character in the miracle...
24. Or else put another way—she would behold the glory of God in the very character and activity of Christ Himself...
25. Now—this goes back to what I said last week—in the moral actions of Christ, we behold the character of God...
26. In this miracle—Martha would behold the glory of God's power, love, mercy, and wisdom—the miracle was a public display of His glory...
27. In the actions of Christ, the glory of God is made known—we behold the glory of God in the person of Christ...
28. Observation—Faith enables us to behold the glory of God—faith is the eyes of the soul, opened by God, to behold His glory...
29. Now remember, faith doesn't make God glorious in Himself—He and His works are glorious—faith only enables to see it...
30. For example—think of a man who was born on the coast of the Pacific Ocean—and yet, he was born blind...
31. Thus—although the Pacific Ocean is glorious, with its beautiful sun rises and sun sets—he has never seen one...
32. This is like native man, who is born spiritually blind, and thus unable to see anything beautiful in God or His works...
33. This of course, doesn't mean there isn't anything beautiful in God and His works, man just isn't able to see it...
34. But this radically changes when God gives man the gift of faith—for then His spiritual eyes are upon to reality...
35. Now—man is able to behold the glory of God—and he desires to behold God's glory with increased clarity...
36. Ex.33:18—"And Moses said, Please, show me Your glory"—give me an increased sight of Your glorious perfections...
37. Ps.63:1-2—"O God, You are my God; early will I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water. So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, to see Your power and Your glory..."
38. Thus—Christians are those who have had the eyes of their souls enlightened, and they now behold His glory...
39. [1] In creation, Ps.19:11—"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork..."
40. Isn't it amazing, how mankind by nature can live within creation, and yet fail to behold the glory of God in it...
41. Oh he may see things in it that interests him (and even amazes him)—but, he fails to behold the glory of God...
42. But—this of course is radically changed when his eyes are opened—for now he beholds God's glory in creation...
43. [2] In redemption—this is even more tragic than creation, for man fails to see anything glorious in Christ Himself...
44. Lk.2:13-14—"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men..."
45. 2Cor.4:6—"For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ..."
46. [3] In providence—this refers to God's continued work in governing creation, and in accomplishing redemption...

47. When your eyes are closed—you fail to behold His glory in the way in which He orders and governs your life...
48. I really fear, many Christians fail to properly look for God's glory, as it's displayed in His work of providence...
49. For example—just think how the glory of God's wisdom is evidenced throughout this seventh and final miracle...
50. Our Savior waits two days before He comes to Bethany, by then His friend Lazarus has been dead four days...
51. Mary and Martha are both full of sorrow—and yet for all that, they would witness perhaps His greatest miracle...
52. Isa.55:8-9—"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways, says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts..."

II. Jesus Talks to His Father as Priest—vv41-42

1. V41—"And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. 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..."
2. He thanked His Father for having heard His prayer—He then confirms His confidence that He is always heard...
3. [1] WHAT He prayed—"And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You always hear Me..."
4. Now—admittedly, we are not told specifically what He prayed for—He merely thanks His Father for having heard...
5. And yet, within the context—I trust the purpose of His prayer is evident—He prayed for Lazarus' resurrection...
6. Now—before I go further let me clarify—that as God, He could have raised Lazarus from the dead by Himself...
7. Remember, He just said of Himself—"I AM the resurrection and the life"—He has the power to raise the dead...
8. But—our Savior prays to His Father as the GodMan, the Messiah, the Christ—Mediator between God and man...
9. Remember—our Savior achieved our redemption as the GodMan—in perfect obedience and dependence upon His Father...
10. That means—He lived a perfect life (as GodMan), He died (as GodMan), He rose (as GodMan), and He intercedes (as GodMan)...
11. No person can mediate between God and man, except for a GodMan—only a GodMan can reconcile God and man...
12. Thus—all that Christ does as Mediator, He does as the GodMan, who was and is, dependant upon His Father...
13. As a result—there is a very real sense in which, Lazarus' resurrection was the result of our Savior's mediation...
14. Notice—our Savior speaks as if this resurrection has already happen, because He knows His Father heard Him...
15. [2] WHY He prayed—"but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me..."
16. That is, our Savior said these words verbally and audibly, for the good of Martha, Mary, the disciples, and Jews...
17. Our Savior wanted every person to know—that He was acting in the capacity of the Messiah, sent from the Father...
18. Repeatedly, throughout His ministry, our Savior has claimed that He came from heaven and was sent from God...

19. [a] Equality with God—our Savior wanted those around Him to know that He was His Father's eternal Son...
20. To be "sent by the Father" necessarily means—He previously existed with the Father, in heaven, for all eternity...
21. [b] Authority from God—to be sent from God, necessarily means—He came into this world, on a divine mission...
22. It implies the incarnation and His addition of a human nature—He is the Messiah, commissioned by God Himself...
23. 1Kings 18:36-37—"And it came to pass, at *the time of* the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You *are* God in Israel and I *am* Your servant, and *that* I have done all these things at Your word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You *are* the LORD God, and *that* You have turned their hearts back *to You* again..."
24. The fire from heaven, which was a mighty miracle, was intended to validate both God and Elijah as His prophet...
25. Observation—We find in Christ a perfect Intercessor—One who is perfectly suited to mediate between God and man...
26. Before I go further, let me briefly remind you, that our Savior's priestly activity is twofold—oblation and intercession...
27. That is—as our High Priest, He must first offer a perfect sacrifice, and then plead its merit, before the Father...
28. This was illustrated in the OC, when the High Priest took blood beyond the veil, with incense ascended upward...
29. This of course typified Christ returning to heaven, having shed His own blood, and then praying for His people...
30. But—it's important to remember, Christ functioned as a High Priest throughout His earthly ministry as well...
31. In fact, here in our passage we have a little preview of what His intercessory work entails—what it includes...
32. Notice—He looks up to heaven—this was typified in that the incense ascended heavenward—our Savior is interceding...
33. [a] His prayers are fervent, v38—"Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it..."
34. Now—if you recall last week I mentioned, in looking at v33, this word "groan" literally means—"to be deeply moved..."
35. In other words—our Savior's human soul was moved with great emotion, as He was praying to His Father...
36. Put another way—our Savior's prayers are fervent—they are ardent prayers—prayers fuelled with sympathy...
37. Our Savior's prayers were informed or influenced, by the circumstances of His people—they were hearty prayers...
38. And brethren, things have NOT changed—Christ still prays with great affection and sympathy for His people...
39. Thomas Watson—"Though He has left His passion, yet not His compassion. An ordinary lawyer is not affected with the cause he pleads, nor does he care which way it goes; it is profit that makes him plead, not affection; but Christ intercedes feelingly; and that which makes Him intercede with affection is, it is His own cause which He pleads. He has shed His blood to purchase life and salvation for the elect; and if they should not be saved, He would lose His purchase..."
40. [b] His prayers are constant—this is to say, Christ never ceases to make intercession for His beloved people...
41. Kersten—"As the high priest of the OC carried the names of the twelve tribes of Israel on his breastplate and on his shoulders, so Christ the true High Priest carries His elect upon His heart, remembering them night and day. he does not cease to pray for them, to demand of His Father their preservation and salvation..."

42. Heb.7:25—"Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them..."
43. [c] His prayers are effectual, v42—"And I know that You always hear Me"—His prayers are always answered...
44. Luis Berkhof—"The intercessory prayer of Christ is a prayer that never fails. At the grave of Lazarus the lord expressed the assurance that the Father always hears Him. his intercessory prayers for His people are based on his atoning work; He has merited all that he asks, and therein lies the assurance that those prayers are effective. They will accomplish all that He desires..."

III. Jesus Talks to Lazarus as King—vv43-44

1. V43—"Now when He had said these things, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he who had died came out..."
2. Now—here under this final heading, I want to suggest the raising of Lazarus was—a miracle, a parable, and a prophecy...
3. [1] It was a MIRACLE—this I trust is evident—our Savior literally raised Lazarus from the dead, by His Word...
4. This is in part why our Savior waited four days, so that it would be evident to everyone that he was truly dead...
5. Robert Murray McCheyne—"The ear of Lazarus was dead and cold, the limbs stiff and motionless, the eyelids closely sealed, and the cold damp of death lay on his forehead; the grave-clothes were round him, and his face bound with a napkin, when the sudden cry, 'Lazarus, come forth,' awoke the dead. It pierced down into the deep cave, and through the close damp napkin into the dead ear. The heart began suddenly to beat, and the warm current of life to flow through the dead man's veins. The vital heat and the sense of hearing came back. It was a well-known voice. 'The voice of my Beloved,' he would say, 'he calls my name.' So he arose: 'And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot, with grave-clothes..."
6. Now—I want here to remind you—that in commanding Lazarus' body to come forth, He also had to command his soul...
7. Where did Lazarus' soul go for those four days—we are not told, but I assume it went to be with the LORD...
8. But wherever his soul was, it was reunited to his body, and he, body and soul, came out of that tomb ALIVE...
9. A.W. Pink—"Here was public proof that the Lord Jesus had absolute power over the material world and over the real of spirits. At His bidding a soul that had left its earthly tenement was called back from the unseen to dwell once more in the body..."
10. [2] It was a PARABLE—that is, the literal miracle was intended to illustrate the spiritual resurrection of a dead sinner...
11. That is—Lazarus' physical resurrection, was an illustration or picture of spiritual resurrection, or of regeneration...
12. Viewed from this perspective, let me suggest three things—regeneration is necessary, powerful, and liberating...
13. [a] Regeneration is necessary—to "regenerate" means to "re-become"—which implies natural and spiritual death...
14. In regeneration God infuses new and spiritual life into the soul—it awakes the soul from its spiritual tomb...
15. Thus, regeneration is an act of God, whereby the sinner is acted upon—the only thing he contributes is moral stench...
16. Eph.2:1—"And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins"—this is why regeneration is necessary...
17. [i] Spiritual death means separation from God, this is what death means—separation (physical death is the soul's separation from its body, and spiritual death is the soul's separation from its Maker)...
18. [ii] Spiritual death means we lack all ability to change our situation—we are without strength as well as desire...

19. [iii] Spiritual death means we are in a state of moral decay—to put it plainly—there is a moral stench upon us...
20. Now—I don't need to be overly graphic, but remember, Lazarus while in the tomb is a picture of native man...
21. Man by nature is morally filthy and thus offensive to God (and good men)—"There throat is an empty tomb (Rom.3:13)..."
22. That is—when man opens his mouth, all forms of moral stench comes out, just as it would an opened tomb...
23. [b] Regeneration is powerful—by this I mean, it's accomplished through the mighty voice of Christ in His word...
24. V43—"He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth"—He spoke with an authoritative and commanding voice...
25. Here—I want to remind you of another theological term in addition to regeneration, and that is effectual calling...
26. This always takes place in connection to regeneration—Christ calls or summons His people through His word...
27. Though this call or summons comes to all men through the gospel, it comes with life giving power to some...
28. Again, this is illustrated in Lazarus—"Lazarus, come forth"—notice our Savior calls His beloved sheep by name...
29. Thus—in calling His sheep, our Savior accompanies that call with the regenerating work of His Holy Spirit...
30. This regeneration enables the dead soul to hear and obey that summons—"And he who had died came out..."
31. [c] Regeneration is liberating—by this I mean, those raised from the dead, are liberated from sin's bondage...
32. V44—"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..."
33. My friends, to put it plainly—God never saves anyone from spiritual death, who He leaves BOUND IN SIN...
34. The effectual call is Christ summoning the sinner to come to Him for salvation from sin's penalty and power...
35. Let me put it this way—every person to whom Christ says "come forth" He also says "loose him, and let him go..."
36. Oh my dear friends—surely this is good news for poor sinners who are bound tight in their rags of their sins...
37. This is a tragic description of native man—"bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, and his face wrapped with a cloth..."
38. [3] It was a PROPHECY—by this I mean, the raising of Lazarus foretold the future bodily resurrection at the last day...
39. Just as Christ commanded Lazarus' to come forth from that grave, so every person will be raised from the grave...
40. Just as Christ raised the very same body that was previously dead and decomposing, so He shall raise these very same bodies...
41. Furthermore, the same powerful voice that raised Lazarus from the dead, will raise all men at that last Day...
42. 1Thess.4:16—"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first..."