

## John Lesson # 12 Articles

Lazarus represents the salvation of the lost sinner in seven ways.

**I. He Was Dead (11:14)** The unsaved person is not just sick; he or she is spiritually dead (Eph. 2:1–3; Col. 2:13). When a person is physically dead, she does not respond to such things as food, temperature, or pain. When a person is spiritually dead, he does not respond to spiritual things. She has no interest in God, the Bible, Christians, or church until the Holy Spirit begins to work in her heart. God warned Adam that disobedience would bring death (Gen. 2:15–17)—physical death (the separation of the soul from the body) and spiritual death (the separation of the soul from God). Revelation 20:14 calls hell the second death, that is eternal death. What sinners dead to God’s ways need is not education, medicine, morality, or religion; they need new life in Jesus Christ.

**II. He Was Decayed (11:39)** There are three resurrections recorded in the Gospels, apart from that of our Lord Himself. Christ raised a twelve-year-old girl who had died, a young man who had been dead several hours, and an older man who had been in the tomb four days (John 11). They present a picture of three different kinds of sinners:

(1) *The little girl.* Children are sinners, but open corruption has not yet set in.

(2) *The young man.* Young people are sinners whose outward corruption begins to show.

(3) *The older man.* Adults are sinners whose definite outward corruption can be seen.

The point is that all three were dead. One person cannot be “more dead” than another. The only difference lay in the degree of decay. Is this not true of sinners today? The immoral church member is not “decayed” like the person on skid row, but he is still dead.

**III. He Was Raised and Given Life (11:41–44)** The sisters’ Jewish friends could only sympathize and weep; it took Christ to give the man life. How did Christ give him life? By the power of His word. This is the way He raised all three dead people mentioned above (see John 5:24 & Eph. 2:1–10). Why did Christ raise Lazarus? Because He loved him (v. 5 and v. 36) and because it brought glory to God (v. 4). This is why He has saved us. We deserve to die and go to hell, but because of His great love, He rescued us. (Eph. 1:3–14; 2:1–10.) Keep in mind that salvation is not a set of rules; it is life. This life is a Person—Jesus Christ. When dead sinners hear the voice of the Son of God (the Word) and believe, they are given eternal life (John 5:25). To reject that Word is to be dead forever.

**IV. He Was Loosed (11:44)** Lazarus was bound hand and foot and so could not free himself. The believer is not to be bound by the grave clothes of the old life, but should walk in the freedom of the new life. Read carefully Col. 3:1–17 to learn how the Christian is to “put off” the grave clothes and “put on” the “grace clothes” of the new life. It is a poor testimony for a Christian to carry with him the things of the old life.

**V. He Witnessed to Others (11:45)** We see that Lazarus caused quite a stir in the area! People saw him and believed in Christ! In fact, he was a walking miracle, just as every Christian ought to be (Rom. 6:4). The great crowd that gathered on Palm Sunday came not only because of Jesus, but also because of Lazarus. In 12:11 we are told that Lazarus was causing people to trust Christ, but this kind of witness is the privilege and duty of every Christian.

**VI. He Fellowshiped with Christ (12:1–2)** In looking ahead to 12:1–2 we see Lazarus sitting at the table with Christ, feasting with Him. This is the rightful place for the Christian who has been “raised ... and made ... to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:5–6). By spending time with Christ, Lazarus was showing his gratitude for Christ’s mercy and love. He learned lessons from His Word and received new power to walk with Christ and to witness. The miracle of salvation gives us eternal life, but we must fellowship with Christ daily to be able to grow in the spiritual life. The entire family at Bethany demonstrates what the Christian life is like. Mary is always found at Jesus’ feet, listening to His Word. Martha is a picture of service; she is found busily doing something for Christ. Lazarus speaks of testimony, a daily walk that leads others to Christ. These three practices must be in our Christian experience: worship (Mary), work (Martha), and walk (Lazarus).

**VII. He Was Persecuted (12:10–11)** The Jews hated Lazarus because he convinced others of Christ’s deity (12:10–11). Many of the chief priests were Sadducees who did not believe in the resurrection, and Lazarus was living proof that the Sadducees were wrong. Had the priests not been overruled by God, they would have put an extra cross on Calvary for Lazarus. (“Yes, and all that desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution”—2 Tim. 3:12 [NKJV].) Satan always fights a living miracle that testifies on God’s behalf.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1992). *Wiersbe's expository outlines on the New Testament* (pp. 237–243). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.