

BIBLE EMPOWERED TEACHING

Series: Jesus Christ The Son Of God

Lesson 4

JESUS IS POWER!

In Romans 1, Paul wrote of all those who had lived since the beginning of time and before the cross. He made a very profound argument that John also used when he inscribed his historical record of Jesus. Paul's argument was that God will be just in final judgment when His wrath "*is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness*" (Rm 1:18). God will be proved just "*because that which is known about God is manifest within them*" (Rm 1:19). God is the Father of our spirits, and thus being the Father of that part of us that is created after His image, "*they [the ungodly] should seek the Lord, if perhaps they might grope after Him and find Him, though He is not far from every one of us*" (At 17:27).

From the beginning of time, God revealed "*the invisible things of Him since the creation of the world,*" which things, "*are clearly seen*" in that which has been created (Rm 1:20). But because the ungodly refused to follow their instinctive inclinations to reach out for a moral guide that is above man, they will be "*without excuse*" when condemned in final judgment (Rm 1:20). The evidence of God that was revealed through the physical world was sufficient to relieve God from any accountability for judging fairly those who refused to have Him in their minds.

This brings us to the time when God in eternity revealed Himself through the incarnate Son of God in the first century. The God who revealed Himself, both in nature and through the natural instinct of the human being to seek for a Higher Power, was manifested in the likeness of men (Jn 1:1,14; see Ph 2:5-9). This brings us to the purpose for which John wrote the gospel of John. At the conclusion of John's document on Deity, he identified both the audience to whom he wrote, and the reason for recording the advent of the incarnational God the Son into the material world He created (Cl 1:16).

*And Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples that are not written in this book. **But these are written so that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life through His name** (Jn 20:30,31).*

We would assume that John wrote an apologetical document concerning who the man Jesus was in order to give all information necessary for all who hear of Jesus to respond to Him. We would not assume that John's audience was composed of all those who already believed. He wrote "*that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.*" His defense document was written, not for the purpose of keeping believers faithful, **but to bring unbelievers into the family of believers.**

We thus have an inspired platform of signs upon which to interpret the nature of the content of John. It is a platform of evidence upon which we would conclude that this Jesus of

Nazareth was the incarnate Word who was formerly with the Father, but then came into flesh of man (Jn 1:1,14). We would thus view the book of John as a book of Christian evidences that are presented for the purpose of creating belief in the minds of those who do not know who Jesus is. It is for this reason that this book has been commonly referred to as the "Gospel of Belief."

In the preceding statement of John 20:30,31, John said that "*Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples.*" We thus deduct two conclusions concerning his purpose for writing. First, his purpose was not as Matthew, Mark and Luke. John had a concise purpose. He sought to write an apologetic that Jesus was the incarnate Son of God.

Second, John used only **seven** of the signs of Jesus to lead us to the conclusion that Jesus was the Son of God. We thus come to a marvelous conclusion: It does not take a multitude of miracles to prove that Jesus is the Son of God. And possibly, and more important, it does not take a continuation of miracles throughout history in order to maintain one's faith that Jesus is the Son of God. In fact, the very nature of John's recording only seven miracles (signs) of Jesus assumes that if one has the document of John, he would never again need any confirming miracles to prove that Jesus was the Son of God. If by chance a particular religious group did seek to depend on a supposed continual miraculous confirmation that Jesus was the Son of God, then this would be a denial of the purpose for which John wrote. It would marginalize the very book of John, and witness to the fact that those who continue to need miracles for faith have a difficult time with their faith.

If John recorded signs that Jesus worked in order to produce faith in Jesus, then we must assume that the Holy Spirit presents the book of John to us as sufficient to produce faith. If we need more miracles to believe, then we are saying that the book of John is insufficient to produce the faith that is pleasing to God.

We conclude that the seven miraculous signs that were recorded by John are sufficient to produce a faith that is adequate for salvation. We will not, therefore, call on God for more confirming miracles, though God continues to work in our lives. But working in our lives within the natural order of things was not the confirming signs that John provided in his document. John focused on those miraculous events that were already perceived by the people to be God working outside the natural order of the physical world.

The fact that the seven signs of Jesus that John recorded were out of the ordinary occurrence of natural laws is what classifies them as "signs." They were signals of Someone who was beyond this world. We would not, therefore, nullify the seven signs of John by saying that such signs were only the natural occurrence of the physical laws of nature. The fact that John records these particular signs as evidence that Jesus was the Son of God validates the fact that what

Jesus did through these signs was out of the ordinary, and thus, He was no ordinary man.

God expects of us, as He did of those before the coming of Jesus, to accept these seven miracles as sufficient proof to conclude *“that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God”* (Jn 20:31). We conclude as Nicodemus when he came to Jesus in the night: *“Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him”* (Jn 3:2).

A. Evidence of changing water into wine (Jn 2:1-22):

This miracle was the first of Jesus’ signs in Cana of Galilee (Jn 2:11). The occasion was a marriage feast to which He and the disciples had been invited. Having accepted the invitation of those who were to be married, Jesus, and His mother, were present with His disciples. The occasion for the miracle was when Jesus’ mother said to Him, *“They have no wine”* (Jn 2:3). Since Jesus responded to His mother with the statement, *“My hour has not yet come,”* it may be that this was a preemptive sign that His mother expected Him to do. At least Jesus answered His mother in a manner that she expected something from Him in order to solve the problem. So after His kind correction of her misunderstanding concerning His ministry, and without any showmanship, Jesus proceeded to provide the wine.

Regardless of the occasion, or the reasons for revealing His power, John used this sign to encourage the people to start thinking about who He was. In order to begin their wonder concerning who He was, they had to be initiated into the supernatural realm from where He originated.

There were six water pots available, the contents of which were used by the guests for cleansing for a feast (Jn 2:6; see Mk 7:1-9). Since the water had already been used by the guests for washing, Jesus asked that they again be filled with water. Once they were filled, Jesus instructed, *“Now draw some out ...”* (Jn 2:8). When the master of the feast tasted the contents, he excitedly proclaimed that the wine was superior to that which was commonly served at the beginning of a feast.

The master of the feast was unaware of the circumstances and origin of the wine that he classified as superior. He did not realize that the turning of the water into wine was accomplished by Jesus, and that the change was **instantaneous**. There were no dramatic performances on the part of Jesus in order to call attention to what He had just done. There was no ecstatic behavior on the part of those who witnessed the miracle. The sign was simply done, and the result reaped the desired response: *“This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory. And His disciples believed in Him”* (Jn 2:11).

If the disciples believed with only the one sign of turning water into wine, **then we would conclude that it takes only one valid confirming miracle to produce faith**. John wants us to understand that a valid miracle is enough to confirm the presence of the supernatural. One valid miracle is more evidential than a host of fake miracles.

For the disciples, this was only the beginning of an adventure of amazement that would continue for over three years. They would learn that this Jesus they followed was

the Master over the elements of the world that He had created (See Cl 1:16). In the future, they would see greater things. They would eventually arrive at the conclusion that the Son of God was truly in their presence. By the time John takes his readers to the resurrection of Lazarus, he has prepared our minds to accept the fact that the Father was working powerfully through the incarnate Son in order to glorify both Himself and the Son.

B. Evidence of a nobleman’s son (Jn 4:46-54):

The occasion for this miraculous “outreach” of Jesus reached over a distance of about twenty kilometers (about sixteen miles). At the time, Jesus was in Cana, but the nobleman’s son was in Capernaum (Jn 4:46). When the desperate father *“heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and implored Him”* (Jn 4:47).

Only the father of a son who is near death could understand the desperation of this father. The son *“was at the point of death.”* He thus pleaded with Jesus, *“Sir, come down before my child dies.”* It is interesting to note that Jesus gave only a simple reply to the desperate plea of the father: *“Go your way. Your son lives.”* It was an emphatic declaration. No explanation was needed. This statement was made about the seventh hour of the day, and immediately, the father set out for home, believing that Jesus had answered his plea.

The response of the father manifested his faith in what Jesus could do. He was a pleading father in the presence of Jesus, but with a faith that would be increased by the healing of his son. We would expect that he would urge Jesus to personally come to where his son was about to die. But his faith moved him to leave immediately to return to his son. *“And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken to him and he went his way”* (Jn 4:50).

He traveled throughout the night in order to return to his son. We wonder what was going through his mind as he made his way back home to the bedside of his dying son. While he was yet some distance from home, but still on his way, his excited servants met him on the road in the morning hours, and proclaimed to him, *“Your son lives!”* (Jn 4:51). It was there that men probably fell to their knees in thanksgiving to God.

When the father regained his composure, he obviously asked his servants when the child was healed. He wanted to connect the dots between pronouncement and healing. The servants replied, *“Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him”* (Jn 4:52). When the father connected the dots, the healing had its immediate effect on the hearts of both father and servants, and the entire household: *“And he himself believed, and his whole house”* (Jn 4:53).

And herein is defined John’s use of the word “sign” in reference to the supernatural work of Jesus during His ministry. This healing was a sign of something greater than this world, and thus, greater than the man Jesus Himself. Belief on the part of the father and his household was evidence that Jesus had control of that which was beyond this world. The result, therefore, was more than gratitude. It was belief that Jesus was the Son of God who had control of the supernatural world of God.

We must compare this miracle that took place over a

great distance with the theatrical performances of those today who claim to be working confirming miracles. In this case, there was no fanfare. There was no gathered audience. There was no smoke from a stage, or screaming from a microphone. There was only a simple statement from Jesus, and the deed from a distance was done.

When we read what Jesus promised His disciples when He gave them the great commission, we must remember what transpired in the circumstances that surrounded this sign. After saying to the disciples, “*Going, therefore, disciple all the nations,*” Jesus promised, “*And, lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age*” (Mt 28:19,20). Jesus did not have to be in their presence in order to be with them. Our relationship with Jesus does not mean He has to be right here with us in order to be with us.

Jesus had earlier promised the disciples, “*For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there I am in the midst of them*” (Mt 18:20). As the omnipresent God was with David, so He is today wherever there is a child of God: “*Yes,*” David wrote, “*though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me*” (Ps 23:4).

The power of Jesus is in our presence in every situation, and under all circumstances. In prison, Paul confidently affirmed, “*I can do all things through Him who strengthens me*” (Ph 4:13). The strengthening of Jesus is not confined by location, as the power of Jesus to heal the nobleman’s son was not confined to Cana where Jesus was at the time. As one with God, Jesus is now omnipresent, and thus, His power encompasses the world. Therefore, “*The Lord is my light and my salvation. Whom will I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life. Of whom will I be afraid*” (Ps 27:1).

We must not think that because Jesus ascended out of the presence of His disciples that He ascended out of reach with His power. The preposterous teaching that we now need another mediator between God and man because Jesus is so distant, attacks the very nature of the omnipresence of God. There is one mediator between God and man simply because Jesus will always be close in order to mediate on our behalf (See 1 Tm 2:5).

C. Evidence of the disabled man (Jn 5:1-9):

This is a case of a surprised healing. The myth of the day was that an angel on occasion supposedly came down and stirred the waters of the pool of Bethesda. The one to be first in the water after it was stirred by a visiting angel, would be healed.

(Many manuscripts do not include verse 4. It is not included because it is supposed that it was added later by some scribe in order to explain to John’s readers, who were primarily Gentiles outside the region of Palestine, why there was this belief in reference to the waters of Bethesda.)

Nevertheless, the disabled man was there with others, and the common belief, which we suppose was psychosomatic, was that he would be made well of a thirty-eight-year affliction if he could only be the first in the water after its stirring.

So Jesus asked a question that had an obvious answer: “*Do you want to be made whole?*” (Jn 5:6). We suppose that

the question was asked simply to gain the attention of the man, for there were others there also who desired to be healed. This particular man did not know who Jesus was (Jn 5:13). He may have known of Jesus, but he did not know him by facial recognition.

After Jesus had asked the question concerning his willingness to be healed, Jesus simply stated, “*Rise, take up your bed and walk*” (Jn 5:8). There were no theatrical performances on the part of Jesus. There were no crowd-gathering speeches, and call for attention. There was not even a statement to be healed. Jesus simply made the statement that he take up his bed and walk. The deed was done, and realized only when the man stood up. This is something far different from those today who conduct fake healings in order to spread fake news of their deceptive works. We must never underestimate the desire for notoriety among those who presume to fake true confirming signs.

John’s account of the event reads, “*And immediately the man was made whole*” (Jn 5:9). When a true confirming miracle took place, the result was immediate and perceived real by the beholders. Thirty-eight years of infirmity came to an end in a moment. The disabled man was healed with only a statement to take up his bed and walk. There was no command to be healed.

Because of the length of the infirmity, the man was well-known throughout the region. Many had passed by and given him either food or money. Because of the immediate nature of the healing, the impact of the healing was made known to everyone who knew him. The man was not told to go home, and that he would eventually get better. The result was instantaneous, and the impact on the people who knew him was also instantaneous.

Because the man did not know who it was who healed him, we assume from John’s listing of this miracle that Jesus wanted us to know that there was no psychosomatic nature about His healing of this man and others. In other words, the healed were not hypnotically convinced in their minds that they were healed, and then three days later they recovered from some hypnotic trance of being healed. They were not healed during a hysterical meeting, and then “unhealed” days later when they were at home and recovered from the emotional hysteria of the moment.

John records this healing in order to convince us that Jesus did not heal because He was an accepted “healer” of the day, or one who generated emotional hysteria in the minds of those He healed. He wanted us to understand that the personality of Jesus was not used to convince people that they were healed. For the one who was healed, especially on this occasion, was surprised. The man did not request to be healed. Upon the pronouncement of Jesus, therefore, he discovered that thirty-eight years of being crippled had immediately gone away. It was a surprise. The healing was not only of the bones of his legs, but also the strengthening of his muscles, for he took up his bed and walked away (Jn 5:9).

After the healing, Jesus slipped away from the startled crowd (Jn 5:13). However, when He knew He could have a more private conversation with the man, He sought him out in the temple courtyard (Jn 5:14). It was during this personal encounter with the healed man that Jesus encouraged him to live contrary to a sinful way of life (Jn 5:14). And then what

happened was what Jesus evidently intended to happen: “*The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him whole*” (Jn 5:15). And now, this news provoked the Jewish religious leaders to come searching for Jesus, which thing Jesus wanted. For this was a “*feast of the Jews*” when Jews of those times made a journey to Jerusalem, possibly on this occasion for the Passover/Pentecost feast (Jn 5:1). It was during this feast that Jesus wanted His name to be taken back home to nations throughout the Roman Empire. He wanted everyone who heard what He had done in reference to the healing of the impotent man to be broadcast throughout the nations.

D. Evidence of creation (Jn 6:1-14; see Mt 14:13-21):

At the time of this miraculous production of fish and loaves, we are given an indication by John that this was not the fourth miracle of Jesus, but the listing of the fourth miracle that he used to substantiate his proposition that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God (See Jn 20:30,31). In this text it states that the great multitude “*followed Him because they saw His signs*” (Jn 6:2). The word “signs” is plural, and thus we assume that many more signs had been worked by Jesus before this sign. The signs that John has recorded to this point continues to build on his apologetic proposition.

On this occasion, it is very important to notice one interesting request that Jesus made after the feeding of the multitudes: “*Gather up the fragments that remain so that nothing is lost*” (Jn 6:12). In the phrase, “*so that nothing is lost,*” Jesus had more in mind than simply gathering up the fragments that there be no waste. He wanted the disciples, after gathering every fragment of food, to deduct something from the quantity of the leftovers. “*They gathered them together and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves that remained over*” (Jn 6:13). This amount came from an initial five fish and two loaves of bread (Mt 14:17). Now it was time for the disciples to start making deductions.

Five thousand men, plus the women and children, were gathered in the multitude (Jn 6:10; see Mt 14:21). There could have easily been over ten thousand people. But when the fragments were gathered up, they filled twelve baskets. From five loaves and two fish, they ended up with twelve baskets of leftovers. Jesus wanted His disciples to do the math, and then come to the conclusion of who was standing in their midst.

Jesus was more than a good Rabbi, more than a good teacher, and more than a prophet. Since only God can create, He wanted the disciples to gather up the fragments in order to come to the conclusion that **it was the Creator of all things who stood in their midst** (See Cl 1:16). If only God can create, then Jesus wanted them to understand that in some way God was there.

Of all the supernatural wonders that Jesus did in His incarnate state of being on earth, this miracle, and the feeding of the 4,000 on another occasion, brings us to the conclusion that Jesus had command of the supernatural. In the flesh, He could call on the power of God in order to bring about the confirmation of who He was before He came into the flesh of man (Jn 1:14). He was in the beginning with God, and was God (Jn 1:1,2). But we must not think for a moment that

while He was on earth that He forsook His command of the power of the supernatural. The twelve baskets full of fragments will always be a profound testimony to the fact that Jesus on earth was far above any prophet among men. It is superfluous, therefore, to compare Jesus as a prophet to self-declared prophets as Muhammad.

Those who witnessed what happened on the occasion of feeding the multitudes, declared, “*This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world*” (Jn 6:14). This was the Prophet about whom Moses prophesied who would come after him (Dt 18:15-22). The miracle of the loaves and fishes at least took the minds of the people back to Moses’ prophecy of the Prophet who would come after his likeness. But Jesus was more.

For the disciples, Jesus wanted the event to take their minds far beyond Moses, and Jesus being only the Prophet. When Jesus later gathered the twelve together and asked them the question, “*Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?*” (Mt 16:13), He was seeking a response that He was more than the Prophet. In order to take their thinking to where John is taking our thinking in recording this particular sign, Jesus called the disciples’ attention to two miracles. These were the miracles of creation in the feeding of the multitude of the 4,000 and 5,000. He was thus demanding the answer that Peter gave: “*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God*” (Mt 16:16). The miracle of creating twelve baskets full of fragments moved Jesus beyond being the One about whom Moses prophesied. The fragments moved Jesus into being the creating Son of God.

E. Evidence of water walking (Jn 6:16-21):

This miracle was for the disciples, for the people saw the disciples enter the boat, but not Jesus (Jn 6:22). Everything happened at sea in the darkness of the night, just as Jesus had planned. The situation was set up by Jesus, for He commanded the disciples to get into the boat and make their way to the other side of the sea (Mt 14:22). He then sent the multitudes away from the scene (Mt 14:23). It was then that He went up a mountain in order to pray and wait for the opportune time to come to the disciples in the night. Jesus waited until the storm at sea had prepared them emotionally for what He was about to do. So when the storm at sea had battered both occupants and boat for some time, Jesus “*went to them, walking on the sea*” (Mt 14:25).

Of course such a happening would terrify the disciples, which thing it did (Jn 6:19). John does not, as did Matthew, go into great detail concerning what transpired. John’s purpose for recording this incident was to generate faith in the minds of his readers by bringing his readers to the point of confession that Jesus is the Son of God. So the conclusion to which John drew his readers was the control over the natural world that was within the power of Jesus as the Son of God.

When this miracle first occurred, the apostles were the only witnesses. The multitudes were left to question how Jesus made His way to where the boat eventually landed (Jn 6:22-24). Only when John recorded this event, or when the apostles spoke of it after the Pentecost of A.D. 30, did the people, and ourselves, conclude that Jesus in the flesh had power over the elements of this world (See At 27:21-26). As

Jonah perceived that the storm at sea was the work of God to turn his way back to Nineveh, so this storm at sea was for the purpose of revealing to the apostles that if they followed Jesus, they would not be cast into the depths of the sea. They must remember that the One they followed had command of the laws of nature.

John left out the incident when Jesus called Peter to come to Him while He was standing above the waters in a raging storm. Matthew included the conclusion to which John sought to bring us to confess after reading such a testimony. When the storm was quieted, and the sea as smooth as glass that reflected the heavenly bodies, the disciples worshiped Him right there in the boat. They correctly concluded, "*Truly, You are the Son of God*" (Mt 14:33).

Jesus was finally getting through to them. Mark recorded the reaction of the disciples at the moment, "*And they were greatly astonished, for they had not understood the miracle of the loaves because their heart was hardened*" (Mk 6:51,52). After the feeding of the multitudes, the twelve disciples had just experienced something that was surreal. They were still trying to comprehend the twelve baskets of fragments. What had happened had not yet "sunk in." The walking on the water that followed immediately after the feeding of the 5,000 intensified the impact of what Jesus wanted to do in transforming their thinking concerning who He was. It was not that their hearts were hardened against Him, but that the awesome result of the feeding of the 5,000, and the walking on the water, was almost too much for the human mind to comprehend in such a short time.

Therefore, when Jesus came up into the boat, they fell to their knees and worshiped Him, which worship is to be given only to God.

It would have been blasphemy for these Jews to worship any man on earth. It would have been a violation of the first of the ten commandments: "*You will have no other gods before Me. You will not bow down yourself to them ...*" (Ex 20:3-5). But here in this boat in the calm of a sea, twelve Jewish men are bowing down to Jesus. What they came to realize on those calm waters in the middle of the night, was what John wants us to conclude and do in reference to this Jesus of Nazareth. He is truly the Son of the living God. He is One before whom we must bow down and worship.

F. Evidence of the blind who see (Jn 9:1-12):

The event of this miracle was incidental. Jesus was going somewhere and "*passed by*" a man whom He saw was blind (Jn 9:1). As with the disabled man at the pool of Bethesda, this healing was only incidental to what Jesus was doing or to where He was going. He did not call a great crowd of people together, and then select out of them those who volunteered to be healed. He called no one up on a stage in order to do a theatrical performance before the people.

We must "read between the lines" in order to better understand what transpired on this occasion. As Jesus walked by, He noticed this blind man who had been blind since birth (Jn 9:1). In order to heal the man, Jesus made mud by spitting on dirt. He then put the mud on the man's eyes. He then instructed the man, "*Go wash in the pool of Siloam*" (Jn 9:7).

It seems that Jesus did not want the blind man to be

healed in His presence, or the presence of the disciples. And probably most important of all, he wanted the man to know that it was Jesus who healed him. Therefore, it would be a healing that would be known first only by the blind man himself. So obediently, the man "*went his way and washed. And he came back seeing*" (Jn 9:7). He was led away, and then probably came back by himself. There were no crowds to be amazed, and no cheers of praise from an overenthusiastic audience.

It was only later when the neighbors who knew the man, began to question as to how he gained his sight. The questioning by the neighbors as to how he was able to see affirms the fact that the man was actually blind. They had walked by the man for years and given him alms as he begged on the street. But now he could see. They knew that while he was blind, he was not deceiving them for contributions. Their testimony is that he was truly blind.

"*Where is He?*" the neighbors questioned. "*I do not know,*" was the reply (Jn 9:12). John wants us to know that Jesus did not unveil the supernatural on this occasion in order to draw attention to Himself at the time and on this occasion. All the healed man knew was that it was Jesus who did the deed.

Since this was probably the Passover/Pentecost feast that Jesus attended during His ministry, He was building inquiry, or curiosity, in the minds of the people that Someone was in town who was the Prophet about whom Moses had prophesied. The name "Jesus" would become renowned as time went by, and by the time Jesus visited two more Passover/Pentecost feast after this occasion. It would be throughout this time that Jesus would build a case file of miracles that would demand the conclusion that John later affirmed from the record of only seven of His miracles: "*... that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*" (Jn 20:31).

G. Evidence of the resurrected (Jn 11:1-46):

The raising of Lazarus from the dead was to prove something greater than Jesus "practicing what He preached." At the beginning of His ministry, He proclaimed, "*He who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me, has everlasting life*" (Jn 5:24). "*The hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and will come forth*" (Jn 5:28,29). By the time Jesus came to Bethany where His three friends, Mary, Martha and Lazarus, lived, it was time for a demonstration of what He had been teaching in reference to eternal life.

When the death of Lazarus was initially reported to Jesus, it was time in the ministry of Jesus to reveal the power that was within His control. And when this power was released, He would accomplish the following: "*This sickness is not to death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God might be glorified by it*" (Jn 11:4).

At the time, the disciples seem to still be in a state of "unbelief" concerning the totality of who Jesus was. They had difficulty in bringing together all that He was. They had by this time in His ministry experienced a great deal. But raising the dead would certainly shock their thinking just before the conclusion of His earthly ministry. So Jesus said to them, "*Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go so that I may*

awake him out of sleep” (Jn 11:11). The disciples did not understand what He was saying. “*Lord, if he sleeps,*” they replied, “*he will recover*” (Jn 11:12). However, “*Jesus spoke of his death. But they thought that He was speaking of taking rest in sleep*” (Jn 11:13).

In order to increase their still inadequate faith, Jesus said to them, “*I am glad for your sakes that I was not there [when Lazarus died], so that you may believe*” (Jn 11:15). Now Jesus has revealed the purpose for His raising of Lazarus from the dead. The resurrection was not only for the disciples to believe, but for us also, that we might believe that Jesus is the Son of God (Jn 20:31). Since only God can raise the dead, then they, as we, need to conclude that Jesus was and is Deity.

Upon His arrival to Bethany, Jesus said to Martha, “*Your brother will rise again*” (Jn 11:23). He continued, “*I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he were dead, yet he will live*” (Jn 11:25). This claim needed proof. It needed a demonstration. It was something about which Jesus had spoken throughout His ministry, and now it was the time to make good on His claim.

In the emotional build up to the main event, there was discussion, if not blame that if Jesus had been present, He could have healed Lazarus. But this would have been no grand finale of proof that He was the Son of God with all the supernatural power that is characteristic with Deity. His healing power had been substantiated by this time, for the people standing around said, “*Could not this Man who opened the eyes of the blind have also kept this man from dying?*” (Jn 11:37). The answer to the question would be YES! But the purpose for Jesus’ delay in coming to Bethany was to make sure that Lazarus was dead and buried, and thus, there would have been no temptation for Him to heal His friend from a sickness. It was time for a resurrection.

Therefore, with the commanding statement, “*Lazarus, come forth,*” the world was changed forever, and the power of the resurrection after the crucifixion of Jesus was made possible and real (Jn 11:43). All that Jesus had taught throughout His ministry concerning “words of life” found validation in these three words. Our hope in the Son of God finds mean-

ing in the fact that Jesus had the power to be raised, and by the same power that raised Lazarus, we too would be raised.

By the resurrection of Lazarus, Jesus laid the foundation to give His disciples hope when He himself was laid in a tomb of death. Lazarus would be the proof that His own death would not be the end. Though after the cross the disciples may have momentarily forgotten the resurrection of Lazarus, they needed to know that the power that raised Lazarus did not come from the man Jesus, but from Him who remained in heaven. In His incarnate state in ministry, Jesus had control of the supernatural through the power of the Holy Spirit (See Lk 4:14).

Mary had complained, “*Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died*” (Jn 11:32). Physical presence in order that supernatural power be released still plagued the thinking of the disciples. Thus before Jesus cried out for the resurrection of Lazarus, He cried out to the Father, that the Father resurrect Lazarus in order “*that they may believe that You have sent Me*” (Jn 11:42). The power of the resurrection came from above, but only at the command of Jesus. We must not miss this point.

With the same power from heaven, Jesus was raised from the dead. Paul explained in writing,

*I pray that the eyes of your heart be enlightened so that you may know ... what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe ... **that He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead** ... (Ep 1:18-21).*

The same power that raised Lazarus from the dead, was the same power that raised Jesus from the dead. It will be this same power that will raise us from the dead when Jesus comes again. All that Paul said in conclusion to this reality were the words of the Spirit, “*Comfort one another with these words*” (1 Th 4:18).

Therefore, we remember that “*Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His righteous saints*” (Ps 116:15). We have thus been delivered by Him from the fear of death (Hb 2:14,15). Thank you, Jesus!