

## A PERFECT PICTURE OF SALVATION

*And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice,  
Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth,  
(John 11:43-44)*

Two things really stand out to me in the gospel account of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead; the power of Jesus and the impotence of Lazarus. Let's consider them in reverse order.

Lazarus had been dead four days when Jesus arrived on the scene. For four days he made no effort to emerge from the tomb. Why didn't he just decide to be alive and come out of there? He couldn't. Even the power to make such a decision requires life; and Lazarus was dead. Death is the absence of life. No pulse, no respiration, no brain activity; dead! He didn't have the faculties necessary to even recognize his condition, much less change it. No seminar, self-help book or even church program would've helped him. What he needed was life. His only hope of leaving the tomb was if someone had the power to make him alive. That would be Jesus!

When Jesus came to the tomb He called Lazarus by name and commanded him to come. To everyone's amazement Lazarus obeyed the command and came out of the grave. How is that possible? Verse 44 plainly states that Lazarus *was dead* (KJV). *Was* is the key word there. He *was* dead, but Jesus made him alive. Jesus not only *commanded* Lazarus to come, He also *enabled* him to come. He called him out of the grave and, at the same time, imparted life to him enabling him to respond to the call.

What a beautiful picture of the work of God in the salvation of sinners. In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul said we were "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1, 5). That means we were destitute of spiritual life. We could not even know the things of the Spirit (1Cor. 2:14). Just as Lazarus did not have the mental ability to recognize his condition and desire to live, neither do we, because of our sinfulness, have the moral ability to realize our state and turn to Christ.

Jesus, however, does not depend upon our ability but upon His own power. He did not wait for Lazarus to call for Him; He called Lazarus. Likewise, it was *even when we were dead in trespasses* that He *made us alive* (Eph. 2:5; Col. 2:13).

Jesus comes to every person that He saves while we are spiritually dead, calls us out of the grave of our sin and enables us, through the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit (making us spiritually alive), to hear His call and respond in a positive manner.

Blessed be God who raises the dead!

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