

Dr. Robert C. Newman, Miracles, Session 6, Jesus' Miracles Over the Human Realm

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Okay, we're continuing our course, The Miraculous and the Miracles of Jesus. I think that needs to be turned up a little bit. Maybe turn this out this way to give you a little bit of a... Get all your tangles out of this.

Okay, we're continuing our course, The Miraculous and the Miracles of Jesus. We've already looked at the four lectures on the miraculous, looking at a quick survey of Old and New Testament miracles, then at a survey of extra-biblical miracles in Christendom, and then thirdly at the rise of science and theological liberalism, and fourthly at responding to objections to the miraculous.

We started last time then as our fifth lecture, the miracles of Jesus over the natural realm, and now this second one is the miracles of Jesus over the human realm. Here, we're going to look at miracles dealing with human sickness and death. Such miracles include the healing of the nobleman's son, the woman with the hemorrhage, raising Jairus' daughter, healing a paralytic, cleansing a leper, the centurion's servant, raising a widow's son, healing at the Pool of Bethesda, the man born blind, the man with a withered hand, the ten lepers, the deaf and dumb fellow, and raising Lazarus.

As before, we'll only do some of these that are not in our other PowerPoint talks, which are otherwise found on our IBRI website, www.ibri.org. First of all, we look at the healing of the nobleman's son, found in John 4, and here's the passage, John 4, 46-50. Once more, he, that is, Jesus, visited Cana in Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine, and there was a certain royal official whose son lay sick at Capernaum. When this man heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea, he went to him and begged him to come and heal his son, who was close to death.

Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders, Jesus told him, you will never believe. The royal official said, Sir, come down before my child dies. Jesus replied, You may go, your son will live.

The man took Jesus at his word and departed. While he was still on the way, his servants met him with the news that his boy was living. When he inquired as to the time when his son got better, they said to him, The fever left him yesterday at the seventh hour.

Then the father realized that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, Your son will live. So, he and all his household believed. This was the second miraculous sign that Jesus performed, having come from Judea to Galilee.

Well, think about the historicity of that little occasion. This is after Jesus returned from Judea and Samaria and to Galilee. It's in response to the pleading of the father.

Sort of a quasi-liberal explanation of the thing, Jesus telepathically gave the boy the will to live. Liberals in recent years have backed away from that sort of stuff but still might talk of psychosomatic healing or something like that. Evidence of historicity.

This is a royal official or relative of the royal family. Was he the chooser of Luke 8.3? Don't know. The verb comes down, verse 47.

Capernaum is down by the lakeside, and Cana is well up the hill and about 20 miles off. So that indicates some knowledge of the geography, if you like. And then the time indications that the father... I hear Jesus say that at the seventh hour.

That does get us into the question of what kind of time notations John uses. My own thought in that direction, after looking at some of the passages, is that John actually uses the Roman system, which is rather like ours. These are seven in the morning or seven in the evening, and since it was yesterday, it's probably seven in the evening, and then the father goes back and arrives some time the next day.

The development of the father's faith is seen here as well. In verse 47, he wants Jesus to come down, but then in verse 50, he accepts Jesus' word, and at Jesus' word that the son will live, he turns back and goes home. And then when he finds out when the son began to get better, in verse 52, we see then that as a result of that, he believed.

Verse 53. Reaction of the eyewitnesses. Only the father saw both sides of the incident, but he independently checked the time.

The servants in the household knew of the sudden end of the fever, and the father and the household both believed. Old Testament background. What kind of similar miracles do we have to this? Well, the healing from serpents in Numbers 21, the leprosy of Miriam in Numbers 12, the leprosy of Naaman in 2 Kings 5, these are all healings, the healing of Hezekiah in 2 Kings 20, the request regarding the healing of Abijah in 1 Kings 14, and at least one of these, Naaman was healing at a distance, that is, that Elijah was not there when Naaman was actually healed.

There are some other parallels. Psalm 103 tells us that the Lord heals all your diseases. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases.

The curses of the covenant include diseases and fever. Leviticus 26:16. I'll start at verse 15.

And if you reject my decrees and abhor my laws, and fail to carry out all my commands, and so violate my covenant, then I will do this to you. I will bring upon you sudden terror, wasting diseases, and fever that will destroy your sight and drain away your life. You will plant seed in vain because your enemies will eat it.

Significance. Well, immediate effect. Jesus speaks of a relation of signs and wonders to faith, that sometimes people need something like that to cause them to trust God more, to believe, etc., trust Jesus.

Note the healing is about 20 miles away. The boy is healed, verse 52. The father is brought to faith in verses 47, 48, 50, 53.

Also, the household, verse 53. So, the immediate effects. The boy was healed, and the father and household were brought to faith.

When the father trusts Jesus and heads home, then the boy is healed. Place in salvation history. Is this Jesus' first healing? The first one is mentioned in John, but probably not.

John 2:23 suggests that Jesus had been doing healings elsewhere. It probably means it's the second Galilean sign. First healing in Galilee, then.

Symbolic elements, nothing obvious. You could contrast the father with Abraham, but Abraham is ready to give his son, and the father here is very concerned. Not ready, if you like.

You can contrast the father with God. God gave his son. Miracles of Jesus often look back at creation or forward to the end of the age.

Well, all of the miracles of healing certainly look back at the fall of man, and the resultant sickness and death that are a result of that, and Jesus is turning these back, so to speak. In this sense, they also look forward to the end of the age when everybody will be raised from the dead, and there will be no more sickness and dying and such. Move on to a second example of Jesus' miracles over the human realm, the healing of the paralytic in Matthew 9, Mark 2, and Luke 5. I take a look here at the passage in Mark 2. A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home.

So many gathered that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. Some men came bringing a paralytic, which was carried by four of them, to him. Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus and, after digging through it, lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on.

When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, Son, your sins are forgiven. Some of the teachers of the law were sitting there thinking to themselves, Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming. Who can forgive sins but God alone? Immediately Jesus knew in spirit that this is what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, Why are you thinking these things? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, Your sins are forgiven, or to say, Get up, take your mat, and walk? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins, he said to the paralytic, I tell you, get up, take your mat, and go home.

He got up, took his mat, and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone, and they praised God, saying, We've never seen anything like this. Think of the occasion of the event.

It's not clear from Matthew's and Mark's divergence when this occurred, but apparently, it was just before Matthew's conversion. Evidence of historicity. This occurs in the three Gospels in such a form as to suggest they're not copied from one another.

The details of the time are vague, but it took place in Capernaum. The number of men given though natural is significant. Four of them are carrying him.

Notice it actually doesn't say that's all there were. Some men brought this fellow, which was being carried by four of them. There might well have been several besides the four.

Opening the roof is certainly unusual. Reaction of the eyewitnesses. The Pharisees grumble at the claim to forgive sin, but they're apparently silenced when the miracle works.

The paralytic goes away, glorifying God. The others are astonished and fearful, glorify God, and remark on the uniqueness and strangeness of the event. What kind of Old Testament background do we have here? Some similar miracles.

You remember Jeroboam's hand is shriveled up and restored in 1 Kings 13 when he is rebuked by the man of God from Judah who's come up to speak against this false worship center that Jeroboam has set up. Isaiah 53:6 says that the lame are to leap like the deer at the time of Israel's redemption. Some other parallels.

Well, in Leviticus 21:18, lameness and such disqualify one for the priesthood. Forgiveness can only be given by God and by the person sinned against. That's the basic teaching of the Old Testament, which is why these Pharisees reacted like this.

It's not obvious that Jesus is the one sinned against, and so what's he making himself to be? God? If I were to forgive some sin that somebody did to you, but it wasn't me, etc., you would think the same thing. Significance. Immediate effect.

The fellow is healed. There's an attestation of Jesus' claim to forgive sins. His remark about Harder, I think, basically has the idea that anyone can say someone's sins are forgiven, and we don't find out whether they are or not until the last judgment, but he will then do something that you can see the effects of in order to see that. Indeed he does have power.

A place in salvation history. The one who forgives sin has become man. That's something we see here.

Symbolic elements? Compare Isaiah 35.6, which points to the eschaton. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue will shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.

So we get here, and this is not an uncommon feature in Jesus' miracles, that they either point back to what God did in creation, like turning water into wine if you like, or they look forward to what will happen at the end of the age. This lame man leaps like the deer if you like. We move on to a third miracle over the human realm, cleansing the leper, Matthew 8, Mark 1, Luke 5. Here we look at Matthew's account, Matthew chapter 8. When he came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him.

A man with leprosy and the NIV footnote indicates the Greek word was used for various diseases affecting the skin, not necessarily what we would call leprosy today. A man with leprosy came and knelt down before him and said, Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean. Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man.

I am willing, he said. Be clean. Immediately he was cured of his leprosy.

Then Jesus said to him, See that you don't tell anyone, but go show yourself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded as a testimony to them. Historicity of the event. Occasionally, Matthew seems to be the most definite, putting it after the Sermon on the Mount and Matthew 8. Mark and Luke are vague but still early in Galilean ministry.

The fellow seeks Jesus out—liberal explanations while there is some uncertainty regarding the exact nature of the disease. The Hebrew and Greek terms are said to be broader than Hansen's disease, which itself has several types.

Liberals tend to opt for milder forms and a psychological cure of some sort. Matthew seems to locate the event near the site of the Sermon on the Mount—Mark and Luke out from Capernaum on a Galilean tour.

Reaction? Eyewitnesses are not specified. The leper is apparently so overwhelmed he doesn't obey Jesus' instructions not to spread the news of his cure. Mark 1.43-45 indicates this for us.

It's not in our Matthew passage. You might wonder why Jesus said to go show yourself, etc., first, but I think he says to himself why this is a testimony to them.

He wanted this person to show up, someone who had clearly been cleansed of leprosy before they found out who did it. That way, if there's any bias there among the priests against him, they would already have verified it before they found out what it was all about. Old Testament background? We have some similar miracles.

We have healing from leprosy. You remember Moses' hand that he sticks in his garment and brings out, and it becomes leprous, and he sticks it back in and brings it out, and it's no longer leprous. Exodus 14.

Miriam was struck with leprosy in Numbers 10 and then healed. Naaman in 2 Kings 5. Several healings from leprosy in the Old Testament. Some other parallels? Luke 13 is the diagnosis of leprosy in the Old Testament.

And then in Leviticus 13. Then, in Leviticus 14, the cleansing testimony, the cleansing ceremony, excuse me. If you look at Leviticus 14 there and compare it with touching the dead, the cleansing ceremony lasts eight days and includes some final offerings. Significance immediate effect: the man is cleansed, and his faith is rewarded.

Jesus' compassion is seen, and his concern for the law and the ceremony is testimony. Is Jesus concerned to avoid the wrong kind of publicity? That may be what's going on here. A place in salvation history like Moses and Elisha, one who heals lepers again walks the earth.

In contrast, Jesus touches the leper who is cleansed rather than rendering Jesus unclean. Parallel with the resurrections by Elijah and Elisha. One might, of course, argue, well, maybe Jesus took that uncleanness upon himself, and that's a possibility, too.

We weren't there, and we can't see that sort of thing anyway. I don't know the answer to that, for sure. Symbolic elements Surprisingly, although I'd heard of it all my life, I could not find clear evidence of the symbolic value of leprosy.

Psalm 51, verses 5 through 7, which I think was the best candidate, is not obviously referring to leprosy. Surely, I was sinful at birth, says David, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. Surely you desire truth in the inner parts, you teach me wisdom in the inmost place.

Cleanse me with hyssop, and I'll be clean. Wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. So, we do see some kind of cleansing ceremony pictured here by David, but there's no explicit statement that leprosy is symbolic of sin or something like that.

So, although that's not an unreasonable guess, I would have thought that the evidence for that was much stronger given how many times I've heard that one time or another. We move on to the healing at the Pool of Bethesda. John 5 Sometime later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Jews.

Now, in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate, there is a pool called Bethesda in Aramaic, which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. Here a great number of disabled people used to lie. The blind, the lame, the paralyzed and then as the note in NIV points out, some less important manuscripts add, and they waited for the moving of the waters.

From time to time an angel lord would come down and stir the waters, the first one into the pool after each such disturbance would be cured of whatever disease he had. Then, we go back to a more certain text. One who was there had been an invalid for 38 years.

When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, Do you want to get well? Sir, the invalid replied, I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I'm trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me. Then Jesus said to him, Get up, pick up your mat, and walk.

Once the man was cured, he picked up his mat and walked. The day on which this took place was the Sabbath. And so, the Jews said to the man who had been healed, It's the Sabbath.

The law forbids you to carry your mat. But he replied The man who made me well said to me, Pick up your mat and walk. So they asked him, Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk? The man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd, and it was there.

Later, Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, See, you're well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you. The man went away and told the Jews it was Jesus who had made him well.

So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jews persecuted him. Jesus said to them, My father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working. For this reason, the Jews tried all the harder to kill him.

Not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own father, making himself equal to God. Well, the historicity of the event, the occasion, during a feast of the Jews, several feasts have been suggested, even Purim, we're not really sure which one it was, a few months to a year after the events of John 4. Jesus sees a fellow who is lame or something of the sort and heals him on the Sabbath. Liberal explanations, psychosomatic healing, or didn't happen at all are two standard ones for liberals responding to miracles.

Evidence of historicity: the location is now well established, though the site was unknown even in 1900. Recent archaeological work has cleared that up. The reaction of the Jewish leaders, if it's rabbinic views about the Sabbath, the poorly attested verse 4 regarding the angel suggests the place was well known in tradition from before A.D. 70.

Reaction of the eyewitnesses, the fellow himself seems grateful, verses 11 and 15. Verse 15, I think, should not be understood that he was malicious, that he was angry that he got into trouble for carrying his mat, and so found out who Jesus was and went and reported it, but rather that he wanted the people to know that Jesus had done this. The Jewish leaders see only a violation of Sabbath, later compounded in verse 17 by what they view as blasphemy.

Old Testament background. Similar miracles. There are no references to healing on the Sabbath in the Old Testament.

Both Elijah and Elisha touched dead people to raise them. Other materials, lots of Sabbath regulations, Exodus 23, 31, 35, Numbers 15, Nehemiah 13, Jeremiah 17. There's no manna on the Sabbath here, remember.

Exodus 16:22-29. But the priest's labor on the Sabbath, Numbers 28, 9-10. The lame is to walk when redemption comes, Isaiah 35:6. Significance? What's the immediate effect? Well, a man is healed.

Controversy develops between Jesus and the leaders, resulting in strong opposition to him for his actions and claims. Life's in salvation history. Jesus makes claims before the official representatives of the nation.

He bases his authority over the Sabbath on his unique relation to the Father. Symbolic elements. Well, one possibility is should we view the Sabbath as a symbol of the eschaton, symbol of the end of the age.

There's some warrant for that. Healing is eschatological. We certainly got a warrant for that, that God is going to heal and take away all disease and death and such.

God works on the Sabbath. Interesting, huh? Especially as regards redemption. And that surely is part of what Jesus is saying to them.

That the thing that angers them, if they like, is, in fact, God's work of redemption. We move on to the man born blind. John 9. As he, Jesus, 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, not meaning they had never sinned, but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming when no one can work.

While I am the world, I am the light of the world. Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. Go, he told him, wash in the pool, Siloam.

And John points out this word Siloam means sin. So, the man went and washed and came home seeing. His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg? Some claimed that he was.

Others said no, he only looks like him. But he himself insisted, I am the man. How then were your eyes open, they demanded.

He replied, the man they called Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see.

Where is this man, they asked him. I don't know, he said. They brought him to the Pharisees, the man who had been born blind.

Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath. Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received the sight. He put mud on my eyes, the man replied, and I washed, and now I see.

Some of the Pharisees said this man was not from God, for he did not keep the Sabbath. But others asked, how can a sinner do such miraculous signs? So, they were divided. Finally, they turned again to the blind man.

What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened. The man replied he is a prophet. But you still do not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until he sent for the man's parents.

Is this your son, they asked? Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that he can see now? We know he's our son, the parents answered, and we know he's born blind, but how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him, he is of age, he will speak for himself. His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for already the Jews had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogue.

That is why his parents said, he is of age, ask him. A second time, they summoned the man who had been blind. Give glory to God.

If you look at Joshua 7:19, this is a solemn charge to tell the truth, or even to confess, if you like. They said, we know this man is a sinner. The fellow replied, whether he's a sinner or not, I don't know.

One thing I do know, I was blind, but now I see. Then they asked him, what did he do to you? How did he open your eyes? He answered, I've told you already, and you didn't listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too? Then they hurled insults at him and said, you are this fellow's disciple.

We are disciples of Moses. We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don't even know where he comes from. The man answered, now that is remarkable.

You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, he listens to the godly man who does his will. Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind.

If this man were not from God, he could do nothing. To this they replied, you were steeped in sin at birth. How dare you lecture us? They threw him out.

Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he had found him, he said, do you believe in the Son of Man? Who is he, sir? The man asked. Tell me, so that I may believe in him. Jesus said you have now seen him.

In fact, he is the one speaking with you. Then the man said, Lord, I believe, and he worshipped him. Jesus said, for judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see, and those who see will become blind.

Some Pharisees who were there with him heard him say this and asked, what? Are we blind too? Jesus said, if you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin. But now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains. Well, that's an impressively long miracle account.

Occasion at Jerusalem, whether the Feast of Tabernacles, narrated in chapters 7 and 8, or the Feast of Dedication, Hanukkah, narrated in chapter 10. Jesus and his disciples see this man born blind, presumably begging, verse 8. The disciples ask the question about the cause of the ailment. Jesus heals it.

Liberal explanations were invented. Psychosomatic. Evidence of historicity.

Well, the terms rabbi, Pharisees, Siloam. The Sabbath controversy involving spittle and clay making. Details of the investigation, excommunication.

The Hebraism, give glory to God. Compare Joshua 7.19. The perceptive picture of human psychology regarding the blind man, the parents, the neighbors, the Pharisees for that matter, and the Pharisees' behavior. Reaction of the eyewitnesses.

Well, there's the growing faith of a blind man, the growing disbelief of the Pharisees, though they're still divided at this point, but they will be divided all the way up to the end. So, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus clearly are favorable to Jesus, though they're reluctant to advertise it as the polarization grows. Dispute among the neighbors over the fellow's identity.

What kind of Old Testament background do we have? Similar miracles? There are no cases of healing the blind, narrated in the Old Testament, which is perhaps why the fellow said, no, this has never happened before. No narrations, huh? Other? Well, there are Exodus 4.11 and Psalm 146:8, which say that God makes blind and heals. And then in Isaiah 29.18 and 35.5, the blind will be healed at the end of the age.

In Isaiah 42:7, the servant passages of Isaiah state that people would be healed by God's servant. So, God makes blind and heals. Exodus 4:11, 12 The Lord said to him, talking to Moses, who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the Lord? Now go.

I will help you speak and will teach you what to say. Psalm 146.8 The Lord gives sight to the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down.

The Lord loves the righteous. The blind healed him. Eschaton, Isaiah 29.18 In that day the deaf will hear the words of the scroll.

And out of gloom and darkness, the eyes of the blind will see. Isaiah 35.5 Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. And then in the servant passage, Isaiah 42:5-7 This is what the Lord says He who created the heavens and stretched them out. Who spread out the earth and all that comes out of it. Who gives breath to its people and life to those who walk on it.

I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness. I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles.

To open eyes that are blind. To free captives from prison. And to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.

Well, the significance of the miracle. The immediate effect again. The fellow is healed.

But he also faces persecution. And apparently came to salvation. The Pharisees are forced to deal with the matter.

They refuse to accept Christ's claims. And so, as a result they are driven further away—a significant feature.

When one refuses to deal with very strong evidence, one ends up becoming even more in opposition and more dogmatic. A place in salvation history. Again, this shows the uniqueness of Christ in relationship to Moses, Elijah, and Elisha.

Also, we see a strong theme of judgment and deliverance. Symbolic elements. It's pretty clear at the end of the chapter.

At the end of the passage. Physical light and vision. Darkness and blindness.

Stand for spiritual vision and spiritual blindness. See that in verse 5. Verse 39-41. And compare Isaiah 42:16-19 and Isaiah 59:10.

This Jesus is making clay. That's an interesting phenomenon there. Something that struck me some years after I first thought about this for some time.

Was Genesis. Not clear in the English translation. But God makes clay to form mankind.

He takes the dusty earth, and he molds it is the term. It's the yatsar. Same term used in the noun form for potter.

Makes clay to form man. So, what we have there is a picture of Jesus making clay to recreate the fellow's vision or something of that sort. And of course that's a fairly strong statement about who Jesus is.

The one who in the beginning made Adam out of clay and brought him to life here. Puts clay over the fellow's eyes and brings his vision to life if you like. Raising a Lazarus.

John 11. Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.

This Mary whose brother Lazarus now lay sick was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair. So the sister sent word to Jesus, Lord the one you love is sick. When he heard this 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. Jesus loved Martha and her sister Lazarus. Yet when he heard that Lazarus was sick he stayed there for two more days.

Then he said to his disciples, let us go back to Judea. But Rabbi, they said, a short while ago, the Jews tried to stone you, and yet you're going back there? Jesus answered, are there not twelve hours of daylight? A man who walks by day will not stumble for he sees by this world's light. It is when he walks by night that he stumbles for he has no light.

After he had said this, he went on to tell them our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep but I'm going there to wake him up. His disciples replied, Lord if he sleeps he'll get better. Jesus had been speaking of his death but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep.

So, then he told them plainly, Lazarus is dead and for your sake I'm glad I was not there so that you may believe but let us go to him. Then Thomas called Didymus said to the rest of the disciples, let us go also that we may die with him. On his arrival Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days.

Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home. Lord, Martha said to Jesus, if you had been here my brother would not have died but I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.

Jesus said to her, your brother will rise again. Martha answered, I know he will rise in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection in life.

He who believes in me will live even though he dies, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this? Yes, Lord, she told him. I believe that you're the Christ, the son of God who has come into the world.

After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. The teacher is here, she said, and he's asking for you. When Mary heard this she got up quickly and went to him.

Now, Jesus had not yet entered the village but was still at the place where Martha had met him. When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house comforting her noticed how quickly she got up and went out they followed her supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there. When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him she fell at his feet and said, Lord, if you'd been here my brother would not have died.

When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. Where have you laid him, he asked. Come and see Lord, they replied.

Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, See how he loved him. But some of them said, Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying? Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb.

It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. Take away the stone, he said. But Lord said, Martha, the sister of the dead man, by this time there is a bad odor for he has been there four days.

Then Jesus said, Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God? So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.

When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, Lazarus, come out! The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen and a cloth about his face. Jesus said to him, Take off the grave clothes and let him go. Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary and had seen what Jesus did, put their faith in him.

But some of them went to the Pharisees and told him what Jesus had done. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin. What are we accomplishing? They asked.

Here is this man performing many miraculous signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away our place and our nation. Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, spoke up, You know nothing at all.

You do not realize it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish. He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one. So from that day on, they plotted to take his life.

Well, the historicity of these events the occasion just a few months before the crucifixion at the end of Jesus' ministry. Jesus is at Bethany beyond Jordan when the message reaches him. He waits two days before going to Bethany near Jerusalem.

Liberal explanations: Lazarus was not really dead. I would say resuscitation. Or a plot.

Or the parable of Lazarus and the rich man was made into a narrative. Or it was a myth or allegory. However, the characters of Mary and Martha match what we see in Luke.

And the location of Bethany near Jerusalem and the other place names fit what we know about Israel at the time. The details of the narrative including the reaction of the enemies in reference to the blind man all fit the historicity of this. The reaction of the eyewitnesses.

Many Jews who saw the event came to believe. Some report the incident to the Pharisees. Similar miracles.

Old Testament background. Resurrection of the widow's son in 1 Kings 17 by Elijah. Resurrection of the Shunammite's son 2 Kings 4 by Elisha.

Resurrection of the man by Elisha's bones in 2 Kings 13. All of these were rather recently dead. Lazarus is four days dead and presumably then has, in fact, begun to decay.

There are some other parallels. The uncleanness is conveyed by touching the dead, Numbers 19:11-12. Eschatological materials on the resurrection, Daniel 12 to Isaiah 26-19.

There is an explicit connection of this resurrection with the end of the age, verses 23-26. Significance. Median effect.

Lazarus is raised. The family is restored. Sets in motion the decision of the Sanhedrin to kill Jesus.

Place in salvation history. The only addition to the other resurrection accounts is a statement of Jesus as the resurrection and the life. Non-trivial.

Symbolic elements. Here the eschatological significance is brought out in verses 23-26. Some people have wondered why Jesus remained two days before he went to Lazarus.

When he gets there, Lazarus has been in the tomb for four days already. Apparently, Lazarus was probably dead by the time the messenger reached Jesus. Of course, then Jesus' answer to the messenger this is not unto death must have seemed quite strange to the messenger when he got back and Lazarus had been dead and to Mary and Martha when they got the message.

But Jesus lets us occasionally think strange things in order to realize later that God really is in control. Well, that's our quick tour of some of the examples of Jesus' miraculous power over the human realm. We have one more area we will want to look at here in just a bit and that's Jesus' power over the spirit realm.

But we'll stop for now.