

The “I Am” Sayings of Jesus

I Am the Resurrection and the Life

John 11:17-44

Introduction

Our story today begins weaving together the various threads we have seen in Jesus’s “I AM” sayings. In the story of Lazarus, we begin to see what it means to have the great I AM as a part of our lives. We begin to see what it means to have him shepherd, guide, and protect, what it means for him to be the light in our dark world, and what it means for him to give us the bread of eternal life. Jesus’s raising of Lazarus from the dead reveals that *he is who he says he is, and more.*

Read John 11:1–44

- 1: **What was Jesus’s attitude towards Lazarus and his sisters? (v. 5)**

- 2: **When Jesus heard that Lazarus was ill, what was his response? (v. 6) What was the consequence of this decision? (vv. 11 & 17)**

- 3: **How can we reconcile the two facts that Jesus *loved* Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, and he *allowed* Lazarus to die?**

- 4: **What is Martha and Mary’s response to Jesus when they see him? What does this tell you about how they felt? (vv. 21 & 32)**

- 5: **How did Jesus respond to Martha and Mary? How can his responses give you comfort when you suffer?**

- 6: **What does Martha think Jesus is talking about when he says, “Your brother will rise again”? (vv. 23-24)**

- 7: **What do you think Jesus is claiming when he says, “I am the resurrection and the life”?**

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8: How does Jesus react when he sees Mary weeping and Lazarus’ tomb? (vv. 33-38)

9: Why was Jesus so upset? What difference do you think there was between his weeping and everyone else’s, if any?

10: How does Martha respond when Jesus tells the people to open the tomb? How does Jesus answer her? (vv. 39–40)

11: What does raising Lazarus tell us about Jesus’ power and identity?

12: How does this story help us understand God’s purposes in suffering and tragedy?

Closing Thoughts

Depending on your age and experiences in life, you may not have a lot of grief or sorrow to look back on. You may not have had someone close to you die. You may not have experienced abuse or mistreatment or bullying. You may not have ever been deeply betrayed. But one day you will. One day, all of us will have more sorrow than we ever imagined. Because we live in a fallen world.

The story of Lazarus teaches us that it is not God’s will to remove us from this fallen, sorrowful world. It is not his plan for us to escape painful experiences. Rather, it is God’s plan to join us in sorrow. He remains with us in pain. As we read in Psalm 23, “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.” In Isaiah 43, God promises, “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you.”

The promise of God to his faithful followers is not, “Follow me and do as I say, and you will have a blessed, comfortable life.” Rather, it’s, “If you trust me and follow where I lead, I will never leave you. No matter how dark the road gets, no matter how sorrowful and alone you feel, I will never leave you or forsake you.”

As I have grown older and seen too many people I love die, I have come to realize that the great comfort of the gospel is not merely that Jesus died on the cross to forgive my sins. It’s that the Jesus who died on the cross to forgive my sins sits on the throne of heaven. He’s in control. Death is under his power. And whatever happens, whatever sorrows and difficulties providence throws at me, he will guide me through it.