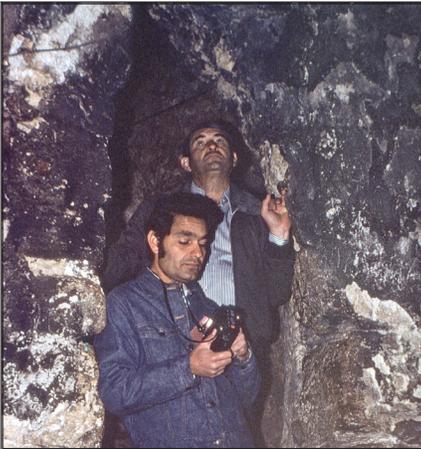


The Unexpected

In John's Story Of The Raising Of Lazarus

Chapter 11 of John's gospel tells of one of the most amazing events ever recorded by an eyewitness: a man buried for four days brought back to life by Jesus of Nazareth. Just as amazing

Photo by Roderick Graciano, 1978



Descending into Lazarus' tomb, Bethany, Israel.

ing as the miracle itself, though, are the other *unexpected* occurrences in the developing drama:

(1) Upon receiving the urgent message that His friend Lazarus was sick, **Jesus unexpectedly lingered two days before responding** (John

11.6). As the story unfolds, we learn that the Lord has purposes for His delays in answering the prayers of His people.

(2) Though the delay in going to Lazarus' home in Bethany surprises us, it made sense to Jesus' disciples. For them, **Jesus unexpectedly decided to "go to Judea again" where the religious establishment had recently sought to kill Him** (John 11.7-9). Jesus explained that though there are risks, no one stumbles who walks in the light, (i.e., guided by Jesus Himself and His mission).

(3) Upon discerning that "Lazarus is dead," **Jesus unexpectedly expressed gladness** (John 11.15). We learn from this that the Lord may have higher priorities than the immediate alleviation of our urgent problems.

(4) When Martha obliquely expressed her disappointment that Jesus had not been present to keep Lazarus from dying, **Jesus unexpectedly**

claimed, "I AM the resurrection and the life," (John 11.25). Such a claim — not only to be the agent of resurrection, but also the source of life — would be unexpected from any man, *unless he were insane ... or divine!*

(5) Surrounded by mourning friends, **Jesus unexpectedly wept** (John 11.35). Why would Jesus weep when He would shortly demonstrate divine power? Because though divine, He was also truly man, and felt true human empathy for the pain of His friends (cf. Isaiah 53.3-4).

(6) When the crowd assumed that Jesus' power was limited to healing those still living (John 11.37), **Jesus unexpectedly raised four-days-dead Lazarus back to life** (John 11.43-44)!

(7) After Jesus blessed the entire community by bringing a beloved man back from the dead, **the Jewish religious council in Jerusalem unexpectedly decided to kill Him** (John 11.45-53). We see that people resist Jesus, not for lack of evidence of His majesty, but for lack of receptivity to His lordship.

❖ Roderick Graciano

Saturday Morning Biblical Languages Fellowship

ἡσού· χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς ὁ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. ὁ εὐλόγησας ἡμᾶς ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ ὑμῶν ἐν ὁνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.



Since 2013, Timothy Ministries has facilitated an informal Saturday-morning study of the Greek New Testament. This informal fellowship has enabled laypeople to learn — each at their own pace — how to read the New Testament in its original language. The genius of this fellowship though,

is that each week it has focused many eyes simultaneously upon the unfamiliar landscape of the original-language Scriptures. The insights that this activity has surfaced from the biblical text have been many and profound!

Now, having studied through the books of 1 John and the Revelation, and nearing the conclusion of our study of Ephesians, the group has elected to branch into the Old Testament. This means that, beginning in July, we will study Old Testament passages in Greek *and Hebrew*, using Greek and Hebrew texts on alternating Saturdays.

So, if you have any interest in learning biblical Greek or Hebrew, or both, please consider visiting our Saturday morning Biblical Languages Fellowship. **This study is designed for people with no previous background in the biblical languages, and no textbook purchases nor attendance commitments are required.** For complete information, please visit the Timothy Ministries website, www.tmin.org.

A Theology Of The Bride?

I've embarked upon a fresh theological journey in search of the Bible's answer to the ultimate *why* question of our race: Why did God create us? Traditionally, the church's answer has been, "For His glory." However, while our God is unquestionably worthy of all glory (Revelation

4.11), and while the Bible does instruct us to do all things for the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10.31), a "theology of glory" has not provided a satisfying end to our *why* questions. Many find themselves asking, "Why did God create us for His glory?" Does God have some profound need to have His ego bolstered?

Obviously, **any theology that posits a need within the all-sufficient and perfect deity must fail.** This is why no one has ever taken seriously the idea that God created us because He was lonely. But if God neither created us because He was lonely nor because He needed His self-image reinforced, then *why*?

Certainly the answer must be rooted in God's eternal nature and character. The Bible teaches us clearly that God *is not* needy, but that He *is love* (Greek: *agape*, 1John 4.8, cf. 1John 3.16). Did God in eternity need someone to love? No! Before the foundation of the world, Father, Son and Holy Spirit shared perfect *agape* among themselves (John 17.24). **Is it possible, then, that we creatures in God's own image were created as an expression of the Father's overflowing love for the Son?**

This hypothesis provides the core of what I tentatively call a "theology of the Bride." A complete "theology of the Bride" would involve a thorough exploration of God's nature and character, *and* acts in history, as seen through the lens of the Bible's teaching about the Bride of Christ. Though that teaching comes to an explicit culmination in the final chapters of the Revelation, I'm discovering that there are typological foreshadowings of the Bride going back to Genesis. I would welcome your insights on this line of inquiry as I work on it!

Thank you all for making our research and teaching on such topics possible.

Eternally grateful,

Roderick Grociani

