

# Lazarus Dies and Jesus Calls Him Back to Life

John 11:1–57 tells the story of **the raising of Lazarus**, one of Jesus’ most powerful and climactic miracles in the Gospel of John. It takes place just before **Passover** and is rich in **Jewish cultural context, theological significance, and escalating tension** with the Jewish leadership.

Below is a **structured explanation** that integrates:

- **Narrative flow**
- **Jewish cultural beliefs and laws**
- **Themes related to Passover**
- **Messianic expectations**

## OVERVIEW OF JOHN 11

Section	Verses	Summary
1. The Situation	1–6	Lazarus is sick in Bethany; Jesus delays going.
2. Journey to Judea	7–16	Jesus decides to go; the disciples fear for His life.
3. Jesus Comforts the Sisters	17–37	Jesus speaks with Martha and Mary; weeps with them.
4. The Miracle	38–44	Jesus raises Lazarus after four days.
5. The Plot to Kill Jesus	45–57	Leaders plan Jesus’ death in light of the miracle.

## 1. **LAZARUS' DEATH AND FOUR-DAY BURIAL (vv. 1–6, 17–39)**

### **Jewish Beliefs About Death:**

- Jews believed the **soul lingered near the body for three days** hoping to return. By day four, decomposition had set in and **resuscitation was seen as impossible** (Midrash Rabbah on Leviticus 18:1).
- Jesus **waited until the fourth day** to make it clear Lazarus was truly dead, countering any claim of mere revival.
- Burial was immediate upon death due to Jewish law (Deut. 21:23), and mourners would gather for **seven days (shiva)**.  
“By this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.” (John 11:39)

## 2. **MOURNING CUSTOMS AND ROLE OF WOMEN (vv. 17–37)**

### **Cultural Practices:**

- **Bethany** is just 2 miles from Jerusalem — many Jews came to mourn (v. 19), a sign Lazarus’ family was respected.
- Mourners included **professional mourners** and friends who stayed for days, especially during shiva.
- **Women**, especially sisters like Mary and Martha, took active roles in mourning but were also **disciples**, as Jesus engages them in theological dialogue.

### **Martha’s Faith (vv. 21–27)**

“I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” (v. 24)

- **Resurrection** was a debated topic. **Pharisees affirmed** it (Acts 23:8); **Sadducees denied** it. Martha shows belief in the traditional **Jewish hope of resurrection**, possibly linked to **Daniel 12:2**.

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## 3. THE MIRACLE: "COME OUT!" (vv. 38–44)

### Jewish Burial Practices:

- Lazarus was **wrapped in linen strips** and buried in a **rock-cut tomb** with a stone covering the entrance (typical for wealthier Jews).
- Jesus' loud call to Lazarus ("Come out!") evokes **prophetic authority**
  - (cf. Ezekiel 37's valley of dry bones).

### Messianic Overtones:

- Only **God could raise the dead** — this sign pushes Jesus into **Messianic territory**, fulfilling **Isaiah 26:19**:  
"Your dead will live; their bodies will rise."

## 4. TENSION WITH THE SANHEDRIN & PASSOVER (vv. 45–57)

### Political and Religious Concerns:

"If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him..." (v. 48)

- The **Sanhedrin** feared Roman reprisal if Messianic excitement stirred revolt — Rome might destroy the Temple and nation (a real risk under Pax Romana).
- **Passover** was near (v. 55), and crowds were arriving early to purify themselves
  - (per **Exodus 19:10-11**, **2 Chronicles 30:17-19**).
- **Jesus' rising popularity before Passover** (a festival about deliverance!) made the authorities nervous about another Exodus-like revolution.

### Caiaphas' Prophecy:

"It is better that one man die for the people than the whole nation perish." (v. 50)

- **Unwitting prophecy**: Though Caiaphas meant it politically, the Gospel presents this as a **divine irony** — Jesus would indeed die for the nation (cf. Isaiah 53).
- The plan to kill Jesus is now official. He withdraws to **Ephraim** (v. 54), staying away until His final entry into Jerusalem.

## CONNECTION TO OTHER SCRIPTURES

Theme	Other Scriptures
Resurrection	Daniel 12:2; Isaiah 26:19; 2 Maccabees 7; John 5:28–29
Mourning and Comfort	Job 2:11–13; Ecclesiastes 3:4; Isaiah 61:1–2
Prophetic Voice over the Dead	Ezekiel 37 (valley of dry bones); 1 Kings 17:21–22 (Elijah); 2 Kings 4:32–36 (Elisha)
God's Glory in Suffering	Exodus 14:4; John 9:3; Romans 8:18
Messiah as Deliverer	Isaiah 53; Zechariah 9:9–10; Luke 24:21

## WHY THIS MIRACLE CHANGED EVERYTHING

1. **Proximity to Jerusalem** (Bethany) ensured word spread fast.
2. **Public, undeniable, and final sign**—no one could claim Lazarus wasn't dead.
3. **Raised the question of identity**: "Could this be the Messiah?"
4. **Forced the hand of the authorities**: Jesus would have to be eliminated before the festival.

# Lazarus Dies and Jesus Calls Him Back to Life

Scripture gives us some key clues to pinpoint **where Jesus was when He received word that Lazarus was sick** (John 11:1–6).

## Clues from the Text

### John 10:40

*“He went away again across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing at first, and there He remained.”*

This refers to a **retreat beyond the Jordan**, likely due to the growing threats against His life after a confrontation in Jerusalem (John 10:31, 39). This region is also known as **Perea** and is ruled by Herod.

### John 11:1–3

*“Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany... So the sisters sent to Him, saying, ‘Lord, he whom you love is ill.’”*

- The message is **sent to Jesus** where He is staying **across the Jordan**.
- He then **waits two days** before starting the journey to Bethany (John 11:6–7).

## Most Likely Location: Bethany Beyond the Jordan (a.k.a. Bethabara in region of Perea)

Detail	Location
“Where John had been baptizing” (John 10:40)	Refers to <b>Bethany beyond the Jordan</b> (John 1:28)
Traditional site	Near <b>Al-Maghtas</b> , in <b>modern-day Jordan</b> , across from Jericho
Distance to Bethany (near Jerusalem)	Approx. <b>20–25 miles west</b> over rugged terrain

**Note:** This is **not** the same as the **Bethany where Lazarus lived**, which was only 2 miles from Jerusalem.

## Travel Time and Delay

- Jesus **waited two more days** after hearing the news (John 11:6).
- The **trip itself** from Bethany beyond the Jordan to Bethany near Jerusalem could take **1 to 2 days on foot**.
- By the time Jesus arrived, Lazarus had been dead **four days** (John 11:17), indicating Lazarus likely died **shortly after the message was sent**.

## Summary

Question	Answer
Where was Jesus when He heard about Lazarus?	<b>Bethany beyond the Jordan</b> , where John had baptized (John 10:40; 11:1–3)
How far was this from Lazarus' home?	About <b>20–25 miles</b> (32–40 km)
How long did He wait before leaving?	<b>Two days</b> , then He traveled (John 11:6–7)

# Lazarus Dies and Jesus Calls Him Back to Life

John 11:9–10 is one of Jesus' more cryptic statements, but when unpacked in its context, it offers **deep theological and symbolic meaning**.

## **VERSES: John 11:9–10 (ESV)**

*9 Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world.*

*10 But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him."*

## **CONTEXT: What Prompted This?**

Jesus had just told His disciples that He was going **back to Judea** (John 11:7), where people had recently tried to **stone Him** (John 10:31–39). The disciples are **alarmed** (John 11:8):

*"Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?"*

Jesus responds with the "12 hours of daylight" metaphor in verses 9–10.

## **PHRASE-BY-PHRASE EXPLANATION**

### **"Are there not twelve hours in the day?"**

- In Jewish timekeeping, **the day was divided into 12 hours of daylight**, regardless of the season (cf. Roman and Jewish clocks).
- Jesus is speaking **symbolically**:
  - The **"day"** = **His appointed time to work**, under the Father's will.

#### **Meaning:**

"There is a fixed time for Me to walk, teach, and do My Father's work — and I must walk in it while I can."

### **"If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble..."**

- "Walking in the day" = walking **in the light of God's will** and timing.
- When you're walking in the light (doing what God has assigned you), **you're safe** and **you won't stumble**, even in danger.

#### **Meaning:**

"As long as I am walking in the light of the Father's purpose, I won't fall — no matter how threatening the circumstances."

### **"If anyone walks in the night, he stumbles..."**

- "Night" here symbolizes:
  - **Spiritual darkness**
  - Acting **outside of God's will**
  - The time of **Jesus' death**, when darkness would "reign" (cf. Luke 22:53)

#### **Meaning:**

"Those who act outside of God's timing and will — in spiritual darkness — are in danger and confusion."

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## ✨ THEOLOGICAL MEANING

Symbol	Meaning
Daylight	God's appointed time and direction (John 9:4: "Work while it is day")
Walking in the day	Living by divine guidance and calling
Night	Spiritual ignorance, rebellion, or the time when Jesus' public work would end
Stumbling	Missteps, error, or danger when not walking in God's light

Jesus is saying: "Now is still the day. I must go back to Judea—even if it's dangerous—because I am still walking in the light of the Father's plan."

## 🔄 CONNECTING SCRIPTURES

Scripture	Parallel Idea
John 9:4–5	"We must work the works of Him who sent me while it is day..."
Psalms 119:105	"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."
Isaiah 9:2	"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light..."
1 John 1:5–7	Walking in the light means fellowship with God and others
Luke 22:53	"This is your hour—when darkness reigns." (referring to Jesus' arrest)

## ✅ SUMMARY

Question	Answer
What does John 11:9–10 mean?	Jesus is saying: <b>As long as I walk in the Father's timing and purpose (the "day"), I am safe and will not stumble — even if returning to Judea seems dangerous.</b> Those who walk outside of God's will (in "night") are the ones truly in danger.
Why did He say it here?	To <b>reassure His disciples</b> that returning to Judea, even near His enemies, was <b>not reckless</b> , but fully <b>within God's appointed time</b> . His "hour" had <b>not yet come</b> .

# Lazarus Dies and Jesus Calls Him Back to Life

There is **definite significance** in the different responses of **Martha and Mary** in **John 11**, and it beautifully reflects their **personalities, roles, and relationship with Jesus**. This contrast also carries **theological and pastoral meaning**.

Let's explore it in context:



## Scene: John 11:20–32

- **Lazarus has died**, and Jesus is finally arriving in Bethany after waiting two days.
- The sisters each respond differently when they hear He's near.



### John 11:20 (Martha)

*"When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she **went and met him**, but Mary remained seated in the house."*



### John 11:28–29 (Mary)

*"When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, 'The Teacher is here and is calling for you.' And when she heard it, she **rose quickly and went to Him**."*



## CONTRAST: Martha vs. Mary

Aspect	Martha	Mary
Action	<b>Went to meet Jesus</b> immediately	<b>Waited</b> at home until called
Interaction	Initiates conversation with Jesus	Responds when <b>personally invited</b>
Focus	Engages in <b>dialogue and theology</b> (John 11:21–27)	Falls at His feet in <b>emotional grief</b> (John 11:32)
Tone	Faith mixed with understanding and questions	Emotionally overwhelmed, repeating same words as Martha, but with <b>tears</b>
Past encounter (Luke 10)	Busy serving, <b>speaks freely</b>	Quiet, <b>listens at Jesus' feet</b>



## 1. Personality and Discipleship Style

Jesus had a deep relationship with both sisters, but their personalities came through clearly:

- **Martha**: Assertive, action-oriented, verbal, pragmatic. She shows **strong theological faith** ("I believe you are the Christ..." John 11:27).
- **Mary**: Contemplative, emotional, responsive, deeply relational. She falls at Jesus' feet in grief (John 11:32) — the **second time of three in Scripture she is found at His feet** (cf. Luke 10:39, John 12:3).

Their **love and faith are equal**, but expressed differently.

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## ✨ 2. Theological Symbolism

Symbol	Martha	Mary
Faith through understanding	Martha's confession (v. 27) shows <b>rational belief</b>	Mary shows <b>relational trust</b> through emotion
Ministry balance	Represents <b>active service</b> (like deacons, teachers)	Represents <b>worship and devotion</b> (like intercessors or worshipers)
Response to Jesus' presence	Comes when He is <b>near</b>	Comes when He <b>calls</b> — a picture of the sheep responding to the Shepherd's voice (John 10:3–4)

## 🙏 3. Pastoral Reflection

- Sometimes, like **Martha**, we **seek Jesus immediately** with our grief or confusion, ready to **talk it out**.
- Other times, like **Mary**, grief leaves us **paralyzed**, waiting until Jesus **personally calls our name** — and then we come running.

Jesus loves and meets **both types of disciples** where they are — with truth and tears.

## 🔄 Their Roles Are Complementary

- Martha's **dialogue** with Jesus leads to the theological declaration of resurrection life.
- Mary's **tears** move Jesus deeply — He is "**deeply moved**" and then **weeps** (John 11:33–35).

Together, their interactions **frame Jesus' most powerful miracle** before the cross — the raising of Lazarus.

## ✅ Summary

Insight	Meaning
Martha goes out to meet Jesus	Shows her <b>initiative, faith</b> , and <b>need for understanding</b>
Mary waits until called	Reflects her <b>intimacy, vulnerability</b> , and <b>personal connection</b> to Jesus
Jesus meets both	He answers Martha with <b>truth</b> , and responds to Mary with <b>tears</b>
Spiritual application	Disciples respond to Jesus <b>in different ways</b> , but He <b>meets each one personally</b>

# Lazarus Dies and Jesus Calls Him Back to Life

This is a deeply emotional and powerful moment in John's Gospel. When Jesus saw **Mary** and the others **weeping** over Lazarus' death, He **"groaned in the spirit" and was deeply moved** (John 11:33). The language here is rich and layered with meaning. Let's unpack it:



## Key Verse: John 11:33

*"When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, He was **deeply moved in spirit and troubled**."*

(Greek: ἐνεβριμήσατο τῷ πνεύματι καὶ ἐτάραξεν ἑαυτόν)



## Greek Word Study

Phrase	Greek	Meaning
"Deeply moved"	ἐνεβριμήσατο (enebrīmēsato)	Literally means to <b>groan with anger or indignation</b> — used of <b>a horse snorting</b> in agitation
"Troubled"	ἐτάραξεν ἑαυτόν (etaraxen heauton)	Means to be <b>stirred up, shaken, emotionally agitated</b>



So this isn't just gentle sadness — Jesus is visibly disturbed, grieved, and angered.



## Why Did Jesus Groan and Get Troubled?



### 1. Compassionate Grief

- Jesus was moved by the **sorrow of Mary** and the crowd.
- **Hebrews 4:15** says He is our High Priest who is **touched by our weaknesses**.
- He enters into our grief — even though He knows Lazarus will be raised soon.  
💔 **He truly feels what they feel.**



### 2. Anger at Death and Sin

- The Greek word for "groaned" often expresses **anger or indignation**, not just sadness.
- Jesus may be expressing **righteous anger at the devastating power of death**, which is the result of **sin** (Romans 6:23).
- He sees the pain death causes and **is outraged by it** — it is **not how creation was meant to be**.  
⚔️ He is preparing to **confront death head-on**, not just at Lazarus' tomb, but ultimately at **His own cross**.



### 3. Frustration with Unbelief

- Earlier in John 11, Jesus says, *"Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?"* (v. 40)
- Even though He has done many miracles, people are still **struggling to trust Him** — their mourning reflects despair, not hope.  
😞 His groaning could include grief over the people's **lack of understanding** of who He is.



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## ✨ Combined Meaning

Jesus' groaning is a **deep emotional response** combining:

Element	Description
<b>Empathy</b>	Genuine grief over Mary and the others' sorrow
<b>Indignation</b>	Anger toward death, sin, and the suffering it causes
<b>Agitation</b>	Inner turmoil as He prepares to confront death
<b>Frustration</b>	Possible disappointment over the crowd's ongoing unbelief

## 📖 Other Supporting Scriptures

Verse	Theme
<b>Isaiah 53:3–4</b>	"A man of sorrows... acquainted with grief"
<b>Hebrews 5:7</b>	Jesus offered prayers "with loud cries and tears"
<b>Romans 8:22–23</b>	All creation groans under the weight of death and sin
<b>1 Corinthians 15:26</b>	"The last enemy to be destroyed is death"
<b>Luke 19:41</b>	Jesus weeps over Jerusalem's blindness — same heartache

## ✅ Summary

Question	Answer
<b>Why did Jesus groan when He saw them crying?</b>	Because He was <b>deeply grieved</b> , <b>moved by compassion</b> , <b>righteously angry at death</b> , and perhaps <b>frustrated with unbelief</b> . The moment reflects His fully <b>human emotional depth</b> and His divine resolve to defeat death.

# Lazarus Dies and Jesus Calls Him Back to Life

The Jewish belief that the **soul lingered near the body for three days** after death comes from **ancient rabbinic tradition** and cultural understandings of death and the afterlife—not explicitly from the Hebrew Bible, but from **oral teachings** that developed during the **Second Temple period and later**. Here's a breakdown of the belief and its background:

## THE BELIEF: Soul Lingers for 3 Days

### Rabbinic Source:

“For three days the soul hovers over the body, thinking it may return to it. But when it sees the appearance of the face has changed, it departs.”  
— *Leviticus Rabbah* 18:1 (Midrash, 5th–7th century AD, reflecting earlier oral traditions)

## EXPLANATION AND CONTEXT

Concept	Explanation
<b>Soul-Body Separation</b>	Death was seen as the <b>departure of the soul</b> (נֶפֶשׁ, <i>nephesh</i> ) from the body (Genesis 35:18; Ecclesiastes 12:7).
<b>Three-Day Window</b>	It was believed that the soul remained <b>near the body for three days</b> , hoping to reenter it—especially if death was not obviously final (e.g., coma or deep unconsciousness).
<b>Visible Decay</b>	On the <b>fourth day</b> , decomposition would begin, making revival impossible. The soul would then <b>depart permanently</b> .
<b>Burial Customs</b>	Jews buried the dead immediately, but the tomb would often be revisited for three days—perhaps to verify death.
<b>Practical Observation</b>	This belief may also reflect <b>ancient observations</b> of some people reviving from apparent death shortly after dying—rare but possible in ancient medicine.

## CONNECTION TO LAZARUS

This belief **directly intensifies the miracle** in **John 11**:

“By this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.” (John 11:39, KJV)

- Jesus **waits until the fourth day** to raise Lazarus—not only to heighten the drama, but to **ensure everyone knows** Lazarus was truly dead.
- The miracle **defies both biological death and spiritual departure**, making it an **undeniable sign** of divine authority.

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## Similar Jewish Literature References

Source	Reference	Concept
Talmud (Yevamot 120a)	Legal discussions mention verifying death over three days	Reflects concern for misdiagnosis of death
Genesis Rabbah 100:7	The soul “goes in and out” of the body for three days	Soul’s reluctance to depart
Ecclesiastes Rabbah 12:7	“The spirit returns to God who gave it”	Reflects belief in the soul’s journey post-death



## Related Themes in Scripture

While the **Torah doesn’t specify** this belief, several verses are interpreted in light of it:

- **Genesis 50:3** – Joseph’s embalming of Jacob took 40 days, suggesting a desire to delay decay.
- **Jonah 1:17–2:10** – Jonah in the fish for *three days and nights* became a metaphor for death and resurrection (cf. Matthew 12:40).
- **Hosea 6:2** – “After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up...”  
– often interpreted as symbolic of resurrection.



## Summary

Aspect	Explanation
<b>Belief</b>	The soul stays near the body for three days, hoping to return.
<b>Origin</b>	Rabbinic tradition, based on oral teaching and observation.
<b>Purpose</b>	To explain the soul’s separation process and reinforce certainty of death by day four.
<b>Impact on John 11</b>	Jesus raises Lazarus on the <b>fourth day</b> to leave no doubt—he was truly dead and this was truly divine.

# Lazarus Dies and Jesus Calls Him Back to Life

While ancient **Jewish traditions** taught that the soul lingered for a few days near the body, **Scripture itself** gives a **different view**—one that speaks more **directly and decisively** about the **immediate destiny** of the soul after death.

Here's a breakdown of **key verses** that contradict the idea of the soul lingering near the body and instead teach that a person is either with God or separated from Him after death:

## SCRIPTURES THAT TEACH THE SOUL GOES TO HEAVEN OR HELL IMMEDIATELY

Theme	Scripture	Explanation
❤️ No lingering, immediate comfort or torment	Luke 16:22–23	"The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom... the rich man also died... being in torment in Hades..." → <b>Immediate awareness of the afterlife.</b>
🕊️ With Christ after death	Luke 23:43	Jesus to the thief on the cross: " <b>Today you will be with Me in Paradise.</b> " Not after 3 days— <b>immediate</b> presence with Jesus.
🏠 Departure = Presence with Christ	Philippians 1:23	Paul says: "To depart and <b>be with Christ</b> ... is far better." Implies <b>no waiting period.</b>
☀️ Absent from the body = with the Lord	2 Corinthians 5:6–8	"To be <b>away from the body</b> is to be <b>at home with the Lord.</b> " Clear and immediate transition.
⚖️ Appointed to die once, then judgment	Hebrews 9:27	"It is appointed for man to die once, and <b>after that comes judgment.</b> " No lingering or delay is implied.
🕯️ Spirits of the righteous with God	Hebrews 12:23	Mentions "the spirits of the righteous made perfect" in the heavenly Jerusalem, showing the <b>souls of the faithful are already with God.</b>
👤 Samuel's appearance from Sheol	1 Samuel 28:13–15	The medium sees <b>Samuel</b> rising from "the earth," suggesting <b>conscious existence</b> in Sheol (not lingering over a body).
✨ The righteous gathered to their people	Genesis 25:8; 35:29	Abraham and Isaac "were gathered to their people" — often understood as a <b>post-death reunion</b> , not lingering on earth.



## OTHER RELEVANT PASSAGES



### Ecclesiastes 12:7

"The dust returns to the earth as it was, and the **spirit returns to God who gave it.**"

- This implies a **reunion with God**, not hovering or lingering.

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## ON THE FATE OF THE WICKED

Verse	Description
Matthew 10:28	“Fear Him who can destroy both <b>soul and body in hell.</b> ”
Revelation 20:13–15	The <b>dead are judged</b> and <b>cast into the lake of fire</b> —indicating conscious judgment.
2 Peter 2:9	“The Lord knows how to rescue the godly... and to <b>keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment.</b> ”



## SUMMARY

Belief	What Scripture Teaches
Lingering Soul	Found in <b>Jewish oral tradition</b> , not Scripture
Biblical View	The <b>soul departs immediately</b> to a place of <b>comfort (with God)</b> or <b>torment</b>
Implication for Lazarus	Raising him on <b>day four</b> showed he had truly died—and Jesus had power over even final, irreversible death

# Lazarus Dies and Jesus Calls Him Back to Life

Jesus' command **"Unwrap him and let him go"** in **John 11:44** is **rich in symbolism, theological depth, and practical significance**. It's more than just a detail in the miracle — it functions on **multiple levels**.

Let's explore its **layers of meaning**:

## Verse in Focus: John 11:44


*"The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, and let him go.'"*

## Literal Meaning

Command	Literal Action
"Unbind him"	Lazarus was wrapped in <b>burial cloths</b> (customary in Jewish burial), which restricted his movement. Jesus commands the <b>bystanders</b> to physically <b>free him</b> .
"Let him go"	He is no longer dead. His <b>life is restored</b> , and he is to <b>re-enter normal human life</b> — no longer among the dead.

## Deeper Symbolic and Theological Significance

### 1. Symbol of New Life / Resurrection


- Lazarus comes out of the tomb **alive but still wrapped in the trappings of death**.
- The command to **unwrap him** is a visible demonstration of **moving from death to life** — not just biologically, but **spiritually**.
- Echoes **Colossians 2:13**:  
"You were dead in your sins... God made you alive with Christ."  
 **Key Idea**: Jesus raises — but others are called to help "unwrap" the person from what bound them.

### 2. Foreshadowing Jesus' Resurrection


- When Jesus is raised (John 20:6–7), **His grave clothes are left behind** — unlike Lazarus, **Jesus no longer needs to be unwrapped**.
- This shows that **Lazarus was resuscitated**, but Jesus' resurrection is of a **glorified, transformed body**.

### 3. Call to the Community

- Jesus **raises Lazarus**, but He commands the **others to participate**:  
"Unbind him and let him go."
- This illustrates that **Jesus brings life**, but the **community helps people live free**:
  - From old identities
  - From the residue of sin
  - From what still binds them

 It's a picture of **discipleship**: we help others walk into freedom once Christ has given them life.

### 4. Freedom from Bondage

- The phrase "let him go" (Greek: *ἄφετε αὐτὸν ὑπάγειν*) can also be translated **"release him"** or **"set him free"**.
- This echoes **Exodus language**:  
"Let my people go..." (Exodus 5:1) — freedom from death, slavery, and oppression.  
 Jesus doesn't just raise us to life — He sets us **free**.

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## Supporting Scriptures

Theme	Verses
New life, unbinding sin	Romans 6:4 – “Walk in newness of life”
Freedom in Christ	John 8:36 – “If the Son sets you free, you are free indeed”
Community’s role	Galatians 6:1–2 – “Bear one another’s burdens”
Spiritual resurrection	Ephesians 2:1–6 – “You were dead... but God made us alive”



## Summary

Phrase	Significance
“Unwrap him”	Removing the physical and symbolic remnants of death
“Let him go”	Releasing him to live in freedom — a new beginning
<b>Overall Message</b>	Jesus gives <b>life</b> , and the <b>community helps free</b> others from what once bound them. It’s a call to <b>discipleship, freedom, and transformation</b> .