

John 11:38–57 – “Glory Shines Through Obedience”

God’s glory shines brightest when believers obey and trust His word—even in the face of opposition.

The Biblical World – Understanding the Context:

Lazarus’ resurrection marked the final and greatest sign before the cross. By the time Jesus arrived, Lazarus had been dead four days—a time that left no doubt about his condition. In Jewish custom, the soul was believed to have departed completely after three days, and touching the dead brought ceremonial defilement. Yet Jesus commanded, “Take away the stone.” Obedience to His Word meant violating religious norms—but it was the only way to see God’s glory revealed. The miracle also stirred division. Some believed and were saved; others hardened their hearts and plotted His death. As Passover approached—the very festival that remembered deliverance through a spotless lamb—Jesus prepared to become that Lamb Himself, offering His life so all who believe would be forever passed over from wrath.

Passage Outline

- **I. The Final Sign Before the Cross. (vv. 38–44)**
 - **II. The Response to the Power of Jesus. (vv. 45–52)**
 - **III. Jesus Does Not Walk in Religion. (vv. 53–57)**
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Passage Notes

I. The Final Sign Before the Cross. (vv. 38–44)

When Jesus called Lazarus by name, His divine voice broke through death itself, proving that His word carries the power to give life and freedom. Jesus’ command, “Loose him, and let him go,” revealed that new life also requires release from what once held us captive. Jesus not only raises us from death to life—He calls us to remove what still binds us so we can walk freely in His new life.

II. The Response to the Power of Jesus. (vv. 45–52)

When the Pharisees heard of Jesus raising Lazarus, they didn’t rejoice in the miracle—they feared

losing their influence and control. Their hearts were hardened, valuing religious authority and worldly security over the grace standing right before them. Religious pride blinds the heart from seeing the beauty of grace, turning freedom into a threat instead of a gift.

III. Jesus Does Not Walk in Religion. (vv. 53–57)

As the Passover approached, the crowds purified themselves, unaware that the true cleansing they needed was standing among them. The festival that once remembered deliverance from Egypt now found its ultimate fulfillment in the Lamb of God who would deliver the world from sin. The Passover pointed to Jesus—the spotless Lamb who willingly gave His life so that all who believe would be forever passed over from God’s wrath.

The World of the Congregation – Applying This Passage Today:

Obedience to Jesus’ Word reveals His glory in our lives. Religion binds, but faith frees. When believers walk in the power of His resurrection, the world sees what grace can do that rules never could.

What This Means for Us

- **Christ gives us life—our part is to walk like the free people He’s made us to be.**
 - *What old ways are we clinging to?*
 - → **Choose love over bitterness, patience over pride, and faith over fear.**

- **The gospel is simple because Jesus did all the work**
 - *Do you think you must earn God’s favor?*
 - → **Simply receives the gift of eternal life that religion tries to complicate.**

- **Jesus is our Passover Lamb—we have been forever passed over from judgment into everlasting life.**
 - *Do you understand the promise fulfilled in Christ?*
 - → **Live faithful to the Lamb that was slain for your eternal acceptance.**