

ἐὰν πιστεύσης ὄψῃ τὴν δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ

John 11:38-44

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February 10, 2000

I. Translation and Notes

38 Then, again groaning¹ in himself, Jesus comes² to the tomb; it was a cave and a stone was laying on it. 39 Jesus says, “Remove the stone.” Martha, the sister of the one who had died³, says to him, “Lord, he already stinks, for it is (the) fourth (day)⁴.” 40 Jesus says to her, “Did I not

¹Predicate position participle with circumstances attendant force. Jesus is the referent. James W. Voelz, *Fundamental Greek Grammar*, 2nd ed. (St Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1993), 135-136. Although a participle with supplementary usage “is very closely linked to its referent and is normally ‘present tense.’” (Voelz, 279), the participle in verse 38 does more than supplement. It gives the circumstances surrounding which the subject is doing the action of the main verb. It gives the spirit or attitude in which Jesus comes to the tomb. The more specific nuance of this participle is *cause*. Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond The Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 631: It “answers the question, *Why?*” Compare with verses 33 & 34. In his translation (p631), Wallace uses the word, “because”, but does not translate the word *πάλιν*. The major translations don’t use the word, “because”. The causal effect is to be understood by the context, especially verses 33 & 34. In other words, Jesus asks about where Lazarus is laid and comes to the tomb because he is grieving (groaning).

The aorist variant (*ἐμβριμησάμενος*) has moderate external support (C*,892s,1241,1424, *pc*) and seems to be based on a desire for uniformity in style (Mk1:43, Jn11:33). The present aspect is a significant highlighting tool here (see below). The Washingtonianus variant (*ἐμβριμων*) provides a helpful commentary in its testimony to the present aspect (with its obvious ignorance of the deponent nature of the verb).

²The major translations use a simple past here (RSV, NIV, NAS, NIV, JB, etc.). The present translation sides with the KJV (“cometh”) in conveying the present aspect since it plays an important highlighting role.

³Attributive position participle referring to Lazarus (v.14), modifying the subject, Martha. Voelz, 134-135, 172. This perfect active participle emphasizes the “present resultant condition” of what has happened to Lazarus (Voelz, 172). In attributive position it can simply be translated as an adjective: “the dead man”. The translation above was chosen because it is less stark (coinciding with the context in which family and friends are grieving for a loved one).

⁴Verse 17 (*ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτὸν τέσσαρας ἤδη ἡμέρας ἔχοντα ἐν τῷ μνημείῳ*) helps clarify the understanding of this construction (*τεταρταίος γὰρ ἔστιν*) as a temporal dative. F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. Robert W. Funk (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), §201: “The temporal dative in answer to the question ‘how long?’ is used instead of the accusative, contrary to classical usage.” (cf. their example of Acts 28:12 where some scribal activity occurred, Vaticanus opting for the temporal dative).

tell you that if⁵ you believe, you will see the glory of God?” 41 Then they removed the stone⁶. Jesus lifted (his) eyes up and said, “Father, I thank⁷ you that you have heard me. 42 I know that you always hear me, but because of the crowd which is standing around⁸ I said (this), so that they may believe that you sent me.” 43 And after he had said⁹ these things he yelled out in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” 44 ¹⁰The one who had died¹¹ came out bound¹² head and foot¹³ with gravewrap, and his face had been wrapped¹⁴ with a facecloth. Jesus says to them¹⁵, “Untie him

⁵Future more vivid condition. Voelz, 270.

⁶External support for the explanatory inserted variants is moderate: **ου ην** (A,0250,1,579,1844,al,f,syh) and **ου ην ο τεθνηκως κειμενος** (C3,f13,700,892s,1424,M). They may indicate that the stone was a focus of attention (see page 12).

⁷Performative Present: “Accomplishes something by merely uttering it . . .” Richard A. Young, *Intermediate New Testament Greek: A Linguistic and Exegetical Approach* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 112.

⁸Attributive position participle modifying the object of the prepositional phrase, the crowd. Voelz, 134-135.

⁹Predicate position aorist participle with temporal force. Jesus is the referent. Voelz, 135-136 (and p.144: aorist participle “tense” and time).

¹⁰The insertion of **και** has strong external support (**κ**,A,C3,W,Θ,0250,f1.13,33,M,it,syp,h, Ir-lat), apparently to link Lazarus’ resurrection grammatically with Jesus’ words to Lazarus. Though not as varied, witnesses to the text are generally earlier (P45,probably P66 & P75,B,C*, L,Ψ). The **και ευθως** variant (D,(12211),lat,sys,sa-ms) may betray a link to John 13:32 or to the Gospel of Mark (where it occurs twenty five times).

¹¹Attributive position perfect participle operating substantively as the subject, referring to Lazarus (v.43). Voelz, 134-135.

¹²Predicate position perfect participle with circumstances attendant force. The one who had died (Lazarus, v.43) is the referent. Voelz, 135-136

¹³The accusative with the passive. Blass, §159(3).

¹⁴The translation of this pluperfect departs from the major translations which render it in present time (NIV, JB) or simple past time (KJV, NAS, RSV, NET, etc.). This departure is based upon Voelz (p177): “The pluperfect, as the secondary form of the ‘focus upon result’/‘perfect’

and let him go.”

II. Limit, Structure & Style

stem, conveys a focus upon *completed action in past time whose results endured in the past* (and may not be enduring now). As is apparent, such a thought is expressed only infrequently.”(see also Blass, §347;Wallace, 585). The crowd probably saw the facecloth still hanging around his head and/or neck, yet somewhat pulled away from his face by Lazarus himself so that he could see to get up and walk out. Consequently, this infrequently used pluperfect was chosen to convey what a simple past or present could not adequately convey.

¹⁵Of the four word order possibilities for this clause, the text (αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς) has very strong external support (P45.66,κ,A,C2,D,Θ,Ψ,0250,f1.13,33,ℳ,it,vg-cl). The external evidence for Ἰησοῦς αὐτοῖς is also strong (P75,B,C*). The basic issue in this latter variant seems to be at play in the other two variants (ὁ Ἰησοῦς αὐτοῖς [L,W] and ὁ Ἰησοῦς [700,aur,A,r1,(sys)]): who is being emphasized, Jesus or the ones to whom He spoke? Verse 39 emphasizes Jesus as He commands to remove the stone. Verse 40 emphasizes Martha who’s objection He is addressing. It appears that the scribes corrected the clause (even very early: P75) to parallel Jesus’ command in verse 39. The strong external testimony throws its weight in favor of the text. The text also lends itself to a logical interpretive point which might have been overlooked if some scribes were zealous to emphasize Jesus’ commanding authority (see page 16).

A. Limits

In the Gospel of John the name, Lazarus, appears eleven times from 11:1 to 12:17. Within this account of Lazarus, the actual raising of Lazarus stands out as a highlighted unit (11:38-44). It begins with Jesus coming to Lazarus' tomb (11:38) and ends with Jesus telling the people to let Lazarus go (11:44). Jesus *comes* to the tomb and the result is that Lazarus *goes*.

Besides this unity of thought, the temporal marker οὐν appears both at the beginning of the unit (11:38) and in the verse following the unit (11:45). Further, a change in geographical location has occurred: Jesus came to the tomb. The text is marked off by being the only unit of text located at the tomb of Lazarus. Finally, the text is highlighted by its striking use of the present aspect.

B. Structure

Culpepper notes that “John 11 follows the typical form of a Johannine sign, but with one major difference. In John 5, 6, and 9, the sign was reported briefly and followed by a discourse appended to interpret the sign, but in John 11, three conversations interpret the meaning of the sign before the raising of Lazarus is actually narrated.”¹⁶ The following is an outline of the specific text:

**Movements of Thought
John 11:38-44**

1. Jesus comes to the tomb.
2. Jesus says to remove the stone.
 3. Jesus is *interrupted* by Martha’s words: Κύριε, ἤδη ὄζει, τεταρταῖος γάρ ἐστιν.
 4. Jesus *responds*: Οὐκ εἶπόν σοι ὅτι ἐὰν πιστεύσης ὄψει τὴν δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ;
5. They remove the stone.
 6. Jesus prays: Πάτερ, εὐχαριστῶ σοι ὅτι ἤκουσάς μου. ἐγὼ δὲ ᾔδειν ὅτι πάντοτέ μου ἀκούεις, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸν ὄχλον τὸν περιστώτα εἶπον, ἵνα πιστεύσωσιν ὅτι σὺ με ἀπέστειλας.
7. Jesus yells: Λάζαρε, δεῦρο ἕξω.
8. Lazarus comes out.
9. Jesus tells them to untie Lazarus and let him go.

Numbers 3, 4 and 6 are indented because they represent significant verbal interruptions in the flow of action.

Two major features guide the reader in discerning the topography of the text: verbs of motion and verbs of speaking. The narrator frames the whole unit with these verbs. They appear as follows: ἔρχεται (v38), λέγει (v39 twice; v40; v44), ἤραν (v41), εἶπεν (v41), ἐκραύγασεν (v43),

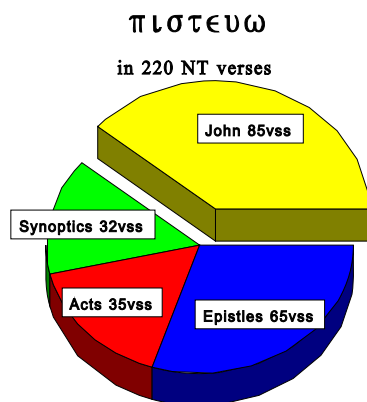
¹⁶R. Alan Culpepper, *The Gospel and Letters of John* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1988), 185.

ἐξηλθεν (v44). The narrator keeps himself in the background, making no significant interpretive comments. Rather he allows the actions and words of the characters to speak the powerful message of this sign. The narrator's use of the present aspect serves to highlight this account. The narrator's use of verbal aspect, his and the character's evaluative points of view and the implied reader figure in prominently in the discussions of irony and literary context (below).

Significant Concepts & Words

πιστεύω (v40,42) is distributed

in the Greek Bible as follows¹⁷:

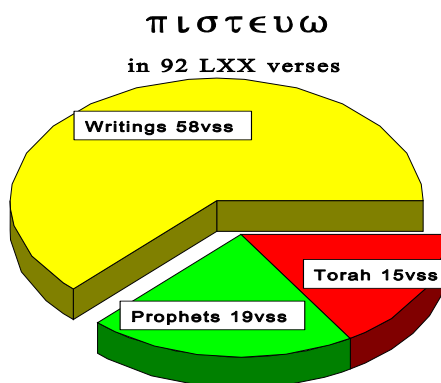


¹⁷W. F. Moulton and A. S. Geden, *A Concordance to The Greek Testament*, fifth edition revised by H. K. Moulton (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1978), 805-808. Edwin Hatch and Henry A. Redpath, *A Concordance to The Septuagint and The Other Greek Versions of The Old Testament*, Vol. II (Athens: "Beneficial Book" Publishers, 1977), 1137-1138. See also *BibleWorks for Windows*, version 3.5 (Big Fork, MT: Hermeneutika Software, 1996) which varies less than five verses from Moulton and Geden.

The pie charts draw attention to the centrality of πιστεύω in the Gospel of John as well as an important link between John and the LXX Writings. It's interesting to observe that πιστεύω does not appear in Revelation or 2 & 3 John, and in 1 John it occurs in only seven verses. In his Gospel, John uses πιστεύω almost three times more than the Law and Prophets combined (34vss). He uses πιστεύω almost twice as much as Paul (50vss). Next to John's Gospel, Acts ranks second (35vss) and Romans, third (20vss), in their use of πιστεύω. This portrays a overwhelming impression regarding the importance of πιστεύω in the Gospel of John.

At the beginning of the Gospel, 1:12 lays down an overarching theme, emphasizing πιστεύω:

□Βυτ ασ μανψ ασ ρεχειπεδ Ηιμ, το τηεμ Ηε γα
 πε τηε ριγητ το βεχομε χηιλδρεν οφ Γοδ, το τηο



σε ωηο βελιεπε ιν Ηισ ναμε.”¹⁸ The most famous passage in John (and possibly the whole Bible) emphasizes πιστεύω: 3:16. πιστεύω is mentioned in all but three chapters (15, 18, 21). Finally, πιστεύω is central in the Gospel's summary statement which also refers to the signs (20:31):

□βυτ τηεσε αρε ωριττεν τηατ ψου μαψ βελιεπε τηατ θεσουσ ισ τηε Χηριστ, τηε Σον οφ Γ
 οδ, ανδ τηατ βελιεπινγ ψου μαψ ηαπε λιφε ιν Ηισ ναμε.□

¹⁸R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*, with Foreword by Frank Kermode (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 87: “John 1:11-12 has often been regarded as a summary of the gospel.”

Throughout John, πιστεύω is mostly used intransitively¹⁹ or with Jesus²⁰ as the object (in the dative case or preceded by εἰς or ἐπι). The intransitive use accounts for 27% of the verses with πιστεύω. The uses with Jesus as the object account for 50%. It appears that these two uses are closely linked throughout the Gospel. For example:

9:36 – Ἡε ανσωερεδ ανδ σαιδ, ∇Ωηο ισ Ηε, Λορδ, τηατ Ι μαψ βελιεπε ιν Ηιμ?∇

9:38 – Τηεν ηε σαιδ, ∇Λορδ, Ι βελιεπε!∇ Ανδ ηε ωορσηιπεδ Ηιμ.

¹⁹1:7,50;3:12;4:41,42,48,53;5:38,44;6:36,64,69;9:38;10:25,26;11:15,40;12:39;14:29;16:31;19:35;20:8,25,29.

²⁰1:12;2:11,23;3:15,16,18,36;4:39;5:24,46;6:29,30,35,40,47;7:5,31,38,39,48;8:30,31,45,46;9:35,36;10:37,38,42;11:25,26,45,48;12:11,36,37,42,44,46;14:1,12;16:9,17:20.

See also 10:25,26,37,38 for another example of a close link between the transitive and intransitive use of πιστεύω. The deduction is that “believe” (intransitive) generally means the same thing as “believe in Jesus”.²¹

Next in frequency is the use of πιστεύω with οτι, “believe *that...*”, which verses account for about 12% of the verses in John with πιστεύω.²² These all refer to believing something about Jesus (that He came from the Father and that He is the Christ). In addition, the object of πιστεύω can be the Scriptures (2:22;5:47;12:38) or Jesus’ words (2:22;4:50;5:47). Finally, the Gospel of John reveals its transcendent intent by the way in which provision is made for future readers who will, like some of the characters, believe:

17:20 I δο νοτ πραψ φορ τησεε αλονε, βυτ αλσο φορ τησεε ωηο ωιλλ βελιεπε ιν Με τηρουγη τηειρ ωορδ;

19:35 Ανδ ηε ωηο ηασ σεεν ηασ τεστιφιεδ, ανδ ηισ τεστιμονψ ισ τρυε; ανδ ηε κνο ωσ τηατ ηε ισ τελλινγ τηε τρυτη, σο τηατ ψου μαψ βελιεπε.

20:29 Θεσυσ σαιδ το ηιμ, √Τηομασ, βεχαυσε ψου ηαπε σεεν Με, ψου ηαπε βελιε

²¹Thus πιστεύω in John’s Gospel differs radically from the “faith” of existential epistemology (which is the basis of postmodern thought) in that John’s faith has a definite object: Jesus Christ. See Francis A. Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live? The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1976), 163: “. . . secular and religious Kierkegaardianism did bring to full tide the notion that reason will always lead to pessimism. . . . Through a ‘leap of faith’ one must try to find meaning without reason.”

²²8:24;11:27,42;13:19;14:10,11;16:27,30;17:21;20:31.

πεδ. Βλεσσεδ *αρε* τηοσε ωηο ηαπε νοτ σεεν ανδ *ψετ* ηαπε βελιεπεδ.∇

20:31 βυτ τηεσε *αρε* ωριττεν τηατ ψου μαψ βελιεπε τηατ θεσυσ ισ τηε Χηριστ, τ ηε Σον οφ Γοδ, ανδ τηατ βελιεπινγ ψου μαψ ηαπε λιφε ιν Ηις ναμε.

Besides the two times the verb is used within 11:38-44, the immediate context (relating to Lazarus) emphasizes believing (11:15,25,26,27,45,48;12:11). It appears that Jesus' delay in going to see Lazarus was related to believing:

11:15 ∇Ανδ Ι αμ γλαδ φορ ψουρ σακεσ τηατ Ι ωασ νοτ τηερε, τηατ ψου μαψ βελιε πε.
Νεπερτηελεσσ λετ υσ γο το ηιμ.∇

Jesus' conversation focuses upon believing:

11:25 θεσυσ σαιδ το ηερ, ∇Ι αμ τηε ρεσυρρεχτιον ανδ τηε λιφε. Ηε ωηο βελιεπεσ ιν Με, τηουγη ηε μαψ διε, ηε σηαλλ λιπε.

11:26 ∇Ανδ ωηοεπερ λιπεσ ανδ βελιεπεσ ιν Με σηαλλ νεπερ διε. Δο ψου βελιεπε τηισ?∇

11:27 Σηε σαιδ το Ηιμ, ∇Ψεσ, Λορδ, Ι βελιεπε τηατ Ψου αρε τηε Χηριστ, τηε Σον οφ Γοδ, ωηο ισ το χομε ιντο τηε ωορλδ.∇

11:40 θεσυσ σαιδ το ηερ, ∇Διδ Ι νοτ σαψ το ψου τηατ ιφ ψου ωουλδ βελιεπε ψου ωουλδ σεε τηε γλορψ οφ Γοδ?∇

Before He raises Lazarus, Jesus' prayer focuses on believing:

11:42 ∇Ανδ Ι κνωω τηατ Ψου αλωαψσ ηεαρ Με, βυτ βεχαυσε οφ τηε πεοπλε ωηο αρε στανδινγ βψ Ι σαιδ *τηισ*, τηατ τηεψ μαψ βελιεπε τηατ Ψου σεεντ Με.∇

The result of raising Lazarus was belief:

11:45 Τηεν μανψ οφ τηε θεωσ ωηο ηαδ χομε το Μαρψ, ανδ ηαδ σεεν τηε τηινγσ θ εσυσ διδ, βελιεπεδ ιν Ηιμ.

Then, the plot to kill Jesus reaches the height of drama because people are believing in Jesus following the raising of Lazarus:

11:48 ∇Ιφ ωε λετ Ηιμ αλονε λικε τηισ, επερψονε ωιλλ βελιεπε ιν Ηιμ, ανδ τηε Ρο

μανσ ωιλλ χομε ανδ τακε αωαψ βοτη ουρ πλαχε ανδ νατιον.∇

Finally, they also plot to kill Lazarus:

12:11 βεχαυσε ον αχχουντ οφ ηιμ μανψ οφ τηε θεωσ ωεντ αωαψ ανδ βελιεπεδ ιν θεουσ.

This study of πιστεύω in the Gospel of John merely scratches the surface in observing its centrality in the Gospel of John, the Lazarus account, and the drama of the Gospel's plot. Future study could focus upon the interrelatedness between the transitive and intransitive use of πιστεύω in John, John's use of πιστεύω compared with that of the LXX (especially the Writings), the way in which (if any) the LXX use and John's use of πιστεύω differ from the Hebrew words underlying the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, John's use of the verb compared with other New Testament writers, various shades of nuance in the verb within John, and the relation between πιστεύω and the signs.

δόξα (v40) occurs 379 times in the Greek Bible, 13 of which are in the Gospel of John.²³

The earliest mention of δόξα refers to wealth, honor and position of the patriarchs (Gen 31:1,16), including Joseph in Egypt (Gen 45:13). Next, it appears in the song of Moses (Ex 15:7,11) with reference to God's wonders in overthrowing the Egyptians to deliver the Israelites from them (also Num 14:22;23:22;24:8). In Exodus 16:7 δόξα is to be seen the next morning as God first gives the Israelites manna (cf., Jn 6:48-51). In the same chapter δόξα is used in connection with God appearing as a cloud (Ex 16:10). Then, at Sinai, δόξα is the cloud (Ex 24:16) and the fire (Ex 24:17) on the mountain. Next, δόξα describes the priestly garments of Aaron and his sons (Ex

²³*BibleWorks* word search: δόξα.

28:2,40;33:5).

The tabernacle is made holy in God's glory, appearing as a cloud (Ex 29:43;40:34,35;Lev 9:6,23;Num 14:10). **δόξα** is present with the ark (1Sa 4:22). God's **δόξα** fills the temple as a cloud (1Ki 8:11;1Ch 22:5;2Ch 5:13,14;Ps 26:8) and as fire (2Ch 7:1-3). Yet such **δόξα** was not present in the second temple (Hag 2:3).

δόξα also refers directly to God (Ex 33:18,19,22;Num 12:8;Num 16:19[w/Korah];Dt 5:24;Neh 9:5;Ps 3:3;17:15;19:1;24:7-10;29:3) and His salvation (Ps 20:6). The earth is filled with His **δόξα** (Num 14:21;Is 6:3). Many verses speak about giving God glory (Jos 7:19;1Ch 16:17,28, 29;Ps 29:1-2;Is 42:12). God's **δόξα** is also connected with terror (Is 2:10,19,21;3:8; 10:16).

In Numbers 24:11, **δόξα** means 'honor'. In Numbers 27:20 it appears to mean 'authority' (Moses was told to give some of his **δόξα** to Joshua). **δόξα** refers to royal wealth, honor and power, especially in regard to Solomon (1Ki 3:13;1Ch 29:12,25;2Ch 1:11,12), but also in regard to David (1Ch 29:28) and other kings as well as Esther and Mordachi (2Ch 17:5;18:1;32:27; Es 1:4;5:1,2;5:11;6:3;10:2;Is 8:7;14:18).

The prophets speak of the **δόξα** leaving Israel (Hag 2:3;Hab 2:16;Hos 4:7;9:11;Is 17:4), yet being restored and coming anew in tremendous proportions (Hag 2:7,9;Zech 2:5;Dan 12:13 [w/resurrection];Is 28:5;35:2;41:16;45:25;58:8;60:1-2,13,19;61:6;62:2-3;66:11-12). Finally, it will be revealed to all flesh (Is 40:5;66:18-19).

From all of these Old Testament verses an oversimplified definition might be derived: **δόξα** is the very best of everything (God's power & presence, earthly wealth & honor & power, beauty, strength, the best of the best). It seems to be strongly connected with God's special/real presence. Some even argue that "a genuinely Lutheran Biblical theology might better organize itself around

the concept of glory than covenant.”²⁴

John begins by saying, “we beheld His glory” (1:14). In the beginning of His signs, Jesus “manifested His glory” (2:11). Glory is to be given to God the Father (7:18;8:50;9:24). Jesus will be glorified through Lazarus’ sickness (11:4). Martha will “see the glory of God” if she believes (11:40). Jesus prays:

□Ανδ νοω, Ο Φατηερ, γλοριφω Με τογετηερ ωιτη Ψουρσελφ, ωιτη τηε γλορω ωηιχη Ι ηα δ ωιτη Ψου βεφορε τηε ωορλδ ωασ.” (17:5),

□Ανδ τηε γλορω ωηιχη Ψου γαπε Με Ι ηαπε γιπεν τηεμ, τηατ τηεψ μαψ βε ονε φουστ ασ Ωε αρε ονε:□ (17:22), ανδ □Φατηερ, Ι δεσιρε τηατ τηεψ αλσο ωηομ Ψου γαπε Με μαψ βε ωιτη Με ωηερε Ι αμ, τηατ τηεψ μαψ βεηολδ Μψ γλορω ωηιχη Ψου ηαπε γιπεν Με; φορ Ψου λοπεδ Με βεφορε τηε φουνδατιον οφ τηε ωορλδ□ (17:24).

Ιν τηε Γοσπελ οφ Θοην ιτ απεαρσ (λικε τηε Ολδ Τεσταμεντ, εσπεγιαλλψ Ισαιαη) that there is a strong connection between God’s glory and God’s (Jesus’) *presence*, and it is something that is/will be *seen*. In raising of Lazarus, Jesus words to Martha are climactic: ἐὰν πιστεύσης ὄψῃ τὴν δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ. In this sign, both aspects of the δόξα are brought together: Jesus’ *presence* and what can be *seen* (the raising of Lazarus). In fact, more than any other miracle, the raising of Lazarus is (in effect) seen by all of Jerusalem (through eyewitnesses). The effect is

²⁴Horace D. Hummel, *The Word Becoming Flesh* (St Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1979), 29.

such that the representative of Israel says Jesus must die (11:49-50) because of it, and they *even* plan to kill Lazarus (12:10). An interesting aspect of the raising of Lazarus that seems to have been planned by Jesus is that He was not *present* when Lazarus was sick, before he died. Jesus purposely delays so that He will not be present before Lazarus dies so that the disciples will believe (11:15). His lack of presence is then highlighted by rebukes from Martha (11:21), Mary (11:32) and some of the Jews (11:37). This was all part of Jesus' plan in order to expand their faith. Then, at the climatic point, Jesus speaks the key words to Martha: *ἐὰν πιστεύσῃς ὄψῃ τὴν δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ*. Will she then, with others, *see* the *δόξα* and *believe* when He is hanging on the cross? The Old Testament's use of *δόξα* overwhelmingly refers to beauty, honor, power displays, wealth, fire and cloud, etc. One can only see the *δόξα* of the cross through faith, a faith that Jesus is trying to teach.

Future study in the topic of *δόξα* could explore *δόξα* in Isaiah, *δόξα* in the New Testament, *δόξα* in the future, and all the vivid pictures associated with *δόξα*. Questions that can be explored are: How and why does God share His *δόξα* with people? If God already has glory, why are people told to glorify Him in both the Old and New Testaments? Finally, exploring the awesome depth of the glory of the cross would be most edifying. It is the greatest paradox of all since it *looks* like the most inglorious thing ever (the Son of God dying in such gore, shame and weakness), its sight is most apt to cause *unbelief*, and it is the epitome of God's separation or lack of *presence*; yet its *sight* is the most glorious to believers and the Father who loves them (3:16), what His followers most *believe*, and it means no more separation but God's *presence* forever for those who believe!

ἀποστέλλω (v42) occurs in 26 verses in the Gospel of John.²⁵ From beginning to end, the concept of accepting that Jesus came from the Father is very important. Jesus spends a lot of time emphasizing His origin (and His return to the Father). Sometimes heated controversy surrounds His origin (9:16-34). As in His prayer here (11:42) Jesus makes a concerted effort to open peoples' eyes to the truth that He came from the Father (especially chapter 17). Finally, this sending transfers to the disciples in 20:21: "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

λίθος (v38,39,41) is the most common noun in 11:38-44 (aside from Jesus' name and pronouns). The reader's attention is drawn to the stone by Martha's interruption when Jesus says to remove the stone. This attention ultimately draws the reader's attention to the stone at Jesus' own tomb.

εὐχαριστώ (v41) is filled with rich meaning in the New Testament, reminding one especially of the Lord's Supper. Space doesn't allow the plunging of its depths here. Within the Gospel of John, it is connected with the multiplication of the loaves and fish (6:11,23).

C. Style

John 11:38-44 is both didactic and narrative. Jesus' uses the special opportunity to teach, both in His response to Martha and in His prayer. He employs repetition of truths He has taught before: "Did I not say to you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" (v40) and "I said

²⁵*BibleWorks* word search: ἀποστέλλω.

this in order that they may believe that You sent Me.” (v42).

The text is especially marked by irony. In 11:38-44 the crowd and even Lazarus are flat characters. The character focus is upon Jesus and Martha. The irony occurs because of the difference between the implied reader’s point of view and Martha’s. Yet, in an interesting way, the reader can very much relate to Martha’s point of view in its naturalness. In this text Martha represents everyone (including the reader) who has a very strong belief in Jesus yet is also missing some key understanding/faith.

The implied reader is set up for the irony by the sequence of events, clarity and analogy (to the last miracle - John 9). First, the narrator informs the reader that Lazarus was sick (11:1). Then, the reader receives a very important bit of information in 11:4: “When Jesus heard that, He said, ‘This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.’” For even the virgin reader, this would be reminiscent of 9:3 (just one page earlier): “Jesus answered, ‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.’” The reader is also informed that Jesus purposely delayed his journey when he heard about Lazarus’ sickness (11:6). After these important bits of information (which Martha does not have), Jesus again speaks in a way parallel to the last miracle in regard to working while it is day (11:9-10; cf., 9:4-5). He next says, “Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up.” (11:11; also 11:12-15). Martha has none of this information given by the narrator with his omniscient point of view.

The implied reader is further set up for the irony by the movement and emotional response of the characters in verses 17-37. The movement proceeds from Martha to Mary to the comments of the Jews. They all respond emotionally (including Jesus who weeps). First, Martha comes ever so close to the faith to which the narrator wants to move the reader. The narrator’s evaluative

(ideological) point of view is characterized by a belief that “Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.” (20:30). This life is eternal life (3:16). This miracle thus reaches a climax among the signs in large part by the author’s use of irony. It touches upon the main aspects of the perspective the author is trying to convey (belief in Jesus, Jesus came from God, eternal life).

In Jesus’ conversation with Martha, she comes ever so close to the spot to which the author wants to move the implied reader as she says, “But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.” (11:22). Jesus then says that her brother will rise again. She interprets this in a futuristic eschatological way. He teaches an important eschatological teaching about Himself being the resurrection in response to her words. Like a good girl, she believes, but still does not get it all (still ignorant of what the narrator has given to the implied reader). Culpepper notes that “Mary and Martha accept Jesus as a miracle worker and healer and call him to help their brother. Their misunderstanding is that they do not see that Jesus himself is now the resurrection and the life for those who believe. Their misunderstanding lies in their failure to relinquish or modify the traditional futuristic eschatology for the Johannine realized eschatology.”²⁶

Next, the encounter with Mary (11:32-33) is similar to the beginning of Martha’s encounter with Jesus (11:21) in that Mary uses exactly the same words: “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” (11:32). Yet it is different in that He doesn’t teach, but is emotionally moved when He sees Mary (11:33-36). The Jews then add to the movement by their emotional response (11:36) and words (11:37). Their words build toward the irony by their reference to the last miracle (with which the implied reader has already been lead to see an

²⁶Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 140.

analogy): “Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?”

Jesus delay (His lack of presence) produces a literary tension that receives triple emphasis from the words of Martha, Mary and the Jews. They all believe (that He could heal sickness), yet interestingly don’t believe (that He will raise Lazarus now). The reader is then set up for the tomb scene.

As Jesus comes, grieving, to the tomb and tells them to remove the stone, the focus of the characters is very earthly (death, grieving, tomb, stone, corpse). There is apparent empathy for Jesus’ grieving (11:34,36). So when Martha, at the height of irony (after her powerful belief confessed in 11:22 and 27), objects to the removal of the stone by telling Jesus that Lazarus stinks because it is four days since he died, she reveals that her thoughts are on the earthly. She seems to think that Jesus is merely moved by earthly grief in His words and actions. By all outward indications He is. Without the interesting information that the implied reader has been given, the natural assumption is that He is merely grieving. Martha, constrained by her earthly existence, does not comprehend the heavenly meaning in Jesus’ words to her. She fails to recognize that He is the resurrection and the life *now*.

By the irony the author produced, Jesus’ key words are brought clearly into the middle of the frame: Οὐκ εἶπόν σοι ὅτι ἐὰν πιστεύσης ὄψῃ τὴν δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ; These words also anticipate their response to the cross. Despite the earthliness of His bloody death, displayed clearly in all of its earthiness, will any believe and see the glory of God in it? Martha’s last appearance is in 12:2. The reader doesn’t know how she responded to the cross. The narrator’s evaluative point of view is working very hard to convince the reader to believe and see the glory of God.

After Lazarus emerges the people standing around are apparently so awestruck (or heaven struck) that Jesus has to break them out of their stupor by telling them to untie him and let him go. Its perlocutionary force is intended to bring people back down to earth. The fact that some scribes would have changed the text to emphasize Jesus commanding (footnote 15) indicates that someone was reading too much into this now very earthy attention of Jesus.

III. Genre and Settings

A. Genre

David Aune writes:

Greco-Roman biography was a continuously developing, complex genre with changing features. An analysis of the constituent literary features of the Gospels situates them comfortably within the parameters of ancient biographical conventions in form and function. They constitute a *subtype* of Greco-Roman biography primarily determined by *content*, reflecting Judeo-Christian assumptions.²⁷

He observes that “Obituaries were important in the development of ancient biography.”²⁸ In the Gospel of John, the raising of Lazarus constitutes a crucial element in the development of the plot toward Jesus’ death.

The immediate result of the miracle was that many believed (11:45), but this resulted in the epitome of the plot to kill Jesus (11:47-57). The raising of Lazarus was the straw that broke the camel’s back. The drama heightens with heightened irony (11:49-52). Jesus’ giving life to Lazarus initiates the plot to take His (11:53). The loosing of His life is then the giving of life for

²⁷David E. Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment in Library of Early Christianity*, ed. Wayne A. Meeks (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1987), 46.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 27.

all (11:51-51;3:16).

The raising of Lazarus is also a key element in the development of an important aspect of the evaluative point of view of the author. Jesus not only exercises power over nature and heals, He also raises from death.

B. Settings

The historical setting can receive a little illumination from cave tombs discovered in Jerusalem.²⁹ People were buried in cave tombs after being wrapped in grave wrappings. They were layed comfortably upon a bed like platform under which was a hole or smaller cave containing bones of deceased ancestors. The body was laid comfortably (including a headrest) as if sleeping. After the skin rotted off of the bones, they were “gathered to their fathers” by putting their bones under the platform with the rest of the bones of the ancestors. Thus the tomb was continually reused.

The literary setting is surrounded both by belief (10:42;11:45;12:11) and severe opposition (10:31,39;11:53;12:10). This represents the choice which confronts the reader (believe or oppose Jesus). This seventh sign brings the signs to a climax in the flow of signs that point to the cross. What is significant about this sign?

The sign of Lazarus is significant in that it becomes the straw (or anvil) that breaks the camels back regarding the plot to kill Jesus. It does this by revealing Jesus’ glory in a climactic manner. This climax also constitutes a final element in Jesus’ life and light giving mission. It provides an essential final element to the eschatological understanding (in which Martha was so

²⁹*The Archaeology of Jerusalem From David to Jesus, Part II From the Return of the Exiles to the World of Jesus*, narr. Hershel Shanks, 36 min., Biblical Archaeology Society, 1990, videocassette.

mature [11:22-27], yet the irony highlighted the missing element in her understanding and faith):
 Jesus is the resurrection and the life *now*.

The early signs have minimal recognition. The water to wine miracle was observed by the disciples, Jesus' mother and the servants. The host of the wedding banquet didn't even know from whence it came. The circle widens a little with the nobleman's son who is healed, with the result that his whole household believes. With the healing at the pool, some Jews in Jerusalem begin to be aware of Jesus and seek to kill Him because He healed on the Sabbath. The fourth sign (the middle sign) breaks out into a few thousand as Jesus multiplies the loaves and fish. The result was that "Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, 'This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.' Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to a mountain by Himself alone." (6:14-15). It is interesting note that it doesn't say any believed (as it does regarding the son, blind man, and Lazarus). Recognizing Jesus as a miracle worker or even a king does not require much faith, or at least not the faith to which the author of John is pointing the reader. The fifth miracle (walking on the sea) seems out of sequence since it did not seem to widen the circle of observers (of those who would see His glory). It also has no mention of believing, simply that "they willingly received Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land where they were going." (6:21). The sixth sign (blind man) again takes up the ascending sequence since it causes a big stir in the temple. The healed man is cast out of the temple (unlike the man at the pool who escaped "unscathed" - possibly because he was more willing to aid the Jews than the man healed of blindness). The drama heightens in between the sixth and seventh sign as the division becomes clear (10:19-21).

The crescendo reaches its climax with Lazarus since now it appears that "everyone will

believe in Him” (11:48). Now “on account of him [Lazarus] many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.” (12:11). The manifestation of His glory in this seventh sign spread like wildfire because “the people who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness. For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign.” (12:17-18). The Pharisees even noticed that it was totally out of hand with this last sign: “You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!” (12:19). Greeks even came to see Jesus (12:20-21) who then realized, “The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.” (12:23) and predicts His death on the cross: “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.” (12:32).

IV. Preaching the Word

The text is about believing and seeing the glory of God (11:40). This includes believing that the Father sent Jesus (11:42). The intended effect of the text is for the reader or hearer to receive (through faith) the best of what God has to give (3:16). This includes seeing God’s glory and receiving resurrection and eternal life. This ultimately means seeing and believing in God’s glory revealed at its peak on the cross. The illocutionary force of the text is *promise* (ἐὰν πιστεύσης ὄψῃ τὴν δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ). The perlocutionary force of the text is to *produce faith* (ἵνα πιστεύσωσιν ὅτι σὺ με ἀπέστειλας).

The text can be used homiletically to inspire faith in Christ’s present work in people’s lives. He doesn’t merely promise pie in the sky in the sweet by and by. He lifts our heads up from our earthly focus to see manifestations of His glory. This raising of Lazarus is one such manifestation for us, ever so concrete and present as the Holy Spirit works through the word of the eyewitnesses

to transmit a witness all the way to us. As we see manifestations of His glory in the Word and in present life, our heads are lifted to see that Christ fulfills all of our needs and conquers all of our challenges both *now* and in the future. Even when we think we have a full understanding like Martha and can be a good boy or girl and confess the right answer, we still may be missing a very important piece of the pie. Jesus works *now* with the fulness of His power. He points us ultimately to the greatest manifestation of glory in the cross. When it seems that we are overcome by the worst of this world (death, cross), Christ Jesus is actually manifesting His glory (which we see by faith) to the fullest.

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