

Open Bible Stories – Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead

Introduction

Key Idea

The story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead teaches us Jesus has power over death.

Core Belief Verse

"For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead." 1 Corinthians 15:21

God's Big Story

The eternal God created all things in six days.

He made a good and perfect world.

He made humans in his image to fill the earth and rule over creation.

But humans rebelled against God and ruined God's creation.

God set to restore his world through his promise.

God made a covenant with Abraham. He promised to bless all nations through Abraham.

God kept his promises across the generations.

God provided Abraham with a promised child, Isaac.

God gave Isaac a wife, and she bore twins Jacob and Esau.

God blessed Jacob and his sons, and the blessing continued to the next generation.

God rescued Joseph, one of Jacob's sons, and used him to rescue his family.

God caused his people, the Israelites, to multiply in the land of Egypt; eventually, they became slaves.

But God raised up a deliverer, Moses, to deliver his people from slavery.

God judged the Egyptians with harsh plagues; in the final judgment, he passed over his people, who covered their doorposts with the blood of a sacrificed lamb.

Then, God delivered the Israelites by bringing them out of Egypt and crossing the Red Sea on dry land.

God made a covenant with the Israelites and made them his people.

God tested Israel in a series of wilderness wanderings and eventually brought his people into the promised land of Canaan.

God raised up deliverers to lead Israel and rescue them from their enemies.

God formed Israel into a kingdom. He made a covenant with King David and promised to send a king that would rule his people forever.

Many of Israel's kings were evil, and the kingdom of Israel was divided into two kingdoms.

God sent prophets to warn his people of God's judgment and call them to repent.

When Israel did not repent, God sent his people into exile. After many years, he brought them back to the land.

Throughout the Old Testament, God promised to send his Messiah to deliver his people from their sin.

After many years, the prophet John was born. He would prepare people for the coming Messiah.

At the perfect time, God sent his Son, Jesus, to be born of a virgin Mary.

When John and Jesus grew up, John baptized Jesus as a sign that Jesus was God's beloved Son.

Jesus endured all manner of temptation without ever sinning.

When he was thirty years old, he launched a public ministry of preaching, teaching, and healing.

He taught his disciples about the life of compassion, sacrifice, and forgiveness.

Jesus performed many miracles: he fed a crowd of five thousand, he walked on water, he healed the sick, and he cast out demons.

He proclaimed to people the nature of real faith, God's kingdom, and how fallen humans can be restored in relationship with God.

Toward the end of his ministry, Jesus revealed his power and glory to his disciples.

He raised a dead man to life.

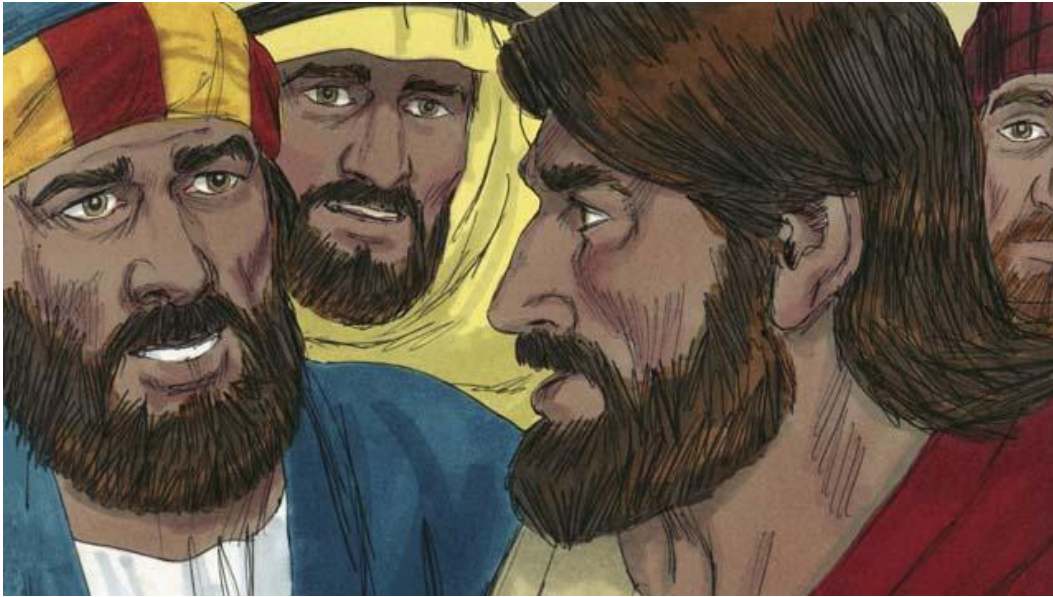
The Story: Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead

37-01



There was a man named Lazarus. He had two sisters named Mary and Martha. They were all close friends of Jesus. One day someone told Jesus that Lazarus was very sick. When Jesus heard this, he said, "This sickness will not end with Lazarus dying. Instead, it will cause people to honor God."

37-02



Jesus loved his friends, but he waited where he was for two days. After those two days, he said to his disciples, "Let's go back to Judea." "But Teacher," the disciples answered, "just a short time ago the people there wanted to kill you!" Jesus said, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, and I must wake him."

37-03



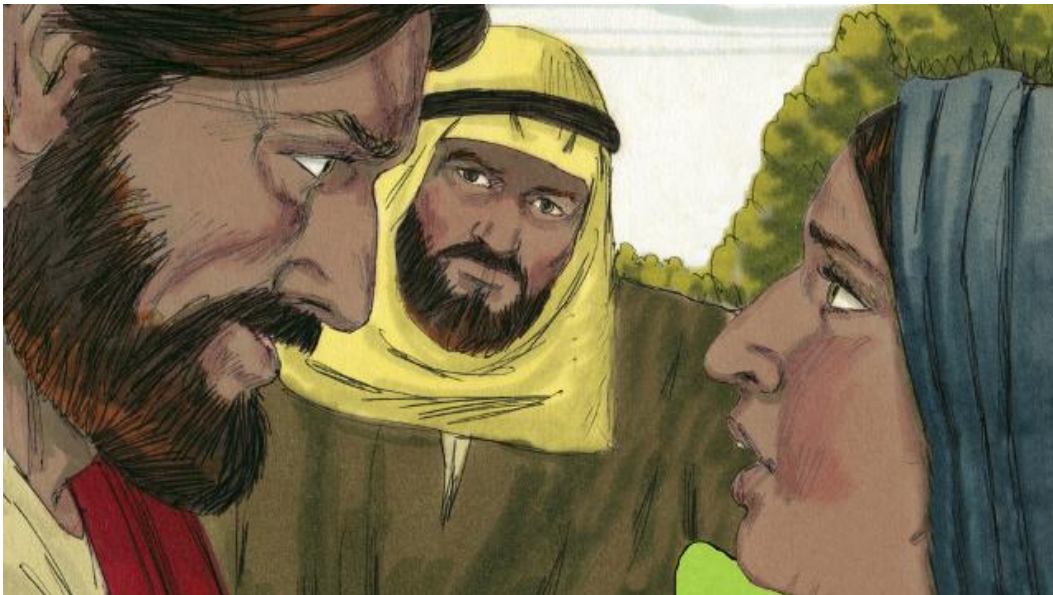
Jesus' disciples replied, "Master, if Lazarus is sleeping, then he will get better." Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe in me."

37-04



When Jesus arrived at Lazarus' hometown, Lazarus had already been dead for four days. Martha went out to meet Jesus and said, "Master, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I believe God will give you whatever you ask from him."

37-05



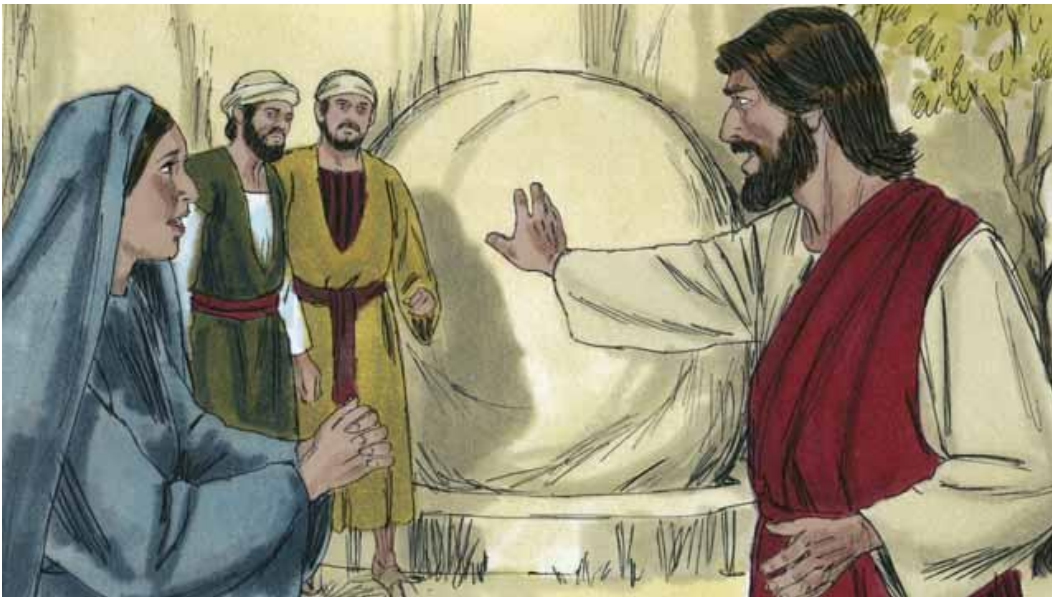
Jesus replied, "I am the Resurrection and the Life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though he dies. Everyone who believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" Martha answered, "Yes, Master! I believe you are the Messiah, the Son of God."

37-06



Then Mary arrived. She fell at the feet of Jesus and said, "Master, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died." Jesus asked them, "Where have you put Lazarus?" They told him, "In the tomb. Come and see." Then Jesus wept.

37-07



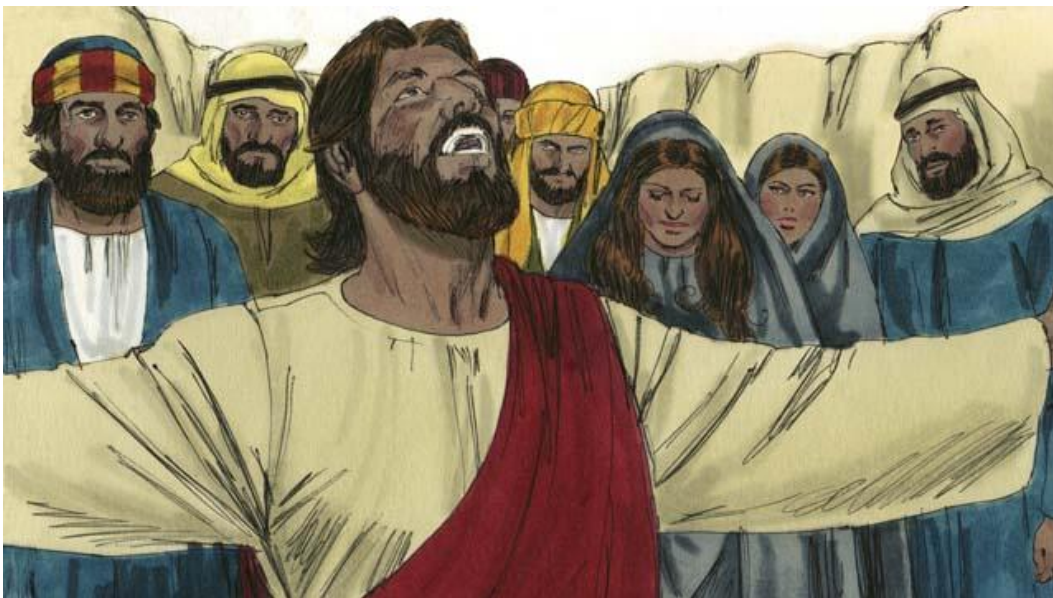
The tomb was a cave with a stone rolled in front of its opening. When Jesus arrived at the tomb, he told them, "Roll the stone away." But Martha said, "He has been dead for four days. There will be a bad smell."

37-08



Jesus answered, "Did I not tell you that you would see God's power if you believe in me?" So they rolled the stone away.

37-09



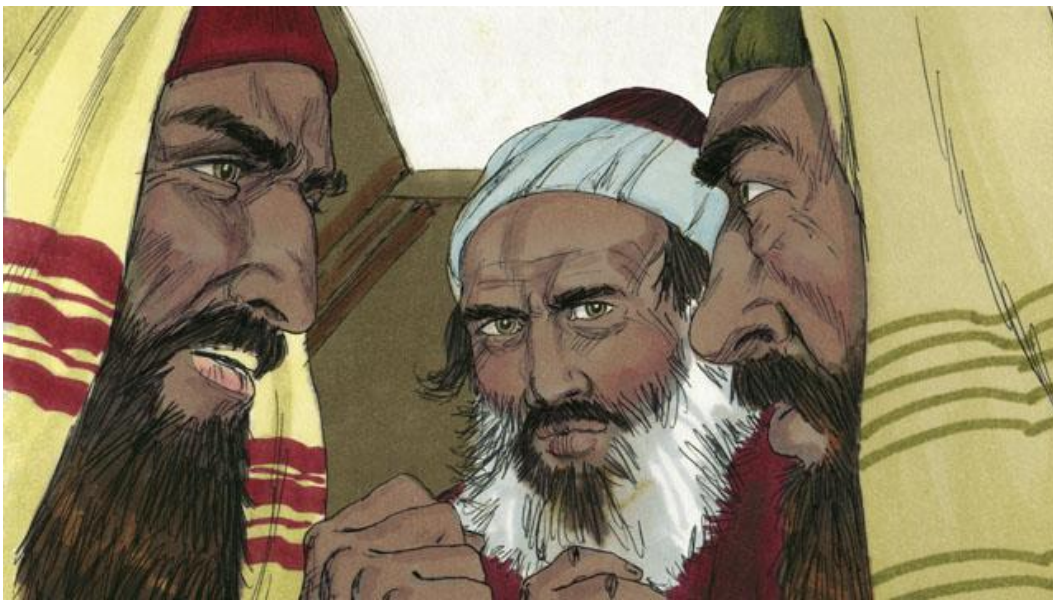
Then Jesus looked up to heaven and said, "Father, thank you for hearing me. I know you always listen to me, but I say this in order to help all these people standing here, so that they will believe you sent me." Then Jesus shouted, "Lazarus, come out!"

37-10



So Lazarus came out! He was still wrapped in grave clothes. Jesus told them, "Help him take off those grave clothes and release him!" Many of the Jews believed in Jesus because of this miracle.

37-11



But the religious leaders of the Jews envied Jesus, so they gathered together to plan how they could kill Jesus and Lazarus.

A Bible story from: John 11:1-46

Community Study: Unless the Lord—Working God's Power

- **Key Idea:** relying on God to make our work fruitful
- **Key Passage:** Psalm 127:1-2
- **Main Session:** OBS 37 (Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead)

Recite the Core Belief Verse (3-5 minutes)

The verse below summarizes the teaching of the current passage.

Read the verse out loud as a

community. Read it again several times as a group until the whole community can recite it from memory.

21 For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whomever he

wishes. John 5:21

OR

39 See now that I, even I, am God, and that there is no god besides me; I kill, and I make alive; I

wound, and I heal, and there is no one who can save you from my might. Deuteronomy 32:39

Acknowledging Our Need for God's Power (5-10 minutes)

God is powerful enough to raise people from the dead. This same God empowers us to go about his

work. As a community, reflect on your need for God's power in your community and work.

We need God's power to help us in these ways...

Read the Passage (3-5 minutes)

God wants you to serve him in God's strength. Only God can energize us to serve him. As a community,

read the following Bible passage together to understand the important truth that God is behind all of the

work and success in our lives and ministries.

1 Unless Yahweh builds the house, they work uselessly, those who build it. Unless Yahweh guards

the city, the watchman stands guard uselessly. 2 It is useless for you to rise up early, to come home

late, or to eat the bread of hard work, for Yahweh provides for his beloved as they sleep. Psalm

127:1-2

Discuss the Passage (10-15 minutes)

God calls us to serve him with devotion and commitment.

Nevertheless, God is the only source of

strength and success in our lives. As a community, use the following questions to discuss the teaching of

the biblical passage.

1. How does this passage describe our work for God? How can the image of building a house and

watching over a city relate to the work of ministry?

2. How does this passage describe work that is not done in God's strength?

3. How does this passage teach us to go about God's work with healthy and godly rhythms of work and

rest?

4. How can your community remain focused on God's work and apply the principles of this passage to

have a healthy approach to your work?

Movement 1: Understand the Story

Read each question aloud. Give the group time to answer before sharing the answer.

Observation Questions

37-01

Who were Lazarus, Mary, and Martha?

Lazarus, Mary, and Martha were close friends of Jesus.

What happened to Lazarus?

Lazarus got very sick.

What did Jesus say would be the end result of Lazarus' sickness?

Jesus said that Lazarus' sickness would not end up with Lazarus dying, but it would be for the glory of God.

37-02

What did Jesus do after he heard about Lazarus' sickness?

He waited where he was for two more days.

Why were the disciples concerned when Jesus decided to go to Judea?

They were concerned because the people in Judea wanted to kill Jesus.

How did Jesus answer his disciples when they expressed concern for Jesus' safety?

Jesus told his disciples that Lazarus had fallen asleep and Jesus had to wake him.

37-03

What did the disciples think Jesus meant when he said Lazarus had fallen asleep?

They thought he was just asleep and would get better.

What did Jesus plainly tell the disciples about Lazarus?

Jesus said that Lazarus had died.

Why was Jesus glad that he was not there when Lazarus died?

Jesus was glad because something would happen that would make the disciples believe in him.

37-04

How long had Lazarus been dead when Jesus arrived at Lazarus' hometown?

He had been dead for four days.

What did Martha say to Jesus when she greeted him?

Martha met Jesus and said that if Jesus had only been there then Lazarus would not have died.

Did Martha believe that Jesus could have healed Lazarus?

Yes, she believed God would give Jesus whatever he asked of him.

37-05

What did Jesus say about himself?

Jesus called himself the Resurrection and the Life.

What will happen to believers because Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life?

Whoever believes in Jesus will live, even though he dies, and everyone who believes in Jesus will never die.

What did Martha see when Jesus asked if she believed what he said?

Martha said, "Yes, Master! I believe you are the Messiah, the Son of God."

37-06

What did Mary do when she arrived?

Mary fell at the feet of Jesus and said to Jesus that Lazarus would not have died if Jesus had been there.

What question did Jesus ask at this time?

Jesus asked about where they put the body of Lazarus.

How did they respond to Jesus' question about where Lazarus was?

They told Jesus that Lazarus was placed in a tomb. They invited Jesus to come and see.

How did Jesus respond?

Jesus wept.

37-07

What was the tomb like?

The tomb was a cave with a stone rolled in front of its opening.

What did Jesus say when he arrived at the tomb?

Jesus told them to roll away the stone when he arrived at the tomb.

How long had Lazarus been dead?

He had been dead for four days.

What did Martha think about Jesus' instructions to roll away the stone?

Martha said there would be a bad smell because Lazarus had been dead for four days.

37-08

How did Jesus answer Martha's concern?

Jesus reminded them they would see God's power if they believed in him.

What did they do with the stone?

They rolled away the stone from the tomb.

37-09

How did Jesus pray to God the Father?

Jesus looked up to heaven and thanked God.

Why did Jesus thank the Father out loud?

He did that so the people would believe that the Father had sent him.

What did Jesus command Lazarus to do?

He commanded Lazarus to come out of the tomb!

37-10

What happened after Jesus commanded Lazarus to come out?

Lazarus came out of the tomb still wearing his grave clothes.

What instructions did Jesus give?

Jesus told them to help Lazarus take off the grave clothes and release him.

Who responded in faith as a result of this miracle?

Many Jews believed in Jesus because of this miracle.

37-11

How did the religious leaders of the Jews react when they saw the miracle?

They envied Jesus and planned to kill him and Lazarus.

Movement 2: Theological Questions

What Does This Story Teach Us?

1. Why did God send Jesus to earth? How does the story of Lazarus teach us about God's purpose in sending Jesus?
2. What should we believe about Jesus? What does this story teach us about who Jesus is (his nature and identity)?
3. What does it mean to follow Jesus? How does this story teach us about what it means to genuinely believe in Jesus?

Movement 3: Live It Out

Personal Implications & Applications From The Story

Guide the group to discuss practical obedience from this story and name concrete next steps.

1. How can align our life with God's purposes?
2. What does this story teach you about Jesus that most encourages your faith?
3. How would you describe your faith in Jesus? Which characters in this story do you most relate to?
4. Think about this week. Where does "Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead" challenge you to obey God in a practical way?
5. How does this key idea shape one decision you need to make right now: The story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead teaches us Jesus has power over death.

Movement 4: Retell the Story

Invite the group to retell the story several times until they can tell it clearly and faithfully.

1. Can someone retell "Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead" from beginning to end in their own words?
2. Retell this story again, but focus on what God did at each key moment.

3. Retell the story in three parts: beginning, middle, and ending. What changed in each part?
4. If you were teaching this story to your family tonight, how would you tell it simply and clearly?

Church Ministry

Ministry Preparation: Take time to consider how you could minister this story to others. Record some ministry ideas below.

Ministry Implementation: Minister this story to a group of believers as you had planned. Use the information in this study to help develop a teaching/lesson or lead a discussion of this story with other believers. Record your ministry plan below.

Ministry Reflection: Think about what you learned from ministering this story to other believers. Reflect on your experience below.

Movement 5: Share It

Help each person plan how they will share this story with others before the next gathering.

1. Who is one specific person you will share "Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead" with this week?
2. When and where will you share this story with them?
3. What is the one main truth from this story you want them to remember?

Report-back next meeting: Who did you share with, and what happened?

Mission Engagement

Witness Preparation: Take time to consider how you will witness this narrative to unbelievers. Record some ideas below.

Witness Implementation: Share this story with an unbeliever. Use the information in this study to help develop a teaching/lesson or lead a discussion of this story with unbelievers. Record your witness plan below.

Witness Reflection: Think about what you learned from ministering this story to unbelievers. Reflect on your experience below.