

Putting Lazarus to Death

“So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well, because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.” John 12:10-11.

After Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered the council and first made plans to kill Jesus before they planned to kill Lazarus. Their plans to kill Jesus were not because they didn't believe that Jesus was able to perform signs – that He was a kind of sleight-of-hand magician and they couldn't figure out how He did His tricks. In fact, they even admitted that Jesus is able to do many signs. The reason they wanted Jesus dead was because: *“If we let Him go on like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.”* (Jn. 11:48). They didn't want to give up their status or their prized nation. They wanted to continue to be in charge, to continue in their wealth, to keep things the way they were.

Then the chief priests and Pharisees discovered that many Jews believed in Jesus as the Messiah because of Lazarus. There were Jews who lived in the area who presumably knew that Lazarus died (he was dead for four days before Jesus raised him) and, upon seeing Lazarus alive and well, they believed that Jesus was who He said He was because of this undeniable miracle. So then the council decided to put Lazarus to death as well.

As Christians today we recognize that there are many reasons for our belief in Jesus Christ. There are many evidences for the existence of God, first of all. Then there are also many historical evidences for the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. There are many undeniable proofs of Jesus's messiahship. There are many *Lazaruses*, so to speak.

When we find ourselves in the world and around unbelievers, we must not be anxious to speak about God and Jesus, because when we are, we're often worried about losing our status – our *place and nation*, let's say – among friends, colleagues, and family. We don't want to be belittled or downgraded. We want to keep our positions and standings with peers and society. But if we find ourselves skirting questions or accusations about God and Jesus and refusing to demonstrate the irrefutable proofs of Jesus's messiahship, then we're no different than the chief priests and Pharisees. By refusing others of the evidence, we're hiding Jesus from others. In effect, we're putting Lazarus to death. [DJR]

