

The Sign of Lazarus

(I) The Raising of Lazarus, xi. 1-46

I have thought it best to give, first of all, an exposition of the passage as we have it, reserving for the end any suggestions as to historical difficulties. One difficulty, however, may here be mentioned.

A good deal of ingenuity has been spent in the attempt to harmonize the Lazarus story with the chronology of Jesus' life, as given in the Gospels. This seems to me a useless and unnecessary task, in view of the character of the Fourth gospel.

The evangelist has clearly placed the Cleansing of the Temple at the beginning of his narrative, presumably for the reasons mentioned in pp. 87 f. For similar reasons he places the "sign" of Lazarus here, in order to prepare the minds of his readers for the true view of the Cross, as victory, the glorifying of the Son of God, and not as a disaster.

The chronological scheme in the Fourth Gospel is unique, and cannot, except by acts of arbitrary violence, be harmonized entirely with the Synoptic scheme.

(The Fourth Gospel: Its Significance and Environment by Robert Harvey Strachan, London: Student Christian Movement, 1917, 150, Text and Paragraph Structure Modified)