

Miracle 13: Jesus Raises a Widow's Son from the Dead in Nain

Luke 7:11-17

The Text: 11 And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people. 12 Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. 13 And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. 14 And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare *him* stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. 15 And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother. 16 And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people. 17 And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judaea, and throughout all the region round about.

The Context (7:11): After healing the Centurion's paralyzed servant in Capernaum (miracle #12), Jesus, his disciples, and a large crowd of people are walking toward the city of Nain. Five additional contextual observations to understand the complete setting:

- 1) Nain is about 20 miles southeast of Capernaum on the slope of Little Herman near Mount Tabor.
- 2) Nain is a mountainous day's journey from Capernaum and they are arriving the next day (v.11).
- 3) This is the only time Nain is mentioned in the Bible.
- 4) Nain means "beautiful" and something beautiful is about to happen in Nain.
- 5) To clarify the words "He (Jesus) went into a city," a little Greek grammar needs to be explained. Verse 12 tells us that He was not yet into the city (came near to the gate of the city). How do these two agree? There are seven tenses in the ancient Greek language, and this Greek word translated "went" is in the imperfect tense. The imperfect tense is essentially the present tense shifted back into the past. In other words, the imperfect tense verb is an action that is still going on stated as in the past. (I do not want to overwhelm us, but I do what to show you how exact and true is God's Word.)

The Circumstance (7:12-13): 12 observations:

- 1) Jesus (His disciples and a large crowd of people) are nearing the gate of the city of Nain and He meets a funeral procession.
- 2) "Behold"- a demonstrative particle meaning See! or Look! and calling special attention to that which follows.
- 3) Jesus sees a widow followed by her only son being carried out of the city, Dead!
- 4) According to the text, neither the widow nor anyone speaks to Jesus, but He knows that she is a widow and he is her only son. OMNISCIENCE (God knows everything).
- 5) Without anyone interceding on their behalf, Jesus chooses to become involved in this widow's and her son's lives.
- 6) The Greek uses the word "only begotten" Greek monogenes #3439 used only nine times in the New Testament (what a wonderful study!). We all should realize that it is used in John 3:16.
- 7) Jewish burials were always at least 50 yards outside the city (often further); the family would lead the funeral processional; and others would follow. This passage tells us that a "considerable crowd of the city" was following. Thus, with both a large crowd following Jesus and a considerable crowd in the funeral processional; there were many witnesses to these events.

(over)

- 8) Interrupting a funeral was a blatant breach of Jewish law.
- 9) The “Lord” sees her (the widow). The title Lord is very fitting for this occasion, because our Lord “felt compassion” on her (doesn’t say the son). Jesus saw a woman who had lost her husband and now her only begotten son; He knew how heart-wrenching that would be. There is no compassionate friend comparable to Jesus (I Pet. 5:7).
- 10) The compassion (Greek #4697) of Jesus is another great study. Used 12 times in the New Testament (only in Matthew, Mark, and Luke).
- 11) Jesus says to the widow, “Weep not” (literally cease or stop weeping). This is a very difficult command (imperative) for a grieving mother to obey. But Jesus will quickly help enable her to obey. Christ’s commands include His enablement (Phil. 4:13).
- 12) How often Jesus dries up the fountains of sorrow (Matt. 5:4; I Thess. 4:13). He is the “Man of Sorrows” (Isa. 53:3). Do you have a heartache today? Take it to Jesus.

The Miracle (7:14-15): 9 observations:

- 1) Jesus “approaching touched the bier” (open coffin- often wooden plank/box on which the dead person would be carried to burial).
- 2) “and the ones carrying him stood (still).” Interrupting a funeral processional was a blatant breach of Jewish law. Jesus speaks to the dead man (young man; youth).
- 3) “Young man, I say to thee, arise (to awaken; to raise up).”
- 4) Immediately, the cold corpse became a living person.
- 5) The dead man sat up and began to speak.
- 6) Remember; the open coffin. Setting up and speaking both give evidence of life.
- 7) We are not told what he spoke.
- 8) Sadly, critics say that the young man was in a cataleptic trance and Jesus saved him from being buried alive.
- 9) “and he (Jesus) gave him to his mother.” What a wonderful gift! Weeping became laughter (Luke 6:21).

The Results (7:16-17): There were at least three results with five additional observations/applications:

- 1) All took (to take; to receive; to be grasped with) fear. Why did all fear? They saw Jesus’ power over life and death (John 11:25-26). All the earth should fear the Lord (Psalm 33:8-9a).
- 2) They glorified God by what they said. “They” seems to include unbelievers in the crowd and in the funeral procession. Is it possible for unbelievers to glorify God?
- 3) This Greek word, “Glorified” means to render or esteem glorious. The Scriptures tell us that all creation glorifies God (Psalm 19:1; Psalm 150:6).
- 4) They say two things: “a great prophet was raised among us” and “God visited His people.”
- 5) Recognizing Jesus as a great prophet was a start. They were putting Him on the level of Elijah and Elisha who both brought people back to life (I Kings 17:21-24; 2 Kings 4:32-37). They initially saw Him as a great prophet, but not as God.
- 6) They say that God visited His people. A very similar statement is declared at the birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1:68). It brings glory to God for them to realize that this miracle was God once again active among His people. But they saw Jesus as a prophet, not the Messiah.
- 7) Then, this word (logos) went forth in all Judaea and all the surrounding region (neighborhood). Word of mouth (no texting, emails, or cell phones). Again, glorifying God (to ascribe honor, power, and admiration to Jesus).
- 8) When was the last time you (and I) spread the word concerning Christ’s resurrection?