

## Research: Raising of Widow's Son at Nain Luke 7:11-15

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.

*“He went into a city called Nain — A town situated about a mile or two south of Tabor, and near Endor. And many of his disciples went with him — Among these, doubtless, were the twelve appointed to be apostles: for, “it is not to be imagined that he would suffer the chosen witnesses of his miracles to be absent, when so great a miracle was to be performed as the raising a person from the dead, and to be performed so publicly, in the presence of all those who were attending the funeral” (Benson Commentary, www.biblehub.com).*

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.

*“The gate of the city. Cities were surrounded by walls, to defend them from their enemies. They were entered through gates, placed at convenient distances from each other. In most cities it was not allowed to bury the dead within the walls. Hence they were borne to some convenient burial-place, in the vicinity of the city” (Barnes 203).*

*“A dead man carried out. A funeral procession. Anciently, no Jews were buried within the walls of the city except the kings and distinguished persons” (Barnes 203).*

*“There was a dead man carried out — “When Jesus and the multitude that attended him came to the gates of Nain, they met the corpse of a youth, whom much people of the city were carrying out to burial, accompanied by his afflicted mother bathed in tears. This woman, being a widow, had no prospect of any more children, wherefore, as he was her only son, the loss she sustained in him was very great” (Benson Commentary, www.biblehub.com).*

*“Jesus felt himself especially sent to the poor and oppressed, and that clearly included in a preeminent way the largest class of that group, women. However, if women were a more oppressed class among the oppressed, the most oppressed of women were widows, for they had almost no means of livelihood or standing before the law, nor anyone to provide for them. Jesus was clearly most concerned about these most oppressed of the most oppressed class of the oppressed, and his concern was translated into action” (Swidler 183).*

13 And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.

“We owe our knowledge of this incident to Luke only. He is the Evangelist who specially delights in recording the gracious relations of our Lord with women, and he is also the Evangelist who delights in telling us of unasked miracles which Christ performed. Both of these characteristics unite in this story, and it may have been these, rather than the fact of its being a narrative of a resurrection, that found for it a place in this Gospel” (MacLaren’s Expositins, www.biblehub.com).

“The cortege has already gone through the town and is on the way to the place of burial, which was customarily outside the town. The deceased was the ‘only son’ of his mother. The compassion of the Lord Jesus, and of Luke as well, goes out to the woman. She is a widow who, without a man in her family, would probably become destitute, unable in that society to earn a living” (EBC 8.899).

“*Saw her.* Had it been in Judaea, the hired mourners and musicians would have preceded the bier; in Galilee they followed. First came the women; for an ancient Jewish commentary explains, woman, who brought death into our world, ought to lead the way in the funeral procession” (Vincent 1.323).

*See is eido* in Greek which means “to perceive with the eyes, to discern, to turn the mind to, to behold, perception as denoted by *eido* when conceived of as completed, permits the sensuous element to be forgotten and abides merely as an activity of the soul” (Thayer 173).

“*compassion* is *splagchnizomai* in Greek: to be moved as to one’s bowels, (the seat of love and pity); to be moved deeply” (Thayer 584).

**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.**

“Here the facts make it clear that it was after the Jewish manner of burial. It was not a closed-up coffin, like the mummy-cases of Egypt, but an open bier on which the corpse lay wrapped up in its winding-sheet and swathing bands, as in the description of the entombment of Lazarus (John 11:44) and of our Lord (John 20:6-7), with the *sudarium*, the napkin or handkerchief, laid lightly over the face. The immediate effect of the touch was that they who bore the bier “stood *still*.” They must have marveled, that One who was known as a Teacher should touch that which most Rabbis would have avoided as bringing pollution, and their halting in their solemn march implied, perhaps, both awe, and faith that the touch could not be unmeaning” (Ellicott’s Commentary, www.biblehub.com).

“Jesus risked ritual defilement by touching the ‘coffin’ on which the shrouded body was laid. One can only imagine the thoughts of the pallbearers as they stopped. Jesus did what would

seem useless—he spoke to a dead person. On the young man’s return to life, Jesus ‘gave him back to his mother’ words similar to those in I Kings 17:23 regarding Elijah and the widow” (*EBC* 8.899).

“*I say unto thee.* Elijah and Elisha raised the dead with difficulty, and after strong wrestlings with God in prayer. Christ without effort, by a single word of power” (Dummelow 748).

**15 And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.**

“The raising of this young man was one of the most decisive and instructive of our Lord’s miracles. There was no doubt that he was dead. There could be no delusion, and no agreement to impose on the people. He came near to the city with no reference to this young man; he met the funeral procession, as it were, by accident; and by a word he restored him to life. All those who had the best opportunity of judging—the mother, the friends—believed him to be dead, and were about to bury him. The evidence that he came to life was decisive. He sat up, he spake, and all were impressed with the full assurance that God had raised him to life. Many witnesses were present, and none doubted that Jesus, by a word, had restored him to his weeping mother” (Barnes 204).

“The story concludes with proof of the success of the miracle. The bystanders are convinced that a great prophet has arrived with the miracle-working powers of Elijah and Elisha, and that his presence among them is evidence that ‘God has not forgotten his people!’ ” (*IDB* 8.133).

This is the first recorded raising of the dead by Jesus. After the widow’s son of Nain, there is Jairus’ daughter in Capernaum (Luke 8:41-56), and Jesus’ friend Lazarus in Bethany, just outside of Jerusalem (John 11:1-46). Only Elijah and Elisha had ever raised the dead, so it is natural that the crowd proclaims, “A great prophet is risen up among us; and God has visited his people.”

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