

## Stage IV. The Great Galilean Ministry

### F. Crucial Events Leading up to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tour of Galilee

#### 2. Jesus Raises a Man from the Dead with Just a Word

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #082

Base Text: LK 7.11-17 (Parallel Text: None)

11 The next thing that happened was that Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd were going along with him. 12 As he approached the town gate, a dead person--the only son of his mother--was being carried out, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her.

13 Because the Lord saw her, he was filled with compassion for her and he said, "*I command you not to continue to cry.*"

14 Then he went up and touched the bier they were carrying him on, and the bearers stood still. He said, "*Young man, I command you, get up!*" 15 The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.

16 They were all filled with awe and were giving glory to God. "A great prophet has appeared among us," they said. "God has come to help his people."

17 This news about Jesus spread throughout Judea and all the surrounding regions.

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = <sup>MT</sup>, Mark = <sup>M</sup>, Luke = <sup>L</sup>, John = <sup>J</sup>, Acts = <sup>A</sup>. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *the words of Jesus are italicized in red*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

CONTEXT DIGEST	
Location	Nain, in Galilee
Timeline	May, 31 AD (Month Sixteen)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage IV: The Great Galilean Ministry
	F. Crucial Events Leading Up to the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Tour of Galilee
Title	2. Jesus Raises a Man From the Dead With Just a Word (Miracle #11)

#### COMMENT:

Luke recorded a second powerful miracle immediately after the Teaching on the Mount. Like the healing of the centurion's servant in the previous reading, specific miracle #11 dramatically reinforced Jesus' closing illustration of building our lives on the sure foundation of his authoritative word.

The similarity and repetition of these two consecutive examples of the absolute power of Jesus word were arranged in this sequence by Luke for special emphasis. None of the apostles and disciples who witnessed these two miracles ever forgot them. Neither should we.

In miracle #10 Jesus instantly healed a young man in Capernaum on his deathbed at a distance, with just a word. Now, in miracle #11 Jesus raised another young man from the dead with just a word. The authority of Jesus' word over life and death is the point.

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The Lord had traveled about 35 miles Southwest from Capernaum to Nain, on the southern edge of Galilee. It was a journey of at least two days, requiring an overnight stay. The most likely place for that was Cana, the hometown of Nathanael (JN 21.2). Jesus had stayed there at least twice before (JN 2.2 and 4.46), and probably used Cana as a regular stopping point on his journeys from Southwestern Galilee to the Lake. (Simonias, Raphia, Exaloth, Nain, Sephoris, Ascochis, and Nazareth were towns in this region.)

In addition to Luke's deliberate arrangement of his narrative to graphically illustrate Jesus' authority, as students of the chronological life of Jesus we know that he had already made the claim that he would resurrect all the dead people of history—with just a word—at the final judgement (JN 5.25, 28-29; DJN #062). He said this just a month earlier at his second Passover. Now he provided proof that he did possess the authority and power to do just as he had said. The raising of the widow's only son at Nain is therefore a crucial demonstration in the gospel record of Jesus' authority to give eternal life.

While this miracle certainly highlighted the awesome power of Jesus' word, it was different from the previous miracle because it did not require the widow who benefited from it to exercise any faith. Most of Jesus' miracles involved faith on the part of those who received healings. Some, like this one, were beautiful expressions of pure compassion and mercy on Jesus' part, in which those who received the miracle did not expect or anticipate it in any way.

This kind of miracle occurred solely because Jesus was moved to give it as an unconditional, unmerited gift. The Lord was moved with deep compassion for the widow. Her tears touched something in the innermost reaches of his soul.

***"Because the Lord saw her, he was filled with compassion for her and he said, 'I command you not to continue to cry.'"***

Widows were helpless without the presence and resources of their husbands. This only son was the only chance for life that the widow had left, and now he had been snatched from her. On top of double measures of grief for her husband and now her son, this woman was destitute. Jesus was deeply touched by this reality. He commanded the end of her tears of sorrow, and replaced them with tears of unspeakable joy.

The circumstances of the resurrection of the widow's son in Nain were similar to the scene where Elijah prayed for the widow of Zerah's son to be resurrected in I Kings 17.22. The people apparently thought of Jesus' miracle in those terms, for they said: ***"A great prophet has appeared among us. God has come to help his people."*** Elijah was the first person in the Bible to experience resurrection through prayer. Likewise, Jesus' miracle #11 was the first instance of Jesus raising someone from the dead in his ministry. Others would follow.

However, there is a key difference between Elijah and Jesus. Elijah prayed and asked God to bring the widow's dead son back to life. Jesus did not pray—he acted AS God and commanded the dead son to come back to life and get up. Jesus' divine authority was further underscored by the way Jesus ***"gave him back to his mother."*** Jesus had complete authority over the life, death, and resurrection of this young man. He "gave him back" because he had full control over him.

Only Jesus has the power to stop death in its tracks, as illustrated by the way he touched the funeral bier and immediately halted the procession headed to the grave. With either a word or mere touch of his hand, Jesus effortlessly ruled over life and death. He is the only sure foundation for eternity. He cares for our needs. He is deeply touched by our tears, pain, grief, and sorrow. He is living, breathing compassion in the flesh. There is no one like him.

### APPLICATION:

Jesus spared the only son of a broken hearted widow out of compassion for her. That same compassion caused him not to spare himself for us, even though he was the only Son of God. Compassion caused the Father not to spare his only Son on our behalf, too. Whatever our lot in life, we can know for sure that the Trinity compassionately cares for us because of scenes such as this in the gospels.

## **Stage IV. The Great Galilean Ministry**

*How do you need to wrap yourself in Christ's compassionate love for you today?*

*The fact that he did not spare himself in any way, while sparing us the judgement we deserve, proves his compassion for us. How will you lay hold of Jesus compassion for you?*