

WIDOWS OF LUKE'S GOSPEL.

3. THE WIDOW OF NAIN, SORROWING. LUKE 7.11-17.

INTRODUCTION. The spotlight here switches from a strong resourceful centurion, to a desolate broken-hearted widow. It is one of three accounts of the Lord Jesus raising people from the dead, the others being Jairus's daughter, and Lazarus. The girl was newly dead, the young man here was being taken to be buried, but Lazarus had been four days dead, and the Apostle John regards his resurrection as a sign, i.e. an evidence of the Lord's sonship and deity.

The location of this miracle, Nain, would have been unheard of, had not the Lord Jesus graced it with His presence. It was not like Bethlehem or Jerusalem, places that featured elsewhere in Scripture.

V11 "The day after." Scripture speaks of "the *days* of his flesh," Heb. 5.7. In particular, note how John ch. 1 speaks of various days, one after another.

"Much people" with Him: "Much people" with her, V12. So there was congestion right at the gate, a logjam. God's timing is absolutely perfect. You can see it in various Bible narratives, e.g. Abraham and Melchizedec, Abraham's servant and Rebekah, Ruth and Boaz, Elijah and the widow, Philip and the Ethiopian. (No references supplied: try to locate them for yourself!)

Warning!! Don't take seemingly good timing as the sole indication of divine favour. Jonah arrived in Joppa in good time to catch a boat for Tarshish, and yet he was moving in disobedience.

V12. The Gate. This is the only city gate mentioned in the Gospels, although we know that the Lord Jesus suffered "without the gate," Heb. 13.12, and that "they that sit in the gate" spoke against Him, Ps. 69.12. At these two city gates, there were a mother, a son, and death.

"The only son." Cf. Ch. 8.42, 9.38. See also Mark 12.6, "Having... one son, his wellbeloved..."

"She was a widow," so for the second time, tragedy had struck, The trials of life don't always come singly. Jacob lost Joseph, Simeon was in an Egyptian jail, and now they wanted to take Benjamin away! (Gen. 42.36). Job had a succession of blows, ch.1. The disciples faced storms in both Mark 4 and 6. Paul lists a catalogue of trials in 2Cor.11.

V13. "The Lord saw her." So often in Scripture, the Lord observed those who were in distress. See Ex. 3.7, Mk. 6.48, Rev. 2.9, Job 23.10.

"Compassion." Note His compassion for the Sick, Mk. 1.41, the Shepherdless, Matt. 9.36, the Sightless, Matt. 20.34, and the Sorrowing, (here).

"Weep not." He dried the tears of the sorrowing widow, but allowed the woman later in the chapter to weep her tears of repentance and gratitude.

V38. "Blessed are they that mourn" in that sense.

V14. "He touched the bier." The only other time this word *bier* is used in our English bible is in the case of Abner's funeral. 2Sam. 3.31. The best that David could do was to follow the bier. He was helpless in the circumstances; not so the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Young man." A timely reminder that death is not exclusively for old people. "Only one life, twill soon be past,

Only what's done for Christ will last." Hence the importance of using our best years for God.

V15. He "began to speak." Speech gave evidence of life. In the case of Jairus's daughter, her walk and appetite gave evidence of life, Mk. 5.42-43. As far as Lazarus was concerned, fellowship at the table with Christ gave evidence of life, John 12.2.

"Delivered him to his mother." One of the incidents where the thoughtfulness of Christ is seen. See also Mk. 5.43, 6.39.

V16. "Great Prophet." See Deut. 18.15. Great High Priest, Heb. 4.14. Great King, Matt. 5.35. "He shall be great," Luke 1.32.

"God hath visited..." See ch. 1.78.