

FOREVER LIFE

How would you react to a dead body raised to life in front of you? Luke 7:16-17 says, *Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, "a great prophet has arisen among us! God has visited His people!"* Jesus said "arise" and the Nain man arose and spoke. His mother was speechless. This hadn't happened for 800 years, since Elijah healed a widow's son in 1Kings 17.

The widow in Elijah's story said *"now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth."* This miracle also brings to mind Elisha in 2Kings 4, who raised from the dead the son of the woman of Shunem, a village near Nain. The people with Jesus had long heard of these Old Testament miracles, but now they had seen it with their own eyes.

SON OF GOD - Nain is near Nazareth, where Jesus said, *"the Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and to set at liberty the captives and the oppressed."* The people are rightly awed by what has happened. Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promises.

Jesus is not only the great prophet who was to come (Deuteronomy 18:15), but the son of a virgin (Isaiah 7:16, 9:6-7) who would *"bring to Galilee a great light for those who walked in darkness, to bring joy, to break the rod of the oppressor."* He is *"the mighty God, everlasting Father."* These are echoes of Luke 1:68-79 praising God for visiting His people for salvation, as promised.

LORD OF LIFE - Jesus is God come in the flesh, by whom all things were created (Colossian 1:18) and He is the firstborn from the dead, the resurrected one (1Corinthians 15) raised from the dead and the raiser of the dead. Jesus is the giver of hope to all who mourn, who lost and will lose loved ones, if you and they have received Jesus as the Christ, Lord and Savior of your life.

"The same power that Jesus displays is available for us in every trial we encounter," relates RK Hughes. "He will do what is best for our well-being and for His glory, bringing His mercy and compassion to our points of pain and need. He will bring healing, and He will bring life."

CHILD OF GOD? - In Luke 7 we've seen the widow, the son, and Christ Jesus. But there's one more character to consider: you. Do you fear death? Or are you reborn and ready for death? Jesus said *"you must be born again from above by the Holy Spirit"* (John 3:3-8). This is spiritual birth, not physical: *"As many as received Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God...those who were born of God"* (John 1:12-13).

Physical life only leads to physical death, unless you are born again by the Holy Spirit with new spiritual life in Christ. As Ephesians 2:1-10 explains, without Christ you are spiritually dead in your sins, and only by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit will you be made spiritually alive.

READY TO DIE? - "Christ can raise to new life souls now dead in sin," notes JC Ryle. "Let us pray for our children and faint not. He who met the people at Nain may yet meet our unconverted children and say with almighty power, arise! With Christ nothing is impossible. He never fails."

John 5:21 explains, *"for as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom He will."* The man raised at Nain will die again. And Jesus came to raise people to eternal life. Jesus continues, *"truly I say to you, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life."*

FOREVER LIFE - Jesus goes on, *"for an hour is coming when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live."* This is the life that matters, forever. Resurrected unbelievers will go to judgment, but believers go to eternal life (1Thessalonians 4:13-18).

"The true Christian has nothing to fear," notes Ryle. "In Christ he is complete and safe, and when he rises he shall see God's face in peace." God gives assurance for all who have died in Christ and who will die in Christ. So we grasp the full meaning of Jesus' words to the widow, *"do not keep weeping."* Turn for consolation to Christ. "He lives, who made the widow's heart sing for joy. He lives, who heals the brokenhearted," says Ryle, "He comes that they weep no more."

"God will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be grieving nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away. Behold, I am making all things new" (Revelation 21:1-5). Do you believe in Jesus as the Christ, Lord, Savior? Then just like the people at Nain, tell everyone around you the good news: He gives life! □