

WIDOWS OF THE BIBLE

WIDOW OF NAIN: LESSON NINE

by Sandy Harber

"And there came a fear on all. . . ." Luke 7:16a

The people of Nain and the people that followed Jesus from Capernaum were seized with fear at what they had witnessed. Scripture tells us that fear came upon them all, including the disciples, the widow, and her son. None of them had ever seen such a thing as a dead man coming back to life, sitting up, and talking. They hadn't even imagined it was possible for such a thing to happen.

Proverbs 1:7a states that, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge." What does it mean to "fear" the Lord? There are 29 different words that are translated "fear" in the King James Version of the Bible: 22 Hebrew words in the Old Testament and 7 Greek words in the New Testament. The original words cover a range of meanings, including wrath, dread, terror, anxiety, trembling, quaking, awe, alarm, reverence, timidity, caution, apprehension, and circumspect. When applying the term "fear" to God we mean "to have a healthy respect for" Him. God is an all-powerful, all-knowing, Supreme Being. He can do whatever He wants to whomever He wants within the limits of His attributes. Thus, because He is a holy God He cannot sin. Because He is a loving God He cannot be hateful. Because He is a righteous God He cannot be unfair or unjust. Still, within the limitations of His Own nature, God is free to act as He will. The healthy response to all that power and wisdom is to humbly acknowledge His greatness (be in awe of Him) and behave with caution or circumspection (obey His commands).

Having the proper respect for God is the "beginning" of knowledge. In other words, learning starts here. If you don't have a proper regard for the God of creation you know nothing - and you will remain in ignorance until you stand in awe of Him. God is the Source of all knowledge and wisdom. He has all the answers.

Knowledge, as in the accumulation of information, is only valuable if it is based on Truth. Accumulating false information does not increase knowledge. Just the opposite. It leads to confusion. You will be deceived into believing lies and, then, acting on the inaccurate information you will make foolish decisions leading you farther from God.

God is a God of Truth. His Word is Truth (Jn. 17:17). His Son, Jesus, is Truth (Jn. 14:6). The Holy Spirit is Truth (Jn. 16:13). Knowledge comes to us, then, through God's written Word (Bible) and His Living Word (Jesus) through the agency of the indwelling Teacher of Truth (Holy Spirit).

The people who witnessed the miracle at Nain took the first step on the road to knowledge. They showed a healthy respect for the God of Truth. Hopefully, we are a little farther down the road today because we have the advantage of a completed Bible, which the witnesses at Nain did not have. If Jesus is your Savior, you have the advantage of an indwelling Teacher Who is on duty 24/7. May we never become complacent with the character of God and take Him for granted so that we lose the awe and wonder of His Person. Our God is an awesome God!

"I, even I, am the Lord: and beside me there is no savior." Isaiah 43:11