

WIDOWS OF THE BIBLE

WIDOW OF NAIN: LESSON TEN

by Sandy Harber

"... and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people." Luke 7:16b

The people of Nain were having a bad day. One of their own had died. A young man. The only son of a widowed mother. The whole town had come out to mourn the passing of this son. And, then, Jesus appeared.

The people of Nain were having a very good day. The dead son opened his eyes. He sat up. He began to speak. The whole town had witnessed this miracle. What a difference Jesus makes!

The people recognized the hand of God in this miracle and they gave Him the glory. The Greek word translated "glorify" means "to magnify; to honor; to esteem." The people honored God for the miraculous resurrection of the young man because they recognized that only God had the power to raise the dead. They saw that Jesus had the power of God and it caused them to respect (fear) Him and honor (glorify) God, the Source of His power.

The people believed that Jesus was a Prophet. And they were correct in their assessment. Jesus was a Prophet. "Prophet" being defined as "one who delivers a message from God." The term "Prophet" comes from the Hebrew root word meaning "to announce" or "to proclaim." Prophets were spokesmen for God.

But Jesus was more than that. He didn't just deliver a message from God - He was the message. Jesus was (is) the Living Word of God (Jn. 1:1). Jesus was God Himself come in the flesh to deliver His Own message to His people.

The people who witnessed the miracle at Nain believed that God had sent them a "great" prophet. Jesus was in the same category as Elijah and Elisha, both of whom had raised the dead. Elijah restored life to the son of the widow of Zarephath (I King 17:8-24). Elisha raised the son of the Shunammite woman (I Kings 4:8-37).

The people may have seen in Jesus the fulfillment of the Deut. 18:15 Prophet: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee (that is, the nation Israel) a Prophet from the midst of thee (an Israelite), of thy brethren (i.e. human), like unto me ("Me" being God; so the Prophet is deity). . . ." The people of Israel had been waiting for this Prophet, Who they understood was their Messiah (anointed) since the time of Moses. Jesus was, in fact, the fulfillment of the prophecy.

The people of Nain said that God had visited them. In what sense did they mean that? Did they recognize that Jesus was God come in the flesh? He was the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy that a virgin would give birth and that baby would be called "Immanuel," which means "God with us." The people did not know Jesus' background, of course. They could not know His mother had been a virgin when she gave birth in Bethlehem, fulfilling still another prophecy (Micah 5:2). But they recognized in Him the power of God. More likely they believed that God had "visited" them in the sense that His Spirit had empowered His Prophet to work signs and wonders in Israel, much like Elijah and Elisha had done in their day.

The presence of Jesus made all the difference in the little town of Nain that day. His presence had made all the difference to me, too, when I lost my husband. Jesus didn't raise him up as He had done for the widow of Nain. But He raised me up in a different way. He gave me comfort, peace, and a hope that I will be reunited with Charlie one day. He gave me strength for each day to get up and go on living. Everyone's need is different. Jesus adapts His remedy to the individual. He will meet your need differently than He met mine. But He will meet it.

*"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."
Philippians 4:19*