

WIDOWS OF THE BIBLE

WIDOW OF NAIN: LESSON ELEVEN

by Sandy Harber

"And this rumor of him went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about." Luke 7:17

Jesus stopped a funeral procession on its way to the cemetery in the middle of the day in front of a multitude of people. Then He commanded a dead man to rise. And he did! The corpse sat up and spoke! Only he wasn't a corpse any longer. His soul and spirit had been restored to his lifeless physical body and he lived! Then Jesus delivered the revived young man to his grieving widowed mother. And the people praised God for sending this great Prophet to them.

Surely there was great rejoicing in the town that day. While Jesus was present the people would have hung on His every word. Perhaps they asked Him questions or brought their sick to be healed. Someone would have offered to provide meals for Jesus and His disciples. Israelites prided themselves on their hospitality. It does not appear that Jesus remained in Nain for very long. There were many towns that needed Him and, so, He moved on.

But the people that witnessed this miracle did not forget about it. They didn't keep the experience to themselves. They were eager to tell others what they had seen and heard. It was so amazing they could not keep silent. The King James Version of the Bible tells us that the story of what Jesus did in the town of Nain was spread abroad as a "rumor." The word "rumor" has a bad connotation in the English language. We pair that word with "gossip" and regard it as sin. Rumors and gossip are often untrue and hurtful. Even when the rumor isn't a lie it can still destroy someone's life. There's a lot of truth that shouldn't be spread abroad.

But that's not the case with the story of the young man who was raised from the dead. The Greek word translated "rumor" here comes from a root word that means "to lay forth." It means to relate in words by means of systematic or set discourse. This "rumor" was the recounting of the event. Eyewitnesses discussed what they had seen with their own eyes. The word carries with it the idea of reasoning by use of mental faculties. That is, the people dug deep when discussing this miracle, seeking understanding. Who was this Prophet Jesus? He must have been sent by God, but for what purpose? Is He the Prophet promised in Deuteronomy 18:15?

Speculation about Jesus spread throughout Judea and beyond. The crowd that followed Jesus from Capernaum to Nain had quite a story to tell when they returned home. Their witness might cause some to believe in Jesus sight unseen. Others may have been inspired to seek out Jesus and see for themselves what it was all about. And there would have been those who did not believe the witnesses.

Before He ascended Jesus told His followers that they were to be His witness in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the whole world (Acts 1:8). All they had to do was tell others what they knew to be true because they saw it with their own eyes and heard it with their own ears (I Jn. 1:1). He expects us to do the same. Start at home. Start where you are. Start in your "Jerusalem." From there the "rumors" move on in an ever widening circle until the whole earth has heard.

When we experience tragedy in our lives, something difficult or even devastating, we ask, "Why?" Why did this happen to me (or my spouse, sibling, child, etc.). One reason is because it gives us an opportunity to start our own rumor. "Let me tell you what Jesus has done for me" is a good opening. Then tell your own unique story that only you can tell. It may give someone else hope. You might plant a seed or lead someone to Christ. If Jesus has touched your life don't keep it a secret.

"I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed." Psalm 119:46