

The Greatest Life Ever Lived

A Study in the Incarnate Life of Jesus Christ and An Exposition of the Four Gospels

LESSON XLVIII : THE CENTURION'S SERVANT HEALED IN CAPERNAUM / WIDOW'S SON RAISED FROM DEAD

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	related passages
8:5-13		7:1-17		

The Centurion's Servant Healed

Matt 8:5,6 And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto Him a centurion, beseeching Him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.

Luke 7:1-5 Now when He had ended all His sayings in the audience of the people, He entered into Capernaum. And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die. And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto Him the elders of the Jews, beseeching Him that He would come and heal his servant. And when they came to Jesus, they besought Him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom He should do this: for he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.

There is a close connection between this that follows and the Sermon on the Mount: (a) **geographical**, making the assumption that the distance between Capernaum and the site of the Sermon was not great; (b) **chronological**, since Luke writes "after Jesus had ended His words...", while "after" may be taken as an indefinite period of time and not necessarily a short period, there is no reason in this case to suppose a large amount of time transpired; (c) **topical** which should be stressed since Luke favors topical arrangement as we have seen. Jesus had just ended the Sermon with the emphasis upon unshakable faith in Him, like a house founded upon a rock. Luke now presents a prize example of such faith.

This incident was an encouragement for the early Gentiles since it records a Gentile who had not seen Jesus (at least to our knowledge) but approached Him through Jewish mediators and was commended for his faith.

This should not be confused with the story recorded in Jn 4:46-54: that story has to do with a royal officer's son, this is a centurion's servant; Jesus in Jn 4 is in Cana while here He is in Capernaum; the father in Jn 4 could not immediately conceive of Jesus' power healing at a great distance while here the centurion declares his faith in Jesus having such power.

The Roman centurion originally had a hundred men under him but in time the numbers varied. The centurion would have been approximately equivalent to our modern army captain. Under him was the decurion (a modern NCO), over him was the chiliarch and the hegemon (equivalent approximately to modern colonels and generals, respectively). An ancient historian Polybius lists the following qualifications for centurions: not seekers of danger but men who can command, steady in action and reliable; not over anxious to rush into a fight, but when pressed hard they must be ready to hold their ground and die at their post. [quoted in Morris, *Luke*] This centurion was a Gentile (Lk 7:3,9) and probably a Roman while this is not demanded (some centurions of other races are recorded in history).

This centurion had a slave / servant who was seriously ill. Matthew says he was bedridden with paralysis, suffering terribly, fearfully tormented. Whatever the progressive case, this man was near death.

The centurion's heart appears to have been in his request to Jesus. The servant is said to have been very dear to the centurion, and later the centurion calls him "my boy" (Gk pais). "It is true that 'boy' for 'slave' or 'servant' (doulos) was not itself exceptional terminology. Yet, the present context — note the centurion's manifest concern in Matthew and 'was very dear to him' in Luke — shows that the appellation is here used in its most favorable sense, as a term of endearment." [Hendriksen, *Luke*] "This centurion did not act as many masters do when their servants are afflicted, have them immediately removed to an infirmary, often to a work-house; or sent home to friends or relatives, who probably either care nothing for them, or are unable to afford them any of the comforts of life. In case of a contagious disorder, it may be necessary to remove an infected person to such places as are best calculated to cure the distemper, and prevent the spread of the contagion. But, in all common cases, the servant should be considered as a child, and receive the same friendly attention. If, by a hasty, unkind, and unnecessary removal, the servant die, are not the master and mistress murderers before God?" [Clarke, *Commentary*] The word is entimos (ἐντιμος) meaning *honored, esteemed*. "Dear: literally, *held in honor or value*. It does not necessarily imply an affectionate relation between the master and the servant, though such may well have existed. It may mean only that he was a valuable servant." [Vincent, *Word Studies*] Wuest: "Now, a slave of a certain captain of a hundred soldiers, being sick, was at the point of death, one who was highly prized by him." The same word is used in Lk 14:8 of one more *honorable* coming in at the wedding feast; Phil 2:29 of receiving Epaphroditus with *honor* (KJV, *reputation*) for his work for the Lord; 1 Pet 2:4,6 of the Lord Jesus being *precious* as the chief corner stone.

Matthew says the centurion reports to Jesus while Luke says he sent messengers. "Some think of irreconcilable differences in the two accounts, while others harmonize them by thinking of the man as sending messengers first and afterwards going himself. **But it is better to see Matthew as abbreviating the story and leaving out details inessential to his purpose.** What a man does

through agents he may be said to do himself. So Matthew simply give the gist of the centurion's communication to Jesus, whereas Luke in greater detail gives the actual sequence of events.. Perhaps we can discern something of the differing purposes of the two Evangelists in their treatment of the messengers. Matthew was concerned primarily with the centurion's faith and nationality; to him the messengers were irrelevant, even a distraction. But Luke was interested in the man's character and specifically in his humility: to him the messengers were a vital part of the story." [Morris, *Luke*]

The elders were more than messengers, they interceded in behalf of the boy for the centurion's sake. Their intercession was due to the centurion's good favor for the Jews in Capernaum, shown by him building the synagogue (possibly the only synagogue in the town). While probably not a Jew (see Lk 7:9) and probably a Roman, his building the synagogue indicates he was rich, generous and kind. "He hath built: *he* is emphatic; *himself, at his own expense....* The article, '*the synagogue*,' marks the particular synagogue which these elders represented." [Vincent, *Word Studies*] Possibly he had even forsaken the polytheism of Rome and accepted the monotheistic Jewish religion although this is not demanded by the text. "He had not built a synagogue for the Jews without exposing himself to some hatred and to some risk: and the only reason why he loved that nation was, that he had embraced the worship of one God. Before Christ healed his servant, he had been healed by the Lord. This was itself a miracle. One who belonged to the military profession, and who had crossed the sea with a band of soldiers, for the purpose of accustoming the Jews to endure the yoke of Roman tyranny, submits willingly, and yields obedience to the God of Israel." [Calvin, *Commentary*]

Note the Jewish elders were caught in the "works" mentality. "'He is worthy,' said the Jewish elders. Worthy of what? Of receiving as a favor from Jesus the healing of this desperately ill servant? However well-meant this appraisal may have been, it smacks of the doctrine of human merits. It should be borne in mind that those who spoke thus were Jewish elders! The true doctrine is quite different. See Lk 18:13; Rom 3:20,23;24; 7:18,24; Eph 2:8; Phil 3:4-9." [Hendriksen, *Luke*]

"In reading this story the temptation is to concentrate our attention entirely upon the wonderful centurion. Well, by God's grace, he was indeed wonderful. But **we should fix our attention especially on the 'marvelous grace of our Loving Lord.'**

*For the love of God is broader
Than the measure of man's mind;
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind."*

[Hendriksen, *Luke*; quoting F. W. Faber's "There's A Wideness in God's Mercy"]

Matt 8:7-9 And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

Luke 7:6-8 Then Jesus went with them. And when He was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying unto Him, Lord, trouble not Thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof: wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto Thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

Note the character of Jesus (= the character of God Himself): even though the centurion had waited until the servant was at the point of death before calling Jesus, even though he was not one of the chosen people, even though the ground on which the Jewish elders pleaded with Jesus was doctrinally unsound, yet Jesus came to him! *How often do we pray then immediately give ourselves reasons as to why the Lord should not answer our prayers?*

Observe the centurion's humble attitude. While the elders of the city was quick to point out to Jesus this man's worthiness, the centurion was just as quick to emphasize his unworthiness. This is the paradox of humility: **humility is something which may be observed by others but is lost when the person who is humble recognizes it.** As soon as we think we're humble, we're lifted in pride and the humility disappears. Vain human nature.

This man could have been boastful if he was in the habit of comparing himself with others. He was a recognized leader in the Roman army, a man of stature with many under his command. But even in his description of himself he does not say he has those under him and he is their superior; rather he mentions he is under his superiors. **The secret of this man's humility was his cognizance of the Person of whom he is addressing.** "After all, who is he in comparison with this Exalted One, this personal embodiment of majestic authority, all-embracing power, and condescending love, a love that bridges every chasm and overleaps every obstacle of race, nationality, class, and culture? Who is he to cause this kind Master to commit an act that would put him in conflict with the time-honored custom of His own people, according to which a Jew vows not enter a house of a Gentile lest he be defiled (Acts 10:28; 11:2,3; cp Jn 18:28)? It is clear that this man is filled with a sense of personal unworthiness. He is deeply convinced of his own insignificance in comparison with Jesus." [Hendriksen, *Luke*]

"The centurion reasons: If, I am but a military officer with very limited authority and power, an officer who must himself obey his superiors, even my orders are nevertheless immediately carried out by both soldier and servant, and this regardless of where I am when I issue them, then certainly He, this Great One, exercising independent authority and holding the universe in His

all-powerful grasp, can command, and whatever it is that He desires will be done. When He says, ‘Go,’ sickness will go; when He says, ‘Come,’ health will arrive; and when He tells the body of ‘my boy,’ ‘Do this,’ it will immediately respond.” [Hendriksen, *Luke*]

The centurion originally asked for Jesus to come (Lk 7:3) but stops Jesus as He was approaching. “It would seem, therefore, that the more the centurion reflected on the greatness of Jesus, on His power, exalted majesty, holiness, and willingness to help, the more also he was ashamed of himself and impressed with the fact that his previous request had been unnecessary. So great is Christ!” [Hendriksen, *Luke*] **This shows the immense profit of believers meditating. Far too few times are we alone, quietly thinking on the things of God.**

Matt 8:10 When Jesus heard it, He marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

Luke 7:9 When Jesus heard these things, He marvelled at him, and turned Him about, and said unto the people that followed Him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

He marveled: the word here is *ethaumasen* (ἐθαύμασεν, from *thaumazō*, θαυμάζω) meaning *to wonder at, marvel, amazed, astounded, wondered at*. There is nothing special about the word and is commonly used in scripture. What is worth noting however is the word is only used by Jesus twice: here when He marveled at the faith of the centurion (Mat 8:10; Lk 7:9) and once negatively when He marveled at the unbelief of those in Nazareth (Mk 6:6). “Wonder cannot apply to God, for it arises out of what is new and unexpected: but it might exist in Christ, for He had clothed Himself with our flesh, and with human affections.” [Calvin, *Commentary*]

To emphasize the importance of what He was about to say, Jesus turned and directly addressed the crowd around Him. **This was no side comment but rather an opportunity to teach.** “Avoid flattering young converts. Learn, from what our Lord said, that He looks out for faith; that He looks for it among hearers of the Word; that He usually does not find it; but that, when He does, it may be so great as to astonish him. Great faith may grow where there is little soil, and no faith where everything seemed to promise and promote it. Great faith is very dear to the Lord Jesus; but He marvels when He sees it, for it is so rare.” [Spurgeon, *Matthew*]

The reason for Jesus’ amazement was the great faith of a Gentile, one outside of the special privileges of Israel. “To be sure, also in Israel Jesus had found faith (Lk 5:5, 8-11; 6:20-23,47,48) but not a combination in one person of a love so affectionate, a considerateness so thoughtful, an insight so penetrating, a humility so outstanding, and a trust so unlimited. In many cases was not what Jesus had found ‘little faith’?” [Hendriksen, *Luke*] This was not meant as an insult to Israel; in fact, the implication is that He did find faith in Israel. The emphasis is upon the *great* faith of the centurion.

Matt 8:11,12 And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. : Matthew’s gospel is greatly evangelistic as the writer presses upon his Jewish brethren the importance of world missions. Matthew records here that many will come from the four corners of the earth to sit with the Jewish patriarchs in the kingdom. “With Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob — In the closest communion with the most eminent followers of God. But if we desire to inherit the promises, we must be followers of them who through faith and patience enjoy them. **Let us therefore imitate Abraham in his faith, Isaac in his obedience unto death, and Jacob in his hope and expectation of good things to come, amidst all the evils of this life, if we desire to reign with them.**” [Clarke, *Commentary*]

The picture provided is one of the Oriental dinner in which the guests are reclining together at a table loaded with food, enjoying sweet fellowship with the host, the spacious banquet hall flooded with light. Those at the “table of the redeemed” will not be Jews only but Gentiles as well. This would have been shocking to the Jews gathered around Jesus. “It was a common belief, that in the day of the Messiah redeemed Israel would be gathered to a great feast, together with the patriarchs and heroes of the Jewish faith.... One thing, however, was clear: Gentiles could have no part in that feast.... On this point, then, **the words of Jesus in reference to the believing Centurion formed the most marked contrast to Jewish teaching.**” [Edersheim, *Life of Messiah*]

Contrasted with those at the banquet will be **the sons of the kingdom**, in the immediate context probably a direct reference to the Jews who did not accept the Messiah but of course could apply to all who reject salvation. **“The faith of these Gentiles would win for them the places at the Messiah’s banquet, when His kingdom was finally established, which would be forfeited by the children of the kingdom, who thought they had a natural right to its privileges but who would be left outside in the dark.”** [Tasker, *Matthew*] The Jews had many kingdom privileges extended to them which brought responsibilities along with the opportunities and blessings. As John the Baptist pointed out (see lessons 18,19) **one of the great errors of the Jews was their belief that they were heirs of the kingdom by virtue of their physical heritage alone.** The Jews as a whole eventually crucified their Messiah and the Lord turned to the Gentiles during this age. God did not cast them off forever however (Rom 9-11) and in this present day we can see God re-aligning Israel for their acceptance of the once-rejected Messiah (Zech 12:10).

weeping and gnashing of teeth: not tears of repentance or due to sorrow for their sins, nor because now they are separated from all those they loved, but tears of “utter everlasting hopelessness”. This coincides with the gnashing of teeth, denoting excruciating pain and frenzied anger. This too will never end. “When our Lord consigned the unbelieving to ‘outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth’, He once more used Jewish language, only with opposite application of it. Gehinnom — of which the entrance, marked by ever-ascending smoke, was in the valley of Hinnom, between two palm trees — lay beyond ‘the

mountains of darkness'. It was a place of darkness, to which, in the day of the Lord, the Gentiles would be consigned. On the other hand, the merit of circumcision would in the day of the Messiah deliver Jewish sinners from Gehinnom.... **In Rabbinic thought [weeping] was connected with sorrow, [gnashing of teeth] almost always with anger — not, as generally supposed, with anguish.**" [Edersheim, *Life of Messiah*]

outer darkness: "The Greek order of words is very forcible. *'They shall be cast forth into the darkness, the outer (darkness).* The picture is of an illuminated banqueting chamber, outside of which is the thick darkness of night." [Vincent, *Word Studies*] "As the enjoyment of that salvation which Jesus Christ calls the kingdom of heaven is here represented under the notion of a nuptial festival, at which the guests sat down in a reclining posture, with the master of the feast; so the state of those who were excluded from the banquet is represented as deep darkness; because the nuptial solemnities took place at night. Hence, at those suppers, the house of reception was filled with lights called *torches, lamps, candles, and lanthorns*, so they who were admitted to the banquet had the benefit of the light; but they who were shut out were in darkness, called here outer darkness, i.e. the darkness on the outside of the house in which the guests were; which must appear more abundantly gloomy, when compared with the profusion of light within the guest-chamber." [Clarke, *Commentary*]

Matt 8:13 And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.

Luke 7:10 And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

Jesus sends the delegates home to find the boy had been healed the instant Jesus spoke. Matthew says he was healed *the selfsame hour* in the sense of *at that very moment*. Luke states the servant was healed upon their arrival home which in all probability was not an hour away. "In the words, *'Go thy way'*, we see that, oftentimes, a return to our usual duties, and our habitual calm of mind, may be the best proof that our faith has apprehended the promised blessing. Why should he linger who has obtained all he sought? Rather let him go home, and enjoy the fruit of his success in prayer. The Lord often gives in proportion to faith. *'As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee'*, is a word by which we are allowed to bring our own measure and set the standard of blessing which we would possess. Our Lord spoke the word as the centurion desired. The result was immediate and complete: not only was life spared, but health restored. **Many a time prolonged prayer is but muttering unbelief; and to go about one's business would be to take the Lord at His word, and honor His veracity.** Lord, grant me faith enough to go about my business, having prayed the prayer of faith. In the self-same hour in which I believe Thee, be pleased to work the miracle I seek." [Spurgeon, *Matthew*]

As great as the faith of the centurion, Jesus went beyond his expectations. The centurion believed, since by example his commands are carried out whether he is present or not, all Jesus had to do was speak the word and He did not need to be present for the servant to be healed. But Jesus sends the delegates away *without even a word* of healing.

Jesus Raises the Dead Son of a Widow in Nain

Luke 7:11,12 And it came to pass the day after, that He went into a city called Nain; and many of His disciples went with Him, and much people. Now when He came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and much people of the city was with her. : note the connection between the narratives: this occurred "the day after", and while the centurion's servant was nigh unto death, this widow's son had actually died.

Nain: not found elsewhere in scripture; commonly identified with modern Nein, 10 KM southeast of Nazareth and about 40 KM southwest of Capernaum. To the north is Mt. Tabor, to the southeast is Mt. Gilboa. Located in what was the tribe of Issachar's area.

Note Jesus is not alone but followed by His disciples and crowds, not uncommon in the earlier part of His ministry.

Providentially *just as* Jesus arrived at the city a funeral procession was coming through the gates the rock-hewn tombs outside the city (no burials were allowed within a Jewish city). According to Edersheim, this would have been in the evening when so often funerals took place. "Jesus *entering*, or about to enter; and simultaneously this procession *leaving*: was this 'the hand of God' or a 'mere coincidence'?" [Hendriksen, *Luke*] We are reminded of Abraham finding a ram in the bushes with his son on the altar; Rebecca coming to the well just when Abraham's servant arrives; Gideon crawling to the enemy's camp just in time to hear the soldiers express their fear of him; Ruth gleaning in the field of her kinsman-redeemer; Jeremiah rescued out of a cistern by an Ethiopian; Paul's nephew overhearing the plot to kill Paul in time to save him out of the city; and we can go on and on. **How often has the hand of the Lord been evident in our lives in like manner? May we be reminded that He is ever-so-near even when His hand is not obvious.**

"Here, near by the city gate, on the road that leads eastwards to the old burying-ground, has this procession of the 'great multitude', which accompanied the Prince of Life, met that other 'great multitude' that followed the dead to his burying. Which of the two shall give way to the other? We know what ancient Jewish usage would have demanded. For, of all the duties enjoined, none more strictly enforced by every consideration of humanity and piety, even by the example of God Himself, that of comforting the mourners and showing respect to the dead by accompanying him to the burying. The popular idea, that the spirit of the dead hovered about the unburied remains, must have given intensity to such feelings." [Edersheim, *Life of Messiah*]

The one dead was the only son of a widow. “This is a poignant situation. The woman was now all alone in the world. Without a male protector and provider she must have been in difficulties. There were few openings for a woman to earn her living in the first century. And besides the hardship and the sense of loneliness and sorrow there was the knowledge that the family line had ended.” [Morris, *Luke*] “Is this death, after the earlier death of her husband, also a severe trial for her faith in a God who loves and cares? Though the text does not indicate this, we must at least consider this possibility. Her condition is indeed tragic.” [Hendriksen, *Luke*] The word used here is *monogenēs* (μονογενής), the same word used of Jesus as being the “only begotten Son”.

Edersheim on typical funerals of the day: “Now the well-known blast of the horn has carried tidings, that once more the Angel of Death has done his dire behest. In passionate grief the mother has rent her upper garment. The last sad offices have been rendered to the dead. The body has been laid on the ground; hair and nails have been cut, and the body washed, anointed, and wrapped in the best the widow could procure ... And now the mother was left *oneneth* (moaning, lamenting) — a term which distinguished the mourning before from that after burial. She would sit on the floor, neither eat meat, nor drink wine. What scanty meal she would take, must be without prayer, in the house of a neighbor, or in another room, or at least with her back to the dead. Pious friends would render neighborly offices, or busy themselves about the near funeral. If it was deemed duty for the poorest Jew, on the death of his wife, to provide at least two flutes and one mourning woman, we may feel sure that the widowed mother had not neglected what, however incongruous or difficult to procure, might be regarded as the last tokens of affection. In all likelihood the custom obtained even then, though in modified form, to have funeral orations at the grave. For, even if charity provided for an unknown wayfarer the simplest funeral, mourning-women would be hired to chant in weird strains the lament: ‘alas, the lion! Alas, the hero!’ or similar words, while great Rabbis were wont to bespeak for themselves a warm funeral oration. For, from the funeral oration a man’s fate in the other world might be inferred; and, indeed, ‘the honor of a sage was in his funeral oration’.... The ends or handles [of the funeral bier] were borne by friends and neighbors, different parties of bearers, all of them unshod, at frequent intervals relieving each other, so that as many as possible might share in the good work. During these pauses there was loud lamentation; but this custom was not observed in the burial of women. Behind the bier walked the relatives, friends, and then the sympathizing ‘multitude’. For it was deemed like mocking one’s Creator not to follow the dead to his last resting-place, and to all such want of reverence Prov 17:5 was applied. If one were absolutely prevented from joining the procession, although for its sake all work, even study, should be interrupted, reverence should at least be shown by rising up before the dead. And so they would go on to what the Hebrews beautifully designated as the ‘house of assembly’ or ‘meeting’, the ‘hostelry’, the ‘place of rest’, or ‘of freedom’, the field of weepers’, the ‘house of eternity’, or ‘of life’.” [*Life of Messiah*]

Luke 7:13-15 *And when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And He came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And He said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And He delivered him to his mother. :* Jesus first addresses the widow, undoubtedly at the front of the funeral procession. He was moved with *compassion* (KJV, Wuest). Other versions: *His heart went out to her* (NIV), *His heart was moved with pity for her* (Williams).

It must have appeared odd at a time when even professional mourners were hired that Jesus said unto her *weep not!* Note no one had asked Him to do anything ... after all, what was to be done? This boy was not sick but dead.

He touched the bier: the word is *sorou* (σποῦ) which referred to a *portable frame on which a corpse laid*. “A ... striking peculiarity is that the dead person was not buried in a coffin. On the contrary, when the corpse had been shrouded it was carried out on a stretcher. That the reference is not to a coffin is clearly evident from the resurrection at Nain. The Savior touched the stretcher, and at His word ‘the dead man sat up and began to talk’. “ [from a Dutch NT word study book by A. Sizoo; quoted in Hendriksen, *Luke*] There have been many attempts to find a modern equivalent to the ancient term:

- *coffin* although what is a coffin in our culture was unknown in ancient Israel according to archaeologists. Others argue however that coffins were known to the Jews although the open biers were preferred.
- *open coffin* which we would equate to what we see in the funeral parlor in our culture. Again, this was unknown in ancient Israel.
- *litter* is technically correct but an old English word no longer in common usage. The first thought of a modern litter is trash on the ground or a number of small puppies running around. Webster does however still list as one of the meanings of litter, “a framework of canvas stretched between two parallel bars, for the transportation of the sick or wounded”; what we would think of as a stretcher.
- *hearse* suggests to us a horse-drawn funeral carriage (of course this would have been before the invention of our modern Cadillac-style hearses). The story indicates however the corpse was being carried by pallbearers.
- *bier* is used often but personally is not a familiar word to me; indeed, some translators consider the word archaic. The word itself means “a frame or stand on which a corpse or the coffin containing the corpse is laid prior to the burial” and would fit in this instance.
- *stretcher* is used by some and has similarities, while our modern stretchers are lightweight and the ancient sorou was heavier in construction.

To touch the dead was to bring upon Himself ceremonial defilement (Num 19:11-22) yet Jesus reached out.

By a word Jesus rose him who was dead. Only three times in the gospels does Jesus raise the dead (here; the ruler of the

synagogue in Lk 8:54; Lazarus in Jn 11:43). How this was done is too mysterious for explanation. The obvious lesson for us however is **Jesus is Lord of all, even of life and death**. What occurred during His earthly ministry was unique in history. “To be sure there are other revivification stories — for example, by Apollonius, by Joseph Smith, etc. — but the circumstances surrounding these ‘miracles’ (?) render further discussion superfluous.” [Hendriksen, *Luke*] In all there are five stories of resurrections, two in the OT (the widow’s son raised by Elijah in 1 Kings 17:22; the Shunammite’s son raised by Elisha in 2 Kings 4:34) and three in the NT. But concerning the miracles performed through Elijah and Elisha, note the agonizing struggle of both the prophets as they pray for the lives of the victims. Jesus however speaks. “There is simply the word of majesty, and the young man is alive and talking! Reason: Jesus is God. Nothing less! His victory over death is immediate and complete.” [Hendriksen, *Luke*]

Luke 7:16,17 And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited His people. And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judaea, and throughout all the region round about. : the immediate reaction of the people was to ascribe glory to God. “They *glorified God*, interestingly not Jesus. They recognized the hand of God in what had happened and gave praise where it was due. But they did salute Jesus, naming Him *a great prophet*. This is an inadequate view of Jesus, but it probably represented the highest title the townsmen could give anyone.” [Morris, *Luke*] **“But Jesus performed His marvelous deeds of power and compassion not because of the recognition He received, but in spite of the fact that He failed to receive what was His due. This enhances His greatness. It causes His glory to shine forth even more brilliantly.”** [Hendriksen, *Luke*] How often are we unthankful yet God is still true to us. Great God of wonders.

fear fell on all: “A sense of the divine presence must have brought fear along with it: but there is a difference between the kinds of fear. **Unbelievers either tremble and are dismayed; or, struck with alarm, murmur against God: while devout and godly persons, moved by reverence, willingly humble themselves.** Fear, therefore, is here taken in a good sense, because they gave the honor which was due to the power of God which they had beheld, and rendered to God not only homage, but thanksgiving.” [Calvin, *Commentary*]

Not only did they glorify God through this miracle, **they recognized God’s loving concern for His people**. Before them was living proof that God cares of their needs. Too often this is forgotten or at least doubted. “ ‘God has visited His people’ is perhaps a little too weak. Better is, ‘God has come to look after His people’, meaning: ‘has shown His concern for [or: interest in] them,’ has come to help or rescue them.” [Hendriksen, *Luke*] Wuest: “A prophet, a great one, has arisen among us, and God has looked upon His people and has come to their aid.”