

THE LORD OF LIFE AND DEATH: “WHERE O DEATH IS YOUR VICTORY?”

LUKE 7:1-23

REV. CHARLES R. BIGGS

Introduction

Death is the great enemy of mankind. Unless Jesus returns for us soon, we shall all experience this great and painful enemy of humanity. Death is the result of the fall, and its dark shadow begins to fall on men and women as well as pursue them from the very time they are born. As we are born and given life, the effects of the Fall begin to threaten every human being.

In our passage today in Luke 7:1-23, Dr. Luke shows to us the sad and yet stark reality of sickness and death for all. In this dark and hopeless situation of weak helplessness and mourning over great loss, **Jesus brings life, light and hope!** Dr. Luke shows to us three situations where death looms darkly and oppressively over the people who are powerless to do anything about it: a trusted centurion of the Roman Empire, a poor widow from Nain, and the great prophet John the Baptist. Jesus enters all three situations showing himself as the glorious Victor and Conqueror over death.

A trusted Roman centurion who has a very faithful servant is bidding him a farewell as he is on his deathbed, slowly dying and about to depart from this life. No longer will the centurion have his relationship with this special servant of his. A widow who has lost another vital male member of her household- -a beloved son has died- -and she is in mourning clothes, in the funeral procession, awaiting the burial of her beloved son. This widow of Nain will mourn with no power to change her situation.

John the Baptist, the great forerunner of Jesus, the greatest of the Old Testament prophets who prepared the way for Jesus the Messiah, is facing death by being beheaded by Herod (cf. Matthew 11:1-3), and he is experiencing doubt as he faces the permanent end of his own ministry and influence in Israel.

In all three situations, Jesus breathes life and encourages hope for the people. Like a new spring after winter has passed when life is displayed vividly and colorfully for all to see, so Jesus comes like a breath of spring to give life in these death situations; ***he gives light where there is darkness; he gives hope where there is mourning, crying and pain.***

In the Person and Work of Christ in Luke 7:1-23 we see that the Messianic Age has dawned in Jesus and we get a foretaste and glimpse of what the New Heavens and New Earth will be like when God has climatically conquered death, and will wipe away every tear from our eyes (Revelation 21:1-4). In the work of Christ, we rejoice and should think of the Apostle Paul's question in 1 Corinthians 15:55: "Where O death is your victory?" "Where O death is your sting?"

And in this display of Jesus' Messianic Kingdom authority and power, he shows forth that **He is the Resurrection and the Life**—whoever believes in him, although he may die, he will live again!

I. A Highly Valued Servant (Luke 7:1-10)

a. A Centurion and his servant

In Luke 6:11, the last we heard was that the Israelite leaders were opposing Jesus' teaching and authority. Here in contrast, Dr. Luke tells us that a centurion, a soldier of the Roman Empire- -a Gentile – one hated and despised by many Jews has a servant who needs help, and Jesus will help him. In the Sermon on the Plain in chapter 6, Jesus has taught the disciples what faith looks like when it manifests itself in love, and here Jesus uses a Gentile's faith to show what true and genuine faith looks like.

We should be reminded of Dr. Luke's purpose in writing his gospel to the "Excellent Theophilus". His purpose was to assure the Gentiles of their faith in Jesus Christ, that they are members of the Church along with believing Jews.

i. What is a centurion?

Centurions were professional Roman officers who commanded a *centuria* or century of 100 or more men; those who had more experience in service and war also were commanders of cohorts and were considered senior staff in their legion. This centurion was probably an officer in the occupied forces of Herod Antipas who ruled over this region on behalf of Rome.

The Roman historian Polybius describes Roman centurions in this way: "They must not be so much seekers after danger as men who can command, steady in action, and reliable; they ought not to be over anxious to rush into a fight; but when hard pressed they must be ready to hold their ground and die at their posts." (Quoted in Leon Morris, pg. 149).

Dr. Luke shows us that Jesus' popularity extended even to Roman soldiers. The centurion hears about the hope in Jesus and asks the elders of the Jews if he can come and heal his servant who is sick at the point of death.

ii. Why was this servant so important or highly valued to the centurion?

1. It was not uncommon for servants to be loved as sons in the Roman world; this servant was "highly valued" or in Greek

ἔντιμος, οὐ which means “valuable, precious; honored, esteemed, distinguished.”

2. This servant was dear to the centurion, and was now dying and he was hopeless to help him. The centurion’s care and respect for his servant shows us more of the man’s heart as we will also see his faith in how he responds to this sickness unto death by turning to Jesus.

b. The Centurion’s authority and Jesus’ authority (7:6-8)

The centurion understood experientially about power and authority as a Roman soldier and applies it well to his understanding of this situation.

i. Caesar’s authority and the centurion’s authority.

After the centurion sends the Jewish elders on his behalf to request Jesus to come and heal his servant, he realizes his **unworthiness**, then sends word to Jesus that he doesn’t deserve for him to come, and realizes by faith that Jesus can just authoritatively say the word, and the servant will be healed.

The centurion understands Jesus’ authority as similar to his own, although greater. The centurion understands that if one has authority, that the one in authority can say “Go” or “Come” or “Do **this**” and his message will be obeyed.

The centurion realizes by faith that although he has power and authority to command Roman soldiers only, ***Jesus has authority over sickness and death***, and that uniquely if Jesus commands the sickness or death to go, it will go.

ii. God’s authority and Jesus’ authority.

This implies that the centurion understood Jesus’ authority to be from God, because he eludes in v. 8 to being a man under authority with power implicitly from Caesar, while Jesus is under authority from one greater- -who is God. The centurion believes by faith that this man Jesus’ authority comes from God alone (as his comes from Caesar).

^{ESV} **John 5:2-29:** "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. ²⁶ For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. ²⁷ **And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man.** ²⁸ Do not

marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice²⁹ and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

c. The Centurion's faith in Jesus (7:9-10)

i. The centurion shows the work of regeneration in his faith in Jesus.

According to verses 4-5, the elders of the Jews who brought the message to Jesus on behalf of the centurion implied that he was a "God-fearing Gentile" or a Gentile who loved the Jewish God and faith, but had not fully become a proselyte to their religion for reasons not mentioned (cf. Acts 10:22).

In the Book of Acts (the 2nd Volume of Luke's Gospel), in chapter 10, the Apostle Peter visited a God-fearing Gentile named Cornelius who becomes a full Christian convert, receiving the Holy Spirit.

^{ESV} **Acts 10:34-45:** So Peter opened his mouth and said: **"Truly I understand that God shows no partiality,³⁵ but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.**³⁶ As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all),³⁷ you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed:³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.³⁹ And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree,⁴⁰ but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear,⁴¹ not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.⁴² And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead.⁴³ To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."⁴⁴ While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word.⁴⁵ **And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles.**

ii. The centurion's faith is compared to many of the Israelites who do not believe (v. 9). The centurion had already been a great benefactor or donor to the building of their synagogue (v. 5), and perhaps the very one who built it for them with his own hands showing his true faith, but now he will show true and saving faith in looking to **Christ alone for hope and life!**

It is interesting to note that although the elders of the synagogue appeal to Jesus by saying that they think the centurion is worthy because of his kind outward works of service (vv. 4-5), the centurion himself realizes he is **unworthy before Christ**- and this humility before Christ is precisely what shows his true faith and his “worthiness”! (v. 6: ***“Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof.”***).

*^{ESV} Luke 7:7 **Therefore I did not presume to come to you. But say the word, and let my servant be healed.***

Jesus marvels at the faith that the centurion shows. It is apparent that the man has been regenerated through the Word and the Spirit of God, and here is showing forth his strong faith in Messiah.

Application: *Here is another example that Dr. Luke wants us all to see ourselves inwardly as we truly are as sinners.* We all must realize that true faith manifests itself in humility before God; we must never attempt to prove our worthiness to God, but to humbly ask him for his help and his grace because this shows forth true faith.

- iii. Dr. Luke shows us in this story that God was building a Kingdom made up of Jews *and Gentiles*- -even Roman centurions!

For Dr. Luke, it is important to continue to show to the world in his gospel that Messiah had come for Jew and Gentile sinners, even the most powerful in the Roman Empire could access God’s grace through Jesus Christ! Jesus compares the faith of this Gentile with the faith of Israelites: ***“...Not even in Israel have found such faith.”*** (v. 9).

In Matthew’s Gospel (8:5-13), Matthew records supplemental material to Luke’s account saying that not only did the centurion send friends to Jesus but he himself also eventually came to him personally. This is supplemental material from another gospel that we can understand that the centurion sent his friends, but also mustered up enough faith to go himself (although in the ancient world a messenger sent could be described as the sender of the message himself; messengers often spoke on behalf of the sender in the 1st person).

The purposes of Matthew and Luke in their Gospel writing are unique and different; it is probably that Luke only mentions the friends of the centurion ***to encourage his Gentile audience that even though they have never met Jesus face to face, they have***

heard Jesus message reliably from his messengers, and what Jesus says and does has authority and power even without proximity in location.

The centurion knew that his only hope of life for his servant, and implicitly for him was found in the Person of Jesus Christ! This is how we demonstrate true and saving faith in God.

What was so “amazing” about the centurion’s faith? The mighty work of the Holy Spirit making Christ known to those who believe, and that 1) He is an uncircumcised Gentile who had not been raised in the covenant; 2) His position in the Roman army; 3) His wealth, etc. *Yet he believes!* Jesus crosses boundaries of the ancient society to minister to a Gentile and to welcome him into the covenant!

II. A Highly Valued Son (Luke 7:11-16)

Jesus brings hope during a funeral procession! Jesus can not only heal a centurion’s son at a distance by saying the word and giving the command, but he can raise those already dead by his powerful and authoritative word! Jesus meets a funeral procession coming out of town made up of a large crowd (v.11) that would have been accompanied by hired mourners and musicians with flutes and cymbals (v. 12: “a considerable crowd”). The woman of the dead son would have walked in front of the open casket in the procession.

A widow’s only son had died and the Lord Jesus has *compassion on her*. A widow in the ancient world could not survive without husband or male son and here Jesus shows his power over death as well as his compassionate and exemplary love to those who are poor and weak, cf. Acts 6:1; 1 Tim. 5:3-4; James 1:27.

Nain (v. 11) is a small town in Galilee, about six miles southeast of Nazareth, about a day’s journey from Capernaum.

- a. A Widow and her son
 - i. **Her “only son”** (v. 12) - the sadness a mother feels in death for her son, especially her only son, only Jesus understands (v. 13)! As Jesus wept with Mary and Martha, and was deeply troubled in his spirit (John 11:33), so here he shows that same compassion to those who weep in times of death and sorrow.
 - ii. The Old Testament teaches that widows and orphans were the most helpless of people in the ancient world. A woman without a

male in the family could rarely find any work in this ancient society; women in the ancient world could not find a way to provide for themselves other than something sinful such as prostitution or magic.

- iii. The widow was not only losing her dear and beloved only son, but the line of her ancestors would be finished. She would be like Naomi, possibly called “Mara” or bitter because God has dealt bitterly with her (cf. Ruth 1:19-21).

Application: And what could the people do to help her? They were powerless like we are today when we make a visit to a funeral. We search for words of comfort and peace, but the truth is we feel very uncomfortable with death. ***We feel uncomfortable because there is nothing we can do or say to bring the loved one back!*** When our family or friends are in need and we have the power and authority of plumbers and the people have a plumbing problem, we can show our love to our loved ones by fixing their plumbing problem; if a rook leak, and we fix roofs; if a person has a cold, and we are doctors who can treat it; if a person needs their car fixed, and we fix cars.

But when someone dies, and we want desperately to help, we find that we do not have the power or authority to help them! Nothing we can say or do can “fix” their situation. But we can point them to their only hope in Christ (cf. 1 Thess. 4:13), and this is why Jesus is so important to mourners in the time of death!

- iv. Yet Jesus can! The people had no power, the widow had no power, but Jesus had both power and authority to raise the dead!

b. Life at a funeral found in Jesus! (7:12-16)

Jesus comes up, drawn by his compassion for this lonely woman, and he approaches the scene at the part of the funeral where the open casket or box that held the corpse was laid on the bier in order to be buried. He first ministers to the widow by telling her to rejoice in the life found in him by not weeping (v. 13).

As Jesus wept when his friend Lazarus died, it is appropriate and normal to weep at the consequences of death when we lose someone we love. But here, Jesus is telling her to dry her eyes as in the restoration of all things when God himself will wipe away all tears because death will permanently be “no more”:

^{ESV} **Revelation 21:1-4:** Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ***"Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."***

Jesus is encouraging the widow here in our passage that “in Him”, in His Person and Work, the “former things” have begun to pass away—with Jesus, the Kingdom has come in power – the great enemy Death is being conquered!

Jesus touches the bier and commands the man to “arise”.

^{ESV} **Luke 7:15** *And the dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother.*

The dead man or “He that was dead” (v. 15a) sat up, spoke and Jesus took him apparently from the casket and gave him to his mother- -alive from the dead! Greek verb of “arise” is imperative (command) aorist passive from ἐγείρω.

The widow is reunited with her son which is a glimpse of the reunion we anticipate in heaven in the New Heavens and the new earth!

Through Jesus’ Kingdom authority and power, many believe as the fear of God seizes the people, they glorify God that he has raised up a great prophet and that through him God has visited his people.

In the storied memory of the people, their reaction to Jesus’ miracle of raising up the dead son is a reference to the Prophets Elijah and Elisha; the people are saying that Israel is experiencing a visitation from God like in the days of the Old Covenant Prophets (1 Kings 17:17ff; 2 Kings 4:18ff).

In fact, it seems that Jesus is purposely showing himself to be One greater than Elijah and Elisha through this powerful healing, paralleling, but more importantly fulfilling in the fullness of the times, the ministry of the Old Testament Prophets.

ESV 1 Kings 17:23 And Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper chamber into the house and delivered him to his mother. And Elijah said, "See, your son lives."

Jesus is indeed a prophet, he is THE PROPHET from God *par excellence*, but he is much more; he is the resurrection and the life- -very God of very God incarnate!

Dr. Luke continues to remind us of how popular Jesus is and how his popularity is continuing to spread throughout the country (v. 17).

III. A Highly Valued Prophet (Luke 7:17-23)

a. A Prophet and his death

Facing the end of his life, locked in the dark dungeon-prison of Machaerus ("the Sword") on the Dead Sea, John the Baptist struggles with his own ministry and needs more *confirmation and reassurance* that Jesus is who he said he was, and wants more evidence of this.

John is perplexed that he is in prison about to be beheaded, and yet he is the forerunner of Messiah, and he wonders why many Israelites do not believe in Jesus.

John the Baptist's message of Jesus was summarized in Luke 3:16-17:

ESV Luke 3:16-17: John answered them all, saying, "I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. ¹⁷ His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

John wondered when the Messianic Judgment he predicted would come in Christ? John was *perplexed eschatologically*, and so he sends his disciples to ask Jesus:

*"Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?"
(v. 19)*

Pastor-theologians and commentators generally think that there are two different ways of understanding John's question about Jesus: 1) Some think John's faith could not be so weak, and therefore they interpret John's question as though John had thought Jesus would release him from Herod's prison, and he is asking Jesus if he is the one to come and get him

out, and Jesus responds by telling him that he is busy showing mercy to the world and that he is to stay faithful. 2) Other pastors and commentators (like myself) believe that Dr. Luke is showing us that John's faith is weak because death looms on the horizon for him, and his Messianic expectations have not happened in the way he supposed that they would. Some argue against this that this doesn't seem to be the same strong and courageous John the Baptist who can preach against Herod's marriage to Herodias (cf. Luke 3:19-20), **but I think this is the point of the passage.**

The presence or reality of death can take the strongest, most faithful Christian, and cause their faith to weaken and to challenge their assurance (and I think this interpretation is proven by Jesus telling John not to be offended in v. 23).

b. *John the Baptist's question concerns the hope of assurance in death.*

In response to John the Baptist's question of "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" Jesus shows his Messianic authority and power by healing diseases, plagues, evil spirits, and restoring the eyes of the blind, cf. Isaiah 61:1-3; Luke 4:18-22; Malachi 3-4, and tells John's disciples to go back and tell him what they "see and hear":

"Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them.

Jesus tells John that he is doing exactly what the Old Covenant had declared, and what John the Baptist himself had preached he would do; the word "offended" in v. 23 as in "Blessed is he who is not offended" is from the Greek verb **σκανδαλίζω (skandalon)** which means to cause (someone) to sin, cause (someone) to give up his faith (pass. give up one's faith, be led into sin, fall into sin).

As Isaiah 8:14-15 says, Messiah will be a "stumbling block" or "skandalon" to many. As Simeon said in Luke 2:34, Jesus the Messiah has been appointed for the rising and falling of many in Israel:

^{ESV} **Isaiah 8:14-15:** And he will become a sanctuary and a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. ¹⁵ And many shall stumble on it. They shall fall and be broken; they shall be snared and taken."

Compare with parallel passage in Matthew 11:1-6:

^{ESV} **Matthew 11:1-6:** When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in their cities. ² Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent

word by his disciples³ and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?"⁴ And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see:⁵ the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them.⁶ And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."

- c. Jesus' answer: the hope of assurance in death found in him!

John the Baptist is seeking final assurance at the end of his life in a deep and dark fortress dungeon alone. Jesus is implicitly teaching John that his assurance is found *in Jesus- -in his power over death, and his resurrection life that he has authority and power to use for the glory of God!*

Jesus summarizes the depiction of the Messianic Age that has dawned in his person and work by quoting from Isaiah 35:5-6 and 61:1-3:

^{ESV} **Isaiah 35:5-6:** Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped;⁶ then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert...

^{ESV} **Isaiah 61:1-3:** The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;² to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn;³ to grant to those who mourn in Zion- to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified.

IV. A Highly Valued People!

- a. Jesus has come to give life to all those who believe! (John 5:24; 11).
- b. Even when we experience the death of our loved ones, or experience sickness unto death ourselves, we do not grieve or mourn as those who have no hope (1 Thess. 4:13-17; 1 Corinthians 15:12-24).

^{ESV} **1 Thessalonians 4:13-17:** But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.¹⁴ For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so,

through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁵ For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

- c. Our hope is in Jesus' resurrection from the dead; our assurance before God of his love for us is found in the empty tomb, and Christ seated alive at God's right hand ever interceding for his people!
- d. Christ is our Firstfruits!

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Exegetical Notes on the Text

^{ESV} **Luke 7:1** After he had finished all his sayings in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum. [Jesus has completed his “Sermon on the Plain” and has told the people what those who are disciples will look like in their life of total dependence upon his grace.]

² Now a centurion had a servant who was sick and at the point of death, who was highly valued by him. [In Luke 6:11, the last we heard was that the Israelite leaders were opposing Jesus’ teaching and authority. Here in contrast, Dr. Luke tells us that a centurion, a soldier of the Roman Empire- -a Gentile – one hated and despised by many Jews has a servant who needs help and Jesus will help him. Centurions were professional Roman officers who commanded a *centuria* or century of 100 or more men; those who had more experience in service and war also were commanders of cohorts and were considered senior staff in their legion.]

³ When the centurion heard about Jesus, he sent to him elders of the Jews, asking him to come and heal his servant. [Dr. Luke shows us that Jesus’ popularity extended even to Roman soldiers and he hears about the hope in Jesus and asks the elders of the Jews if he can come and heal his servant who is sick at the point of death.]

⁴ And when they came to Jesus, they pleaded with him earnestly, saying, "He is worthy to have you do this for him, ⁵ for he loves our nation, and he is the one who built us our synagogue." [The elders of the Jews put in a good word for the centurion because he has been just and fair to the Jews and they credit him with building their synagogue in Capernaum.]

⁶ And Jesus went with them. When he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to him, "Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof. ⁷ Therefore I did not presume to come to you. But say the word, and let my servant be healed. ⁸ For I too am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me: and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." [The centurion understands Jesus’ authority as similar to his own, although greater. The centurion understands that if one has authority, that the one in authority can say “Go” or “Come” and his message will be obeyed. The centurion realizes by faith that Jesus has authority over sickness and death, and that uniquely if Jesus commands the sickness or death to go, it will go. This implies that the centurion understood Jesus’ authority to be from God, because he eludes in v. 8 to being a man under authority with power implicitly from Caesar, while Jesus is under authority from one greater- -who is God.]

⁹ When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him, and turning to the crowd that followed him, said, "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith." [Jesus marvels at the faith that the centurion shows. It is apparent that the man has been regenerated through the Word and the Spirit of God, and here is showing forth his strong faith in Messiah. For Dr. Luke, it is important to continue to show to the world in his gospel that Messiah was for Jew and Gentile sinners, even the most powerful in the Roman Empire

could access God's grace through Jesus Christ! Jesus compares the faith of this Gentile with the faith of Israelites: "...Not even in Israel have found such faith."]

¹⁰ And when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the servant well. [Jesus healed the servant as God without having to be near him, perform certain incantations, or go through certain magical motions, but through his will, he commanded the sickness to depart even from afar.]

¹¹ Soon afterward he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a great crowd went with him. [Large crowds are traveling with Jesus, and now Jesus goes to a small town in Galilee called Nain.]

¹² As he drew near to the gate of the town, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and a considerable crowd from the town was with her. ¹³ And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." [Jesus brings hope during a funeral procession! A widow's only son had died and the Lord Jesus has compassion on her. A widow in the ancient world could not survive without husband or male son and here Jesus shows his power over death as well as his compassionate and exemplary love to those who are poor and weak, cf. Acts 6:1; 1 Tim. 5:3-4; James 1:27]

¹⁴ Then he came up and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." ¹⁵ And the dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. [Jesus comes up at the part of the funeral where the casket or box that held the corpse was laid on the bier in order to be buried, and he touches the bier and commands the man to "arise". The dead man sat up, spoke and Jesus took him apparently from the casket and gave him to his mother- -alive from the dead! Greek verb of "arise" is imperative (command) aorist passive from ἐγείρω]

¹⁶ Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and "God has visited his people!" [Through Jesus' Kingdom authority and power, many are believing as the fear of God seizes the people, they glorify God that he has raised up a great prophet and that through him God has visited his people.]

¹⁷ And this report about him spread through the whole of Judea and all the surrounding country. [Dr. Luke continues to remind us of how popular Jesus is and how his popularity is continuing to spread throughout the country.]

¹⁸ , The disciples of John reported all these things to him. And John, ¹⁹ calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to the Lord, saying, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" [Facing the end of his life in prison, John the Baptist struggles with his own ministry and needs more confirmation that Jesus is who he said he was, and wants more evidence of this.]

²⁰ And when the men had come to him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying, 'Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?'" ²¹ In that hour he

healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind he bestowed sight. [In response to John the Baptist's question of "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" Jesus shows his Messianic authority and power by healing diseases, plagues, evil spirits, and restoring the eyes of the blind, cf. Isaiah 61:1-3; Luke 4:18-22; Malachi 3-4.]

²² And he answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them. ²³ And blessed is the one who is not offended by me." [Jesus tells John that he is doing exactly what the Old Covenant had declared, and what John the Baptist himself had preached he would do; the word "offended" in v. 23 is from the Greek verb *σκανδαλίζω* (*skandalon*) which means to cause (someone) to sin, cause (someone) to give up his faith (pass. give up one's faith, be led into sin, fall into sin); cf. Matthew 11:1-6: ^{ESV} **Matthew 11:1-6:** When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in their cities. ² Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples ³ and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" ⁴ And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. ⁶ And blessed is the one who is not offended by me." **John the Baptist is seeking final assurance on his deathbed, which all can empathize with him in this. Jesus is implicitly teaching John that his assurance is found in Jesus- -in his power over death, and his resurrection life that he has authority and power to use for the glory of God!**]

Scripture Lesson

^{ESV} **John 5:25-29:** "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. ²⁶ For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. ²⁷ And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. ²⁸ Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice ²⁹ and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

John 11:21-26, 38-46: Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." ²³ Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." ²⁴ Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." ²⁵ ***Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"***

....Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb [of Lazarus]. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. ³⁹ Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four

days." ⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" ⁴¹ So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me." ⁴³ When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." ⁴⁴ The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go." ⁴⁵ Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him, ⁴⁶ but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.

1 Corinthians 15:16-24: For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹ If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. ²⁰ But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. ²⁴ Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.

^{ESV} **Revelation 21:1-4:** Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

^{ESV} **Acts 10:34-45:** So Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵ but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. ³⁶ As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), ³⁷ you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: ³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. ³⁹ And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, ⁴⁰ but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, ⁴¹ not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴² And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name." ⁴⁴ While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. ⁴⁵ And the believers

from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles.