

Bite Size Bible Study

The Widow's Son #78

By Pastor Lee

Some of you have probably wondered why I use so many Old Testament Scriptures. The answer is that in many ways I see the New Testament as a reiteration of the Old Testament, only with a more complete perspective.

Let me show just one example:

Soon afterward, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him. As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out—the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, "Don't cry."

Then he went up and touched the bier they were carrying him on, and the bearers stood still. He said, "Young man, I say to you, get up!" he dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.

They were all filled with awe and praised God. "A great prophet has appeared among us," they said. "God has come to help his people." This news about Jesus spread throughout Judea and the surrounding country.
Luke 7:11-17 (NIV)

While going to the village of Nain, which is just south of Nazareth where He grew up, Jesus comes across a funeral procession. A woman, who was a widow, had lost her only son. That means that she had also lost the only person that was supposed to take care of her and sustain her in her old age.

Although this is great miracle in itself, this miracle has a special significance to the people of this particular area.

Just over the hill from Nain was located the Old Testament town of Zerepath where Elijah performed the miracle of restoring another widow's son to life.

Elijah had been sent to Zerepath by God in order to be protected from a famine in the area. He was to go to a widow who would provide him food and shelter. See the story in 1 Kings 17:8-16.

Some time later the son of the woman who owned the house became ill. He grew worse and worse, and finally stopped breathing. She said to Elijah, "What do you have against me, man of God? Did you come to remind me of my sin and kill my son?"

"Give me your son," Elijah replied. He took him from her arms, carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his bed. Then he cried out to the Lord, "Lord my God, have you brought tragedy even on this widow I am staying with, by causing her son to die?" Then he stretched himself out on the boy three times and cried out to the Lord, "Lord my God, let this boy's life return to him!"

The Lord heard Elijah's cry, and the boy's life returned to him, and he lived. Elijah picked up the child and carried him down from the room into the house. He gave him to his mother and said, "Look, your son is alive!"

Then the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord from your mouth is the truth."
1 Kings 17:17-24 (NIV)

By Jesus performing this miracle in this particular location, He was identifying Himself with the Old Testament prophets. The people recognized two things about this event. First by proclaiming Himself as great prophet, they recognized the great historical significance of what they saw had occurred. Secondly, when they also proclaimed, " *God has come to help his people*", they were saying "Messiah has come!"

Often when you find a story in the New Testament you can find a parallel or similar situation in the Old Testament. Each story will be of value to the reader by itself. But there is a synergy when comparing the two, and often the understanding is enhanced when studying both together.

The Bible is not two separate books bound together, like volume one and two. It is a continuing story of how God has been, and is, providing for and guiding His children through their lives. When one looks at the whole story from Eden to the present, one needs to see His continued presence, and be aware of how He has always been drawing His children to Himself. Sometimes we see "tough love" and sometimes we see "grace and forgiveness", but that is nothing less than what a good parent will do for their children.

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