

Raising of the Widow's Son at Nain (Luke 7:11-17): Exegetical Intertextual Study of Luke-Acts as a Typology of the Elijah-Elisha Narrative

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Abstract

The most thoughtful of all the miracles Jesus performed during His earthly ministry are those in which He raised the dead. Liberal theologians, because of natural laws, objected to the logical possibility of miracles. Other folks have disputed the reality of miracles for centuries that they are merely garbage of stories that Jesus' followers and disciples fabricated. More repeatedly, studies into the literary roots of the New Testament endeavour to connect Jesus' narrative to wonder-workers and holy men from the Greco-Roman world. The raising of a widow's son is unique to the Lukan pericope. This paper attempts to trace an intertextual relationship that exists between Luke-Acts and the Elijah-Elisha narrative. The study adopts narrative and socio-historical criticisms to investigate Luke-Acts as a typology of the Elijah-Elisha narrative, concentrating on the resuscitation of the deceased son of the widow of Nain to validate reality. The study found that the Jesus-Elijah/Elisha typology supports the authenticity and historicity of Jesus raising the dead. The major social issue in the raising of the widow of Nain's son centres on the vulnerability of a bereaved mother whose only child had died, leaving her without family, social, or monetary upkeep, yet she found solace in Jesus.

Keywords: Elijah-Elisha, Jesus, Luke-Acts, miracles, Nain and the widow, typology

Introduction

Researchers in the arena of historical Jesus investigation have debated whether historians should be eager to admit all types of miracles that are persuasively attested in the sources. Miracles that align with a contemporary scientific worldview seem to have stronger support in the research works than those that do not.¹ The variance is relatively vibrant when one matches the narratives concerning the manner through which Jesus resurrected the deceased; nonetheless, it is similarly noticeable when one likens narratives of other wonders.

¹ Craig S. Keener, "The Historicity of the Nature Miracles," in *The Nature Miracles of Jesus: Problems, Perspectives and Prospects*, ed. Graham H. Twelftree (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publisher, 2017), 41–65; Andrew J. Cress, "Jesus, Skepticism, and the Problem of History: Criteria and Context in the Study of Christian Origins," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 63, no. 4 (December 2020): 877–79; Michael P. Levine, "Miracles and the Laws of Nature," in *The Nature Miracles of Jesus: Problems, Perspectives and Prospects*, ed. Graham H. Twelftree (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publisher, 2017), 128–51; Keith Warrington, *The Miracles in the Gospels: What Do They Teach Us about Jesus?* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Academic, 2016); Amy-Jill Levine, *Signs and Wonders: A Beginner's Guide to the Miracles of Jesus* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2022).

To contemplate 'cogitate' along a sliding scale from perfectly normal to highly abnormal is a concept that fits somewhat awkwardly within contemporary medical assessment. It is also, from a source-critical perspective, rather fragile. The account of the widow's son at Nain (Luke 7:11–17) is part of the unique material found only in Luke's Gospel, which was recorded in its known form at a relatively late date.

The undertone in New Testament scholarship heightened authorial curiosity, based on a rethink to redefine the authenticity of Jesus' miracles, the exegete sets out to address the current trend, so as to hit the bottom line. A closer examination of Luke 7:11–17 portrays that the author aims to present Jesus as an empathetic divine being who performs wonders, motivated by the plight of one of the marginalised members of his time, a widow. The account of Jesus raising the son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11–17) originates from the unique material found in Luke's Gospel, independent of the accounts in Mark or John. Interposing a funeral was a blatant break of Jewish law and custom; touching the bier unveiled Jesus to a day's impurity (Num 19:21–22); touching the corpse unveiled him to a week's impurity (cf. Num 5:2–3; 19:11–20). But in Jesus' circumstance, the impact portrays a unique pageant.

This passage in Lukan narrative presents practically unmatched explicit equivalents to the stories of Elijah/Elisha that Luke develops.² In this account, Jesus revives a deceased boy, a miracle performed by both Elijah and Elisha in the Old Testament. To fully grasp Luke's subtle emphasis, it is important to examine the language used by these prophets during their respective resurrections of the dead. This miraculous act elevated the people's perception of Jesus' authority even further. Notably, the theme of faith in Jesus does not play a prominent role in this episode. Nevertheless, the recurring motif of the joy that Jesus brings remains evident. Ultimately, the miracle performed by Jesus surpasses those of Elijah and Elisha in both power and significance.

From the foregoing, as discussions raged back and forth, the study is set out currently as an underway, newfound, and substantial proof of the authenticity of Jesus' resuscitation of the widow of Nain's son. The purpose is to ascertain the source-critical strength and scientific acknowledgement of Jesus' revitalisation of the deceased lad of the bereaved mother of Nain.

The Authenticity of Jesus' Miracles

During the last century of New Testament scholarship, numerous protestations erupted to challenge the authenticity of Jesus' divine wonders.³ A handful of dissenting arguments are relatively shallow, revealing a striking lack of familiarity with the vast body of historical and biblical scholarship from the past sixty years. For instance, the idea that the miracle stories are merely fabrications of Jesus' followers and disciples is undercut by several key points. These include the existence of ancient pagan accounts referring to Jesus' miracles, the Jewish opposition that acknowledged those miracles yet attributed them to the power of Beelzebul, and the failure of these objections to apply basic principles of historical analysis to the miracle narratives.

Some demurals emphasise Jesus' resuscitating the lifeless; possibly, Jesus performed some wonders by restoring the sick to good health and casting out demons. Nonetheless, resuscitating those that passed on echoes as an initial Christian artificial package to attest to

² Thomas L. Brodie, *The Crucial Bridge: The Elijah-Elisha Narrative as an Interpretive Synthesis of Genesis-Kings and a Literary Model of the Gospels* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2000), 84.

³ Nicholas T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God: Christian Origins and the Question of God*, vol. 2 (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996), 186.

Jesus' divinity throughout his ministry.⁴ Some of the pieces of evidence in Luke-Acts concerning the Roman Empire are verified employing materials referring to Rome from other sources, and this scrutiny validates the dependability of Acts.⁵ Contemporary defences of dependability find their way into this type of recourse.⁶ Other oppositions focus on the opinion that ancient people were incapable of detecting a factual wonder, disrupting the natural order, since they were oblivious to equally moral laws and ordinary science. This opposition speciously links the acknowledgement of miracles with a grasp of ordinary science. As many historiographers identify, the folks living in ancient Judea during early Roman times were comparatively experienced in identifying the normal and metaphysical as they sighted prompt healings of skin disease, physical deformities, hearing impairments, and complete loss of sight.⁷

According to Meier, an earlier pre-Lucan narrative validates the designation ascribed to Jesus after the raising of the dead was affirmed: "He is a great prophet."⁸ This phrase would have been reasonably fitting for a Jewish addressees throughout Jesus' mission who had only a limited familiarity with Him outside this astonishing wonder. It is possible they showed up to behold Him in the role of Elijah or Elisha, prophets who were widely regarded as "great prophets." Nonetheless, this description ultimately surpassed several ages after the Son of Man's raising from the dead, following the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the founding of the Faith community, and Christians' declaration of Jesus as "the Lord." The close connection between the Luke-Acts passages and the Elijah-Elisha narratives provides sufficient evidence to resolve any uncertainties regarding the significance of Jesus' miracles.⁹

⁴ John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus Vol. 2 - Mentor, Message, and Miracles* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1994), 623-840; Justin J. Meggitt, "'More Ingenious than Learned'? Examining the Quest for the Non-Historical Jesus," *New Testament Studies* 65, no. 4 (September 2019): 443-60, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0028688519000213>; Tobias Hägerland, "The Future of Criteria in Historical Jesus Research," *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 13, no. 1 (October 2015): 43-65, <https://doi.org/10.1163/17455197-01301003>; Elaine Pagels, *Miracles and Wonder: The Historical Mystery of Jesus* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 2025).

⁵ "Historical accuracy of the Book of Acts: A treasure trove of evidence," Home, Truths to Die for, published October 17, 2024, <https://truthstodiefor.com/historical-accuracy-of-the-book-of-acts-a-treasure-trove-of-evidence/>. This source explains how archaeological evidence, textual consistency, and external historical corroboration from Roman and Jewish historians confirm the accuracy of Luke's account in Acts. It highlights specific examples such as the use of the title "politarch" in Thessalonica, Roman citizenship privileges, and the confirmation of historical figures like Felix, Festus, and Gallio through inscriptions and documents.

⁶ Craig L. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels*, 2nd ed. (Lisle, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007); Frederick Fyvie Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003); Brooke Malia Mann, *Miracles of Jesus* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2019); James G. Crossley, "The Nature Miracles as Pure Myth," in *The Nature Miracles of Jesus: Problems, Perspectives and Prospects*, ed. Graham H. Twelftree (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2017), 86-106.

⁷ Mega Nutzman, "Person, Place, and Object: Ritual Healing in Roman and Late Antique Palestine," *The Ancient Near East Today*, October 2024, <https://anetoday.org/person-place-object/>.

⁸ Bruce, *The New Testament Documents*, 796.

⁹ Peter Dubovský, "From Miracle-Makers Elijah and Elisha to Jesus and Apocrypha," *Studia Biblica Slovaca* 12, no. 1 (June 2020): 24-42; Gary L. Shultz Jr., "The Spirit in Elisha's Life: A Preview of Jesus Christ and the New Covenant," *Themelios* 47, no. 1 (April 2022): 36-48; Alexey Somov, *Representations of the Afterlife in Luke-Acts* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017); Lorne R. Zelyck,

The three accounts of "raising the dead" are found in different gospel traditions: the Marcan tradition, which tells of the resurrection of Jairus' daughter (Mark 5:21–43); the unique tradition found only in Luke, which recounts the raising of the son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11–17); and the Johannine tradition, which describes the resurrection of Lazarus (John 11:1–46). In addition, a saying from a list in Q: "The blind see and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them" (Matt 11:5). These stories clearly show that these events really happened. Resurrecting those who died is cited across four out of every five different customs, except for the Distinct Matthew, which doesn't mention it directly. Although raising the dead is rare, it is supported by many different sources.

Thoughtfully, regardless of the remarkable charisma of the "raisings," no one among the evangelists had a cause to reproduce them. Mark, Matthew, and John had one on record, while Luke had two narratives. Thus, the restraint of the Gospel authors to replicate these stories designates reverence for veracity.

The SBL Greek New Testament (SBLGNT); Luke 7: 11-17

The Society of Biblical Literature

¹¹ Καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ ἐξῆς ἐπορεύθη εἰς πόλιν καλουμένην Ναῖν, καὶ συνεπορεύοντο αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ ὄχλος πολὺς.

¹² ὡς δὲ ἤγγισεν τῇ πύλῃ τῆς πόλεως, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐξεκομίζετο τεθνηκὼς μονογενὴς υἱὸς ἰ τῇ μητρὶ αὐτοῦ, καὶ αὐτὴ ἦν χήρα, καὶ ὄχλος τῆς πόλεως ἱκανὸς ἦν σὺν αὐτῇ.

¹³ καὶ ἰδὼν αὐτὴν ὁ κύριος ἐσπλαγχνίσθη ἐπ' αὐτῇ καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῇ· Μὴ κλαῖε.

¹⁴ καὶ προσελθὼν ἥψατο τῆς σοροῦ, οἱ δὲ βαστάζοντες ἔστησαν, καὶ εἶπεν· Νεανίσκε, σοὶ λέγω, ἐγέρθητι.

¹⁵ καὶ ἀνεκάθισεν ὁ νεκρὸς καὶ ἤρξατο λαλεῖν, καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτὸν τῇ μητρὶ αὐτοῦ.

¹⁶ ἔλαβεν δὲ φόβος πάντας, καὶ ἐδόξαζον τὸν θεὸν λέγοντες ὅτι Προφήτης μέγας ἠγέρθη ἐν ἡμῖν, καὶ ὅτι Ἐπεσκέψατο ὁ θεὸς τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ.

¹⁷ καὶ ἐξῆλθεν ὁ λόγος οὗτος ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ περὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ πάσῃ τῇ περιχώρῳ.

Jesus Raises a Widow's Son LUKE 7:11-17; New Living Translation (NLT)

11 Soon after this, Jesus travelled with his disciples to the town of Nain, and a large crowd accompanied him.

12 As they approached the village gate, they met a funeral procession coming out. The man who had died was the only son of a widow, and a large group from the town was with her.

13 When the Lord saw her, He was deeply moved with compassion. "Do not weep," He said to her.

14 Then He stepped forward and touched the coffin, and the bearers stopped. He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise."

15 Immediately, the dead man sat up and began speaking, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.

16 A great fear came over the crowd, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has risen among us," and "God has come to help His people."

17 And the news about Jesus spread throughout all Judea and the surrounding regions.

"Elisha Typology in Jesus' Miracle on the Jordan River (Papyrus Egerton 2, 2v. 6–14)," *New Testament Studies* 62, no. 1 (January 2016): 149–56, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0028688515000399>.

Luke-Acts as a Typology of the Elijah-Elisha Narrative

All over Luke-Acts, the figure of Elijah is raised as regards the question of the true people of God. Luke's Gospel replicates the OT account of Elijah and the widow of Zarephath (1 Kgs 17:8–24) as early as Jesus's opening homily, with intrepid and challenging claims about the true recipients of the kingdom of God (Luke 4:25–26). The following echoes and allusions to the same account span the rest of Luke-Acts, from the account of the widow of Nain (7:11–17) to the raising of Tabitha (Acts 9:36–42) and Eutychus's hapless fall from the window (Acts 20:7–12).¹⁰ Fitzmyer deduces that Luke used this narrative to depict that a new dawn of salvation history is preparing to be manifested.¹¹ Jesus is the transmitter of God's word to humanity, and he acted as a prophet.

Many scholars have argued that Luke draws upon the Elijah-Elisha narrative tradition, particularly the stories associated with Elijah I, in order to portray Jesus. In doing so, Luke appears to frame Jesus' reply to John the Baptist's students within a passage that evidently seeks to identify him with Elijah I, specifically through the miracle of the Raising of the Widow's Son at Nain (Lk. 7:11–17; cf. 1 Kgs. 17:17–24). Exclusively concerning the prior references to Elijah and the Zarephathite all over the Lukan narrative, the rudimentary equivalents in this pericope are conspicuously sufficient and acknowledged by most scholars.¹² The Old Testament context for the story of Jesus raising the widow's son is miracles fashioned by Elijah (1 Kings 17:10–24) and Elisha (2 Kgs. 4:18–37). The episode of Jesus resurrecting the bereaved mother's son is a typology of Elijah and Elisha because both Jews and Gentile Christians during the messianic ministry had known the stories fully, and how they intertwined. However, Croatto underscores that the figurative and unequalled Messiah swaps the historical prophet.¹³

There is an indication that Nain has been adjacent to Old Testament Shunem, where Elisha restored to life the Shunammite's son (2 Kings 4: 18–37). Elijah also raised a widow's dead boy to life, in Zarephath (1 Kings 17:17–24). The people recognised that Jesus's divine wonder was similar to miracles performed by the great prophets of the Old Testament, Elijah and Elisha. These wonders demonstrated the supremacy of Yahweh and confirmed the legitimacy of the seer. As a result, the folks viewed Jesus's miracle as a divine act: "God has come to help his people!" They also acknowledged Jesus as a prophet sent by God: "A great prophet has risen among us!" At this point, they had not yet understood that Jesus was Lord

¹⁰ G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 29–40; Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 29–32.

¹¹ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke I–IX: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1983), 215, 656.

¹² Thomas. L. Brodie, *The Birthing of the New Testament: The Intertextual Development of the New Testament Writings* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2004), 284–446; Craig A. Evans, "Luke's Use of the Elijah/Elisha Narratives and the Ethic of Election," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 106, no.1 (March 1987): 75–83, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3260555>. That Elijah is an agent of resurrection is recognized not only from Hebrew Scriptures (1 Kings 17), but similarly subsequent Rabbinic writings where we read that the resurrection of the dead comes through Elijah (m. Sot. 9.15; y. Sheq. 3.3; y. Sabb. 1.3; Sanh. 92b).

¹³ J. Severino Croatto, "Jesus, Prophet like Elijah, and Prophet-Teacher like Moses in Luke-Acts" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 124, no. 3 (October 2005): 454, <https://doi.org/10.2307/30041034>.

himself in human form. However, the folks recognised that Yahweh was actively working in him.

Luke underscores the despondency of the occasion by expressing the phrase μονογενὴς υἱὸς (only son) and καὶ αὐτὴ ἦν χήρα (and she was a widow). The gravity of this real-life situation highlights that a widow who has lost her only son may now have no one to care for her in her later years.¹⁴ Furthermore, a close comparison between Luke 7:11–17 and the account in 1 Kings 17 reveals conspicuous parallels: just as Elijah met a widow at the gate of the city (1 Kings 17:10), Jesus also encountered a widow at the entrance to the city (Luke 7:12); both Jesus and Elijah returned the life of the widow's son (Luke 7:14; 1 Kings 17:22); both returned the son to his mother (Luke 7:15; 1 Kings 17:23); and in both cases, the miracle led to the recognition of the prophet's divine authority, Jesus as a great prophet, just as Elijah was recognized (Luke 7:16; 1 Kings 17:24).

Brodie locates parallels in “central motifs, rudimentary structures, and explicit events” between Luke's gospel and the Elijah/Elisha accounts.¹⁵ In Luke 7, the Gospel writer records the episode in which Christ resurrects the bereaved mother's only son back to life in the town of Nain, an event that showcases Jesus' resurrection power and connects His ministry to the roles of two prominent Old Testament prophets. This particular account is unique to Luke's Gospel and is the first reference to the city of Nain in the whole New Testament. Luke strategically includes both literary and geographical references to present Jesus as a prophet in the tradition of Elijah and Elisha. Notably, all three figures, Elijah, Elisha, and Jesus, performed the miraculous act of raising an only son from the dead: Elijah in Zarephath (1 Kings 17:8-24), Elisha in Shunem (2 Kings 4:8-37), and Jesus in Nain. The details surrounding Jesus' resurrection of the young man in Nain closely mirror Elijah's miracle in Zarephath, differing primarily only in the geographical context. Elisha's resuscitating the Shunamite lady's son “was projected to reveal Elisha as a prophet like his forerunner, Elijah.” Twelftree's expression considers Luke's narrative equivalent to Elijah's resuscitation of the lad of the bereaved mother of Zarephath.¹⁶ This entails that Luke formed his story on 1 Kings 17:23ff. The specific details, such as the upstairs setting and the seers stretching themselves over the lad several intervals, help identify this act as a deliberate allusion. Accordingly, Luke intentionally referenced the divine wonder at Nain, not only as it accurately mirrors the precise specifics of the miracles performed by Elijah and Elisha, nevertheless, it similarly draws a direct earthly parallel to Elisha's story. Both Nain and Shunem are situated on the slopes of the Mount of Moreh, overlooking the Jezreel Gorge. It is therefore likely that the inhabitants of Nain recognised this linking after beholding Christ's astounding restoration of the dead, the crowd started exclaiming, “A great prophet has risen among us!” and “God has visited His people!” (Lk. 7:16).¹⁷ Ostensibly, “the people of Nain recollected the last time a

¹⁴ J. Lyle Story, “Four Females Who Encounters Jesus,” *Priscilla Papers* 23, no. 4 (Autumn 2009): 14-15.

¹⁵ Brodie, “*The Crucial Bridge*,” 83.

¹⁶ Graham H. Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker: A Historical & Theological Study* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 307.

¹⁷ Leander E. Keck, ed., *The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary Volume IX: Acts, Introduction to Epistolary Literature, Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2015), 157; Philip Graham Ryken, *Luke, 2 Volumes: Reformed Expository Commentary* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishings, 2009).

great prophet, Elisha, had performed a very parallel miracle on the angles of the same hill.¹⁸ And now, in their day, God had visited his people again." Unrelatedly, these parallels advocate that Elisha and Christ are equally seers who demonstrate kindness and resuscitate the dead.¹⁹ Elijah prayed to God for help when he encountered the widow of Zarephath, whose son had died (1 Kgs. 17:10-24). The equivalents between this episode and the account of Jesus and the widow of Nain are outstanding. Equally, Elijah and Christ arrive at a city gateway (1 Kgs. 17:10, 17; Lk. 7:12). Both encounter a widow who has lost her only son (1 Kings 17:17-18; Lk. 7:12). Elijah calls on Yahweh's name at the top of his voice, while Jesus shows empathy (1 Kgs. 17:20-21; Lk. 7:13). Elijah extends his limbs over the child, and Jesus touches the funeral bier (1 Kgs 17:21; Lk. 7:14). In both cases, the lad is restored to life, Elijah's prayer results in the child's soul returning, and Jesus' command brings the dead boy to life, causing him to sit up and speak (1 Kgs. 17:22; Lk. 7:15). Equally, Elijah and Christ then, return the child to his mother, with nearly identical phrasing in the Greek Septuagint translation (1 Kgs. 17:23; Lk. 7:15). Finally, the widow acknowledges Elijah by saying, "Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth," while the throng's reaction to Jesus is, "A great prophet has risen among us." (1 Kgs. 17:24 and Lk. 7:16).²⁰

A notable variance between the accounts highlights the relative effortlessness with which Christ resuscitates those who had died. While Elijah prostrated himself over the child in a trio of efforts, pleading with God to restore the boy's life; Elisha followed suit, doing so twice (1 Kgs. 17:20-22; cf. 2 Kgs. 4:34-35), Christ steps forward, lays His hand on the coffin, and speaks life into the youth (Lk. 7:14). Although Brodie argues that the resemblances between Luke 7 and 1 Kings 17 cannot be denied, there are significant differences between the narratives. Among these, the most significant is Jesus' authoritative declaration to the bereaved mother's lad: νεανίσκε, σοὶ λέγω, ἐγέρθητι ("Young man, I say to you, arise!" Luke 7:14). Luke thereby affirms that Jesus surpasses Elijah. By the power of his authoritative word, Jesus raises the widow's son, whereas Elijah had to physically extend his limbs over the boy and plead with God (1 Kgs. 17:21) for the child to be restored to life.²¹

The accounts of miracles in the Gospels that resemble those performed by Elijah can be partially interpreted as Jesus imitating Elijah. A notable variance between the Elijah-Elisha narratives and the account involving Christ is that mutually Elijah and Elisha had received kindness from their respective mothers and thus felt a sense of obligation, whereas traces of evidence are lacking to showcase that Jesus had ever met the Nain's widow before he restored her child's life, who had died. These matches between the miracles of the Old Testament seers and those of Jesus helped the folks to recognise that Christ is a great prophet (v. 16).

Immediate and Remote Setting (Luke 7: 1-10; 18-23; 24-26)

¹⁸ Allen C. Myers, ed., *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987), 747, 946. Elisha resurrected the only son of a Shunammite woman from the dead (2 Kings 4:18-37). Shunem was situated 7 miles south of Nazareth, and Nain was sited 5.5 miles (9 km) southeast of Nazareth so the place where Jesus resurrects the widow's son is geologically relatively adjacent the place where Elisha raised the Shunammite woman's son.

¹⁹ Thomas Louis Brodie, "Luke 7, 36-50 as an Internalization of 2 Kings 4, 1-37: A Study in Luke's Use of Rhetorical Imitation," *Biblica* 64, no. 4 (1983): 457-85.

²⁰ Keck, *The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary Volume IX*, 157.

²¹ Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX*, 656.

Luke's routine opening words to a novel narrative *kai egeneto* ("and it happened"), roughly link this specific story to the previous proceedings (7:1-10).²² The account of Christ resuscitating the bereaved mother's lad is closely connected to the episodes that promptly go before and follow it. It is paired with the narrative of Jesus healing the centurion's servant (Luke 7:1-10). Luke often presents stories in complementary pairs, one involving a man and the other a lady, and this is evident here with the male centurion and the bereaved lady. In two scenarios regarding the accounts, the spoken word of Jesus demonstrates extraordinary power: performing healing from a faraway area, in the centurion's case, and even raising the dead in the case of the widow's son.

In the earlier passage, Luke highlights Jesus ministering to a Gentile, not merely a non-Jew, but a servant of a Roman centurion. This underscores the truth that Jesus was sent as the Messiah not only for the Jewish people but for the whole world. This theme echoes Jesus' very first sermon in Luke 4, where He referenced Elijah's ministry to a Gentile widow (4:24-26), a subtle yet significant reminder that God's salvation extends beyond Israel.

Directly after the divine wonder of resuscitating the bereaved mother's child, Luke records the arrival of messengers from John the Baptist, who ask Jesus whether He is truly the promised Messiah (7:18-23). This sequence of events reinforces Jesus' identity and mission, with each story building upon the other to reveal the scope and significance of His ministry. "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?"²³

Jesus's reaction to the query clearly points to an affirmative answer: he is indeed "the one who is to come." According to Luke, this title carries far more weight than that of a prophet. Foremost, Christ restores life to deceased child of the bereaved mother, and then he speaks to John's emissaries, implying his unique and superior identity, "Go and tell John the things which you have seen and heard: that the blind receives their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news preached to them" (7: 22).

Textual Criticism

7:11 ἐν τῷ ἑξῆς *{B}

With ἐν τῷ ἑξῆς, the bibliophile is to provide ἡμέρᾱ ("on the next day"); with ἐν τῷ ἑξῆς, one provides χρόνῳ ("[soon] afterwards"). In another place, nevertheless, when Luke pens τῇ ἑξ ἡς he does not prefix ἐν (Luke 9:37; Acts 21:1; 25:17; 27:18); instead, when xro/nw | is to be understood, Luke uses ἐν τῷ καθ' ἑξῆς (Luke 8:1). Generally speaking, it is more likely that the less definite expression of time would be changed to the more assured than the other way around. Additionally, the proof backing τῷ ἑξῆς is heftier than that backing τῇ ἑξ ἡς²⁴

7:11 αὐτοῦ *{B}

Reflections of transcriptional and inherent prospects appear to support the originality of the word ἰκανόν. It is possible that copyists either intentionally omitted it since the phrase

²² Marvin Pate, *Luke-Gospel Commentary (Moody Gospel Commentary)* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publisher, 1995), 167. Luke's routine preliminary words to a new narrative *kai egeneto* ("and it happened") slackly links this specific story to the prior events.

²³ Ian Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Exeter, England: Paternoster Press, 1978), 290.

²⁴ "PC Study Bible version 5," PC Study Bible, Biblsoft, http://www.biblesoftonline.com/help/index.php/Main_Page; Bruze M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994).

οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ἱκανοί is unusual and has no parallel elsewhere in the New Testament, or accidentally skipped over it due to the proximity of the following words beginning with καὶ. Additionally, the term ἱκανός is notably characteristic of Luke's style, appearing 27 times in Luke-Acts outside a total of 40 manifestations in the entire New Testament. Nevertheless, the external evidence supporting the shorter reading (αὐτοῦ without ἱκανοί) is strong in terms of both era and variety of manuscript tradition. As a result, the mainstream of the Group opted to endorse the smaller reading.²⁵

13, κύριος is substituted by Ἰησοῦς in several manuscripts. This is interesting because the narrator himself has not referred to Jesus as "Lord" until at this juncture, even though others have referred to him in that manner.²⁶ A comparable difference, conflicting only in case, likewise arises in v. 19. Following this, Bruce Metzger debates that κύριον is more probable the original reading because it follows Lukan style and for the reason that it is not probable that Ἰησοῦν would have been substituted.²⁷

Exegesis of Luke 7:11-17: Exegetical Comments, Discourse of Translation, Lexical and Grammatical Issues

Craddock added that Luke 7: 11-17 is very similar to miracle stories told in Hellenistic culture. Niceties of the narrative characterise what we know of interment traditions in Palestine at the time: the usage of a cot (Luke says "bier" from his Greek culture), the procession of bearers and mourners, and the burial outside the city wall. This particular city, Nain, may have been the earliest designation of a town southeast of Nazareth, but that remains a question.²⁸

The Predicament of the Widow's Fatherless (Luke 7:11-12)

"It happened soon afterwards, that he went to a city called Nain. Many of his disciples, along with a great multitude, went with him" (Καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ ἐξῆς ἐπορεύθη εἰς πόλιν καλουμένην Ναϊν, καὶ συνεπορεύοντο αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ ὄχλος πολὺς v. 11). Equally distinguished directly above, Nain is situated 5.5 miles (9 km) southeast of Nazareth, adjacent to the space Christ was brought up and not distant away from Capernaum, where he builds his household as a grown-up and the location he uttered the command that rehabilitated the centurion's household staff.

²⁵ Biblesoft, "PC Study Bible version 5."

²⁶ David L. Tiede, et al., *New Proclamation: Year C, 2007, Easter through Christ the King* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006), 95; Keck, *The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary Volume IX*, 158.

²⁷ Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 119.

²⁸ Fred B. Craddock, *Luke: Interpretation, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1973), 207. But as stated by Price, the raising of the widow of Nain's son, though this story is unique to Luke in the synoptic gospels, has the physiognomies of an unabridged set of Hellenistic tales in which a wise man or master physician barely saves from untimely burial someone who has gone into a deep coma or been poisoned but still scarcely lives. The similar story to Luke's account is one found 34 in Philostratus's *Life of Appolonius of Tyana* (VI: XLV). Again, in its Hellenistic analogous, the dead person that was carried out of the city gates of Shumen for burial was a young maiden who had died on the eve of her wedding; for example, Robert M. Price, "The Widow Traditions in Luke-Acts: A Feminist-Critical Scrutiny" (Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series, Scholars Press, 1997): 83-100.

Almost immediately afterwards, ἐγένετο (egeneto), a verb in the aorist indicative middle, third person singular. Strong's 1096: A lengthy form and middle voice variant of a primary verb; meaning to cause to be, to come into being, or to become, used with considerable flexibility. Harris asserts that the miracle regarding the revivification of the widow of Nain's son "elucidates the distinctive character" of the mission of Christ: Disease (Lk. 7:1-10) and even death (Lk. 7: 11-17) are subordinate to the power of Jesus.²⁹ Through Jesus, "the dead are raised" (Lk. 7:22). The narrative starts with Καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ ἑξῆς (And it occurred next...), therefore tethering this narrative to the aforementioned. In the earlier account, Christ revived an "almost dead person"; at this point, He resurrects someone who is actually deceased.³⁰

"Now when he drew near to the gate of the city, behold, one who was dead was carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. Many people of the city were with her" (ὡς δὲ ἤγγισεν τῇ πύλῃ τῆς πόλεως, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐξεκομίζετο τεθνηκῶς μονογενὴς υἱὸς τῇ μητρὶ αὐτοῦ, καὶ αὐτὴ ἦν χήρα, καὶ ὄχλος τῆς πόλεως ἱκανὸς ἦν σὺν αὐτῇ v. 12). Luke articulates the calamitous situations. The lady, until now a widow, had lost her only son in the incident. This would be an immense tragedy to every lady, regardless of period or dwelling, but even more so for someone living in a male-controlled community. It is not only a peculiar loss; however, it is also a monetary disaster, parting her without any means of support or livelihood.

Jesus' Sympathy on the Widow of Nain (Luke 7:13-15)

"When the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her" (καὶ ἰδὼν αὐτὴν ὁ κύριος ἐσπλαγχνίσθη ἐπ' αὐτῇ v. 13a). Luke seldom emphasises Jesus' emotions, yet in this passage, he clearly highlights His compassion. While Jesus' primary aim is not to draw attention to Himself, His actions naturally result in drawing people to Him, as seen in the way He helps a woman in desperate need. This significant word is compassion, to have compassion, *splanchnizesthai* "to be stimulated with sympathy, to have pity or compassion".³¹ The Greek term used here, *splanchnizesthai*, corresponds to the Hebrew *rāḥam*, which signifies a deep, powerful emotion that moves someone to act. Luke employs this verb only three times in his Gospel (see 7:13; 10:33; and 15:30), and in each instance, it marks a pivotal moment in the story. A broader look at the phrase "to have compassion" throughout the New Testament reveals that it is consistently accustomed to designate Jesus' disposition, reflecting the divine character of His actions.

²⁹ Murray J. Harris, "The Dead are Restored to Life: Miracles of Revivification in the Gospels," in *Gospel Perspectives, Volume 6: The Miracles of Jesus*, ed. David Wenham and Craig Blomberg (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1986), 295.

³⁰ Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker*, 153. Darrell L. Bock asserts that the portrayal of the woman as widowed and childless is significant. She has no household now and in operation is an 'orphaned parent.' The passion in the verse conveys profound pathos. Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1994), 648; Arie W. Zwiep, "Jairus, His Daughter, and the Haemorrhaging Woman (Mk. 5:21-43; Mt. 9:18-26; Lk. 8:40-56): Research Survey of a Gospel Story about People in Distress," *Currents in Biblical Research* 13, no. 3 (June 2015): 351-87. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1476993X14530058>.

³¹ George Abbot-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament* (Edinburgh, Scotland: T & T Clark, 1999), 414; Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 2nd ed., trans. and ed. William F. Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich, and Frederick W. Danker (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 962.

In this scene, the sight of the grieving widow, surrounded by a large crowd of sympathisers, stirs deep compassion within Jesus. He responds with the gentle command, “Do not weep,” a statement that not only brings immediate comfort but also becomes a turning point in the widow’s life, transforming her sorrow into hope.³²

There is more to explore from Jesus’ compassion. According to Löhe, Jesus was passionately moved with compassion, which triggered his divine power to do the needful. Löhe went further to advance this “great need”, concluding that Jesus’ involvement in this specific incident is what inspires in Him the divine determination to restore the damage that occurred in Paradise. Death is His mischievous adversary; once more, now that He took our flesh and will undergo this adversary Himself. Undeniably, Jesus’ compassion in all his miracles is the sign of the Gospel, that the emergence of the messianic rule of God is predisposed to grace”.³³ It is not just compassion for the man who is afflicted with death, but for the widow’s immediate situation. Not only is she ritually unclean and must go through the purification process, but she also reminds us that the widow’s son was all that she had to give her standing in her community. Being a widow is hard enough, but her son’s death has left her bereft of all identity and vulnerable. In a sense, she has become a kind of living dead, a ghost.

“He came near and touched the coffin, and the bearers stood still” (καὶ προσελθὼν ἥψατο τῆς σοφοῦ, οἱ δὲ βαστάζοντες ἔστησαν v. 14). Placing his hand on the coffin appears to notify the carriers to halt, and they do so promptly. To touch a dead body makes a person ritually unclean for seven days (Numbers 19:11, 16). Christ appears to touch only the bier and not the corpse itself, yet he had previously shown negligence for a parallel proscription the minute he placed his hand on a leper during the curative course (5:13). This was not a coffin or pine box, but a wooden frame. Contact with it should make Jesus ritually unclean; He has essentially touched death.³⁴ Since Jesus is God, death cannot make Him impure. Instead, Death withdraws, leaving the only other thing possible.³⁵ In verse 14, Jesus uttered one word of action: “ἐγέρθητι”. The prompt result ensued as life and spiritual cleanliness were restored for both son and mother as designated by Jesus, handing him back to her.

“Do not weep” (Μὴ κλαῖεν. 13b). Fitzmyer deduces that a verbatim rendition would be “Do not go on crying”.³⁶ These expressions suggest that Christ opted to proffer a solution to the issue of her child’s bereavement. He increases anticipations that he must fulfil; otherwise, he will simply deepen this woman’s sorrow. Jesus’ usage of present imperative Μὴ κλαῖεν entails that the woman was crying her eyes out profusely. He was truly communicating with the bereaved mother to wipe her tears. She must have overheard parallel

³² Helmut Köster, *Splanchnizomai: Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 7 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 553.

³³ Arthur A. Just Jr., ed., *Luke: 3 (Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture)* (Chicago, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 308. This dramatic compassion will spill over into His parables as well, notes Just on the same page, in particular that of the Good Samaritan (in Luke 10) and the Forgiving Father (in Luke 15).

³⁴ Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 14.

³⁵ Just Jr., *Luke: 3*, 308.

³⁶ Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX*, 659; James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Luke (Pillar New Testament Commentary (PNTC))* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2015); Brendan Byrne, *The Hospitality of God: A Reading of Luke’s Gospel*, revised ed. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2015); Nicholas T. Wright, *Luke for Everyone*, 3rd ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2022).

comforting expressions from people who sympathise with her; nonetheless, only Christ could say ‘Do not weep’ and simultaneously get rid of the root of the tears.³⁷

The Deuteronomist elaborates that both Elijah and Elisha must beseech God with the aim of resurrecting the dead, but Jesus overruled such a medium. As a substitute, Jesus authorises the restoration of the boy himself: σοὶ λέγω, ἐγέρθητι (“I say to you, get up”). Jesus utters a command (ἐγέρθητι) acceptable by his power (σοὶ λέγω). This unprecedented event signifies a miracle to be performed only by a great prophet. Nonetheless, Jesus’s direct claim to authority, as expressed through the term λέγω, carries with it certain theological implications. He performs the same kind of miracle as both Elijah and Elisha, yet He does so through His own inherent authority, an authority that Elisha did not possess. Whereas Elisha struggled in his attempt to raise the Shunamite woman’s son (2 Kings 4:31), requiring a second effort, Jesus successfully performs the miracle with nothing more than a word (Luke 7:14). In this section, Luke inspires the attentive person who reads to recognise Jesus’s prophetic supremacy over Elijah and Elisha, as He accomplishes the miraculous faultlessly in a manner they could not. Through this, Luke presents Jesus as the greatest of all the prophets, with His miracle serving to underscore that truth.³⁸ To buttress this point, it is evident that Jesus did not plead that Yahweh would resuscitate the deceased, but otherwise spoke unswervingly to the deceased. He is engrossed in no dramatics. He basically utters a short-term imperative. That is everything that must be done.

“He who was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he gave him to his mother”³⁹ (15καὶ ἀνεκάθισεν ὁ νεκρὸς καὶ ἤρξατο λαλεῖν, καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτὸν τῇ μητρὶ αὐτοῦ). There has been no reference to faith. The helpless widow, traumatised, has not reached out to Christ for assistance and, thus, has not established belief in Christ. The act at this point is exclusively at Christ’s inventiveness and hinges deeply on his authority. As soon as he voices out, everything falls into its appropriate place (“Thus says the Lord’ Gen. 1:1-3 cf. Jn 1:1). Most notably, the expression “and he gave him to his mother” (καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτὸν τῇ μητρὶ αὐτοῦ) is an exact quotation of LXX 1 Kgs 17:23. However, as with any allusion, this is no mere reiterating of the OT event, for Luke manages to direct the readers’ thoughts through the insertion and lapse of many details. The nationality of the woman, of critical imagery in the OT original, and of central importance for Jesus’s application in Luke 4:26, is not stated whatsoever.

Apparently, being from the Galilean town of Nain, the woman was actually Jewish. There is no clue of conflict in this section, either with the audience, as in Luke 4: 28–29, or with the widow herself, as in 1 Kgs 17, where she indicted Elijah of conveying misfortune upon her

³⁷ Walter L. Liefeld and David W. Pao, *Luke: The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 105. Consistent with Luke-Acts, Jesus, the new Elijah, displays unparalleled concern for widows. A widow is portrayed as a model of determined prayer in Luke 18: 1-8.

³⁸ Francois Bovon, *Luke 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1-9:50 (Hermeneia: A Critical & Historical Commentary on the Bible)* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002), 273; Troy M. Troftgruben, “Salvation ‘Today’ in Luke’s Gospel”, *Currents in Theology and Mission* 45, no. 4 (2018): 6-11; David E. Garland and Clinton E. Arnold, *Luke (Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament)* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2011).

³⁹ Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke, The New International Commentary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 292; John T. Carroll, *Luke: A Commentary (The New Testament Library)* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012).

(v. 18). These gaps serve entails the focus of the incident hinged on the woman and her miserable condition, which the relator slyly divulges sequentially: the son “had died,” he was “the only son of his mother,” “and she was a widow” (7:12). With the degree of her sorrow necessitates Jesus to have compassion on her (v. 13).

Jesus as the Great Prophet, Greater than Elijah-Elisha (Luke 7:16-17)

Luke emphasises Jesus’ sympathy as well as His power. The throng’s words are undoubtedly meant to recommend that Jesus is a prophet such as Elijah and Elisha, who correspondingly owned such incredible power (1 Kgs 17:17–24; 2 Kgs 4:8–37).⁴⁰ However, the last words of the crowd, “God has visited (Ἐπεσκέψατο) His people,” reminiscence Zechariah’s prophecy in Luke 1:68: “He has visited (Ἐπεσκέψατο) us and has accomplished redemption for His people.” Thus, it is conceivable that there are likewise messianic nuances.

Trajectory to the same line of thought, Blackburn corroborates in citing Green by asserting that the thesis statement of this miracle is about the divine power of Jesus. It is displayed in Verses 16 and 17. The crucial phrase is “God has visited his people.” In the Synoptic Gospels, the drive for Jesus’ miracles is to announce the arrival of God’s kingdom. These miracles prompted the people to consider Jesus as a seer, since, like the prophets of the Jewish background, He confidently pronounced God’s bidding and even resuscitated the deceased. Equally, Elijah and Elisha had performed similar acts by raising children back to life (1 Kgs. 17:17-24; 2 Kgs. 4:18-37). While the folks were accurate in recognising Christ as a prophet, they had yet to grasp the full truth that He was not only a prophet, but God Himself.⁴¹

The concluding exclamation of the onlookers, “God has visited his people” (ἐπεσκέψατο ὁ θεὸς τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ, v. 16) recalls familiar imagery of God’s saving acts for Israel throughout the OT (Exod 4:31; Ps 106:4 LXX 105:4]; cf. Luke 1:68, 78), so that this woman in her poverty typifies God’s true people. Likewise, Jesus’s healing compassion for her serves to represent God’s salvation.⁴² Thus, if Luke’s application of the Zarephathite account in Luke 4 shows that many in Israel can be removed from God’s blessings because of unbelief, Luke 7 shows the posture of those few who will receive divine mercy as “his people”, poor and humble, with nothing to cling to but God alone.

“And God has visited (Greek: *episkepsato*) his people! For Poythress, the miracle exhibited the power of God at work, and it confirmed the validity of the prophet. So, the people saw Jesus’s miracle as a work of God”.⁴³ (v.16). The verb *episkepsato* is associated with *skeptomai*, which entails ‘to gaze’. *Episkepsato* can entail ‘to stare’ with mercy or ‘to look’ with judgment, or to visit (see Acts 7:23). By so doing, it reflects God’s tender mercy extended to His beloved people.. The crowd also begins to say, ‘God has come to help his people’. The

⁴⁰ Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 646.

⁴¹ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 353; F. Scott Spencer, *Luke (Two Horizons New Testament Commentary)* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2019).

⁴² Michael Eaton, *Preaching Through the Bible: Luke 1–11* (Bristol, TN: STL–Distribution North America, 2004), 95.

⁴³ Vern S. Poythress, *The Miracles of Jesus: How the Savior’s Mighty Acts Serve as Signs of Redemption* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 17. Earlier, God promised Moses, “I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their own people; I will put my words in the mouth of the prophet, who shall speak to them everything that I command” (Deuteronomy 18:18), a promise that anticipated the coming of the Christ (Acts 3:22-23; 7:35-37). The crowd (while probably not realizing the full significance of their words) declares that the promise has been achieved.

verb is *episkeptomai*. In Greek culture, the term has numerous connotations: 'to look upon, consider, have regard to,' 'to reflect on, examine, investigate something' and 'to visit', such as the sick.⁴⁴ It is used in the Greek Old Testament to signify a divine encounter in which God lovingly intervenes to redeem His people.⁴⁵ The expression is evocative of Yahweh's intercession in Egypt during Moses' leadership: *And the people believed: and when they perceived that the Lord had visited* (*episkeptomai*, Septuagint) *the children of Israel and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped* (Exo. 4:31).

In reaction to fear is fathomable, with respect to two astounding exclamations: "A great prophet is risen among us!" and "God has visited His people!" "The extent to which, in response to fear, is conceivable, given two marvellous utterances: 'A great prophet is risen among us! and "God has visited His people!" This is the response of people to Jesus raising the widow of Nain's son (Luke 7:11-17). It was a wondrous miracle, an emotion-stirring and spiritually uplifting. "Fear is a spectrum people could wrap their heads around." This analogy implies that the kind of fear or awe people feel is conceivable, logical, or justifiable, given the situation. As with all things miraculous, when ordinary people encounter them, it's natural for them to be overawed, frightened or profoundly affected. Of two marvellous exclamations. The terror or the wonder is linked up with two great confessions of the people: "A great prophet has arisen among Importance of the prophet's teaching, Greatness of the prophet as shown by subsequent history.⁴⁶ To Wright, any kind of miracles they may have witnessed from other Jewish teachers and spiritual healers, the people have not perceived anything like this.⁴⁷ In effect, the OT epoch of Elijah and Elisha was the last period anyone was raised from the dead.

Kistemaker pens that the crowd impulsively burst into praising God and saying that the Great Prophet had come among them to show that God indeed helped his people. They were accurate in calling Jesus a Great Prophet; he fulfilled the messianic prophecy that God would raise a prophet like Moses, who was considered the greatest in the history of Israel.⁴⁸ This passage, as stated by Sproul, has plenty in it to divulge to us His sweetness, His excellency,

⁴⁴ H. W. Beyer, "ἐπισκέπτομαι, etc.," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 599–600.

⁴⁵ Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 298.

⁴⁶ This is to say that the people acknowledged Jesus as a very important prophet, as one who comes with some degree of divine authority and a great deal of power, that is perhaps akin to those men of old who spoke the word of God and worked miracles. "God has visited His people!" This is a declaration that God Himself has drawn near to His people in the person of Jesus. It is a theological affirmation that we are the presence and activity of God in this event. this follows up with the reaction or fallout to that event. For instance, in Luke 7:17, it quotes: "And the report of this went over all Judaea and all the country round about." What are the two exclamations indicative of? The exclamations indicate the sudden emotional and spiritual reaction of the witnesses-fear, awe, and recognition of Jesus' divine authority. Put differently, people's initial fear and recognition, then they told others about Jesus' fame and the growing awareness among the people that something special.

⁴⁷ Nicholas T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), 430.

⁴⁸ Simon J. Kistemaker, *The Miracles: Exploring the Mystery of Jesus's Divine Works* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2006), 124.

His person, His power, and His saviorhood.⁴⁹ The people did not yet comprehend that Jesus was God's incarnate in the flesh. But they did grasp that God was at work through him.

"This report went out concerning him in the whole of Judea, and in all the surrounding region" (καὶ ἐξῆλθεν ὁ λόγος οὗτος ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ περὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ πάσῃ τῇ περιχώρῳ v. 17). It seems odd that Luke would mention Judea here, given that this miracle takes place in Galilee. It appears prospective that he intends us to understand "Judea" to depict "the land of the Jewish people", in which case, "all the neighbouring countries" would refer to Gentile domains.

Lessons in Luke-Acts/Elijah-Elisha Narrative

Jesus demonstrates that he has power over death and demonstrates himself to be even greater than the prophets of the OT. He fulfils the imagery of Elisha, Elijah and Moses. He doesn't pray to God to do this. He doesn't go through any rituals, lie on the child, etc., like Elijah and Elisha did. He just says it, and it happens. Jesus demonstrates true and sincere religion in His care for widows. True devotion possesses such compassion. While His disciples see only a funeral procession as they pass by, Jesus perceives far more. He understands the intimate details of the situation. He knows the deceased is a young man, the only son of a woman who is now a widow. Without waiting for any appeal, as echoed in Isaiah 65:24 and Daniel 9:20-23, He acts. Upon seeing the grieving mother, He was moved with compassion. His deep concern is evident in His expression of mercy and tenderness. He comforts her with the words, "Do not weep." When Jesus touches the coffin, He does so without pride or pretence. In quiet humility, He offers hope. The widow believes all hope is lost, but even in such devastating circumstances, Christ's presence radiates hope. He displays further tenderness when He lovingly restores the son to his mother. This miracle stirs fear among the witnesses, yet this fear quickly transforms into reverent awe in response to Christ's compassion and power. His fame spreads among the people, while opposition from the Jewish leaders intensifies as they continue to reject His assertion to be the Son of God..

After the miracle episodes, in Elijah/Elisha narrative the widow of Zarephath exclaimed 'Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord from your mouth is the truth', the rich lady of Shunem already realized Elisha as the man of God, prostrated to his feet and bowed herself to the floor to signify worship to God, the crowd in Lukan periscope proclaimed, "a great prophet has risen among us and that God has visited his people".

Christ, who can lay down his life and take it back again, arose from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have died (1 Cor. 15:20). Christ is the "firstfruits." He is not the first human being ever to be brought back to life. Restoration to life happened with the widow of Zarephath's son (1 Kings 17:17-24), with the Shunammite's son (2 Kings 4:18-37), and with Jairus's daughter (Matt. 9:18-26), as well as with Lazarus. In what wisdom is Jesus first? Christ, in man's nature, was the first to go into the eternal and unending life made possible through resurrection. The resuscitation of Lazarus, while significant, serves only as a foreshadowing or partial glimpse of a far greater reality to come. It remains a mere shadow when compared to the resurrection of Jesus. Yet, it is still a meaningful preview, a small-scale representation of the everlasting, spiritual life that Jesus would fully bring about through His own resurrection.

⁴⁹ Robert C. Sproul, *Luke: An Expository Commentary* (Sanford, FL: Ligonier Ministries, 2020), 251; Andreas J. Köstenberger, Justin Taylor, and Alexander Stewart, *The Final Days of Jesus: The Most Important Week of the Most Important Person Who Ever Lived* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014).

Towing the same trajectory in the African milieu. Africans who have come to grapple with the gospel miracle in Christ have reshaped their ideology. Christianized Africans have been significantly shaped by clearly defined Christian eschatological beliefs, such as the concepts of final judgment, heaven, hell, and the resurrection of the dead as ultimate fates of the soul. As a result, this theological framework has led many Christianized Africans to anticipate an afterlife spent in a heavenly fellowship with God and the angels, as described in Christian teachings. This shift represents a reconfiguration of the traditional African worldview, with many African Christians outwardly embracing the Christian understanding of the afterlife and finding comfort in the prospect of eternal life with God in the hereafter. Supporting this perspective, Opoku argues that Christianized Africans have largely adopted the Christian doctrines regarding heaven, hell, and judgment after death. Yet, despite this apparent acceptance, there remains a visible resistance among many Christianized Africans to fully embrace the syncretism of traditional African beliefs, particularly those concerning ancestors and the ongoing spiritual presence of the living dead⁵⁰ and reincarnation.⁵¹

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that a significant majority of Biblical historians consider the evidence for Jesus' wonders of resuscitating the deceased, particularly the resuscitation of the widow of Nain's son, to be compelling beyond a reasonable doubt, primarily based on New Testament sources such as Mark, Q, Luke, and John. It highlights the strong source-critical and historical credibility of this miracle, linking Jesus' actions to Old Testament prophetic traditions of Elijah and Elisha, thereby reinforcing Jesus' divine authority and mission. Luke's detailed narrative emphasises the compassion and power of Jesus, who is recognised by witnesses as a great prophet and God's visitor, affirming the miracle's role in declaring the kingdom of God. The study concludes that Jesus' power over death offers hope for life after death, with his own resurrection serving as a model for eternal life, ultimately challenging scientific scepticism and affirming the theological significance of Jesus' miracles as authentic divine acts that transcend natural laws.

The study's novelty lies in its synthesis of historical-critical findings with theological implications, particularly its emphasis on the source-critical strength and multi-traditional attestation of Jesus' miracles as affirmations of his divine identity. This study brings together biblical, historical, and theological evidence to support the truth of Jesus' resurrection miracles, especially when some people question their likelihood because of a scientific viewpoint. It combines findings from history and theology, focusing on the strengths of source criticism and the various traditions that back up Jesus' miracles as signs of his divine nature. It contributes fresh insight by demonstrating how Jesus' miracle narratives, especially in Luke, echo and surpass Old Testament prototypes to declare God's active presence among His people. For future research, it would be helpful to look into archaeological evidence and other historical sources outside the Bible that could back up the resurrection miracle accounts. Also,

⁵⁰ John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Oxford, England: Heinemann, 1990), 158. The constant recollection of the Living-Dead and their continuous interface with the living establishes the person's "personal immortality." One enjoys this status so long as there are people left behind to remember him or her.

⁵¹ Kofi A. Opoku, *West African Traditional Religion* (Accra, Ghana: FEP International Private Limited, 1978), 138. The dead are also believed to be able to return to the earth to be reborn into their families.

studies that mix theology, history, and the philosophy of science could give more insight into how these miraculous events relate to natural laws. Investigating how early Christian communities viewed and interpreted these miracles could also help us understand their influence on Christian beliefs. Lastly, comparing resurrection stories in other religions might give us a wider view of the cultural and religious meaning of these miracles.

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