

(NB) **The question of Authority**: The Roman Centurion had **the Authority** and Power of Rome behind him when he gave commands, so, these commands **would** be obeyed!

***Jesus has the Authority and Power of God behind His Word of Command** (4:14; 5:17; 6:12)

The Gentiles know that Creation will obey its Lord! This augurs well for the future Mission to the Gentiles. Cf. **Acts** of the **Apostles** "The Word of the Lord began to spread..."

- The Gentiles were present at Pentecost: Acts 2:5-12...
- Samaria accepted The Word of God: 8:14
- The pagans too – had accepted The Word of God: 11:1

2. **New Life and the Jews: 7:11-17**

For the Gentiles, participation in the New Israel required faith and a radical healing from Jesus. For the Jews, it required a genuine resurrection from the dead! This is illustrated in Jesus' prophetic action at Nain.

We must remember that **Jesus is LORD**: Lk 7:6, 13

We have seen that the Son of Man has power to forgive sins in 5:24

... that he is Lord of the Sabbath in 6:5...

Now we see that **He is LORD of LIFE** in 7:15

NB: The motive for this miracle is Jesus' compassion for the grieving mother, **Israel** Or for Israel who was **the wife of Yahweh** through the Covenant of Moses. Cf. Luke 15:24,32 where death is equated with 'lost' and 'found'.

NB: Jesus alone can fulfil the prophecy of Ezekiel that a nation could rise from the dead: Ezek 37

Vs. 11 The Village of Nain rests on the slopes of Little Hermon, east of Endor.

- Jesus met a funeral cortège and observed a weeping widow about to bury her only son. This would mean that she was now **alone**, with no one to support her in life. She was desolate.

- vs 13
- **The Lord Jesus**, out of compassion for the widow stopped the procession, put his hand on the bier, and raised the young man to life.
 - a) in touching the bier Jesus drew ritual uncleanness upon himself. Cf. Num 9:6-7; Num 5:2 → he drew the penalty of uncleanness upon himself and died "outside the camp" reviled by all.
 - b) Jesus raised the young man with no merits on **his** part.
 - it was the unmerited, unconditional Love of God
 - Jesus paid for this gift with his own life.

Future Event: In about 3 years' time Jesus, the only son of **His MOTHER**, who was a widow will walk to his death outside of Jerusalem. She will be desolate and alone then.

- **But** Just as Jesus in vs 16 "**gave** the boy back to his mother" here, so will God the Father give Jesus back to His Mother and to the Church in the **RESURRECTION**.

(NB) This event forecasts **that** one!

A.

Who is the Widow's Son of Nain?

- Israel was the wife of Yahweh through the Covenant.
- The widow's son also represents Israel in spiritual death, the Covenant broken.
- The sobbing woman is Jer. 31:15 (Mt 2:18)

"Rachel weeping for her children because they were no more"

Jesus was prepared to raise Israel from the dead **out of the sheer love of God** for his people. He wanted to **restore** the widow back to her bridal bliss in the New Covenant which was about to be cut in the flesh of the Pure Lamb of God.

Result of the Miracle:

- a) "Everyone was filled with awe..."
- b) They praised God...
- c) Proclaimed **"a great prophet has appeared among us; God has visited his people"**. Cf. Lk 1:32, 68
- d) **This** message about him spread everywhere.

B.

Who is this Widow's Son? Look at Luke 15: The Prodigal Son

- In Luke 15 we hear in detail how God's son gets **"LOST"** (ie) dies spiritually
- And then through the Father's Love is **"found"** or brought back to life and community.
- The transformation comes through the sheer Love of God

Final observation: Luke deals with this event in a way similar to the healing of Zechariah in Lk 1:64-65:

- The young man speaks ... Zechariah spoke and praised God
- Jesus is recognised as a great prophet ... Zechariah was transformed into a prophet...
- Both conclude that **"God has visited His people"**: 1:68 / 7:16
- Both episodes note that **"the story spread throughout Judea and the whole countryside"**
- We will see that it reaches a much wider environment – including the Gentiles...

Israel's Expectations of the Messiah: 7:18-35

In the next section the Persons and Missions of John the Baptist and Jesus are related, but also distinguished from each other.

Two segments here: a) JB questions Jesus: 7:18-24 b) Jesus' discourse to the crowds: 7: 25-35

Again, Luke takes up the prophetic lines of **the Benedictus** which spoke about Jesus and JB. He illustrates in the cure of 7:1-10, and the resurrection of 7:11-17 that Jesus fulfils what was said about him – but **in the wider vision** of Simeon's canticle: 2:29-32.

Luke is concerned about JB's disciples – who were still faithful to him at the beginning of the Church. He wants them to realise that they **lose nothing** by going over to Jesus, since JB prepared the way for Jesus. Cf. Acts 17:1-7

Vs 7:18: Note that here JB's disciples **go to him** for guidance and that **he sends them to Jesus!**

John the Baptist is in prison awaiting martyrdom. His disciples keep him informed about Jesus. He then sends two of them **TO JESUS** to ask a question.

The scholars say that at the time of Jesus' Mission this would not have happened as John the Baptist's disciples would only look to **him** for guidance... but at the time of **Luke** some of John the Baptist's disciples who **still** continued John the Baptist's teaching, came to the **Church** looking for guidance...

The Mystics say it happened as Luke stated.

Vs 21: Jesus responded to JB by giving him the **Isaiah signs**, and then invited them to testify to JB.
Cf. Lk 2:20; Acts 4:20. **Isaiah 26:19; 29:18-19; 35:5-6; 61:1-3**

By his actions Jesus told them that **he was the "one who was to come"**

Luke continuously points out that Jesus' whole life and Mission are pointed out in **his words and actions**.

Jesus, himself, explains his actions in Biblical terms - that he is the fulfilment of scripture
And that he has the power and authority of the Messiah

Here Jesus reminds us of his inaugural message in 4:18-19 when he cited Isaiah 61: 1-2 as the explanation of his Mission: Cf. Lk 24: 25-27, 44-47 - where he is even more explicit after his Resurrection.

Note Vs 44 with the emphasis on **his deeds**.

Who is the Messiah? John the Baptist or Jesus?

vs 22 : Jesus healed **many** people, illustrating Isaiah 26:19; Isaiah 35:5-6 and 61:1

- Knowing that John the Baptist would recognise the fulfillment of the Prophets, the two disciples were to **testify to what they had seen and heard**.
- This is a strong point in Luke. People must **SEE** as well as **HEAR** in order to believe.
Cf. 2:20; Acts 4:20

vs 23 • **"Happy (Blessed) is the man who does not lose faith in me"**

Why? Because Jesus did not do what John the Baptist **expected** of him.

- a) John the Baptist had taught that the Messiah
"would baptise them with the Holy Spirit and fire" Lk 3:16-18
- b) and that he would judge the wicked...

So far, Jesus had done neither! Looking at Jesus' Ministry from a distance it seemed as if he was just nonchalantly healing this one and that one and not **looking at the big issues** at all!

Yet in his inaugural speech **Jesus left out** the passage about Judgement: Lk 4:18-19
In Luke 9:53-55 Jesus rebuked his own disciples for wanting to judge **too soon!**

NB: Since JB was most likely an Essene, he would recognise something important about Jesus' reply to him. **Jesus gave him the Essene understanding of the Messiah!**

The Pharisee / Sadducee notion of the Messiah was that he would be merely a military leader who would conquer Rome but **leave them in power in the temple!** i.e. **their puppet!**

Judgement: But, what about Roman Domination and Occupation of Palestine?
And what about a big judgement of the wicked House of Herod?
... and the corruption in the Temple?

Problem: How would Jesus ever become a World Leader if he wasted his time on mere nobodies?

Today: Has Jesus disappointed you? What did you expect him to do that he has not done?
stop wars, maybe? or fix the problem of hunger, maybe? - stop violence, crimes and evil, maybe?

- Have you lost faith in him as the Saviour of all the world?
- Are you prepared to take him at his word? that he knows best?
- that saving individual people is the right thing?

Problem:

a) Both John the Baptist and ourselves have the same problem: we don't see the full picture.

Judgement, swift and terrible **did come** to Palestine towards the second half of the 1st Christian century.

40 years after the death of Jesus, the death of the Temple came in 70 AD, with the death of Jerusalem.

At the beginning of the 2nd Century the Jews were expelled from Palestine – and Rome!... before 135 AD

b) Neither John the Baptist, nor ourselves, really appreciate the Kingdom of God in people's **HEARTS**.

c) God doesn't want **STONE** temples but living temples where Love reigns. Cf. 1 Cor 3:16, 19... Cf. 2 Cor 6:16

Who is John the Baptist really? (Who are we?) 7:24-30

Jesus now turned to challenge those whose lifestyles were soft and self-indulgent
Then he revealed that JB fulfilled Malachi 3:1:

"Look, I am going to send my messenger to prepare a way before me..."

Both JB and himself fulfilled the scriptures, one as Forerunner, the other as Messiah.

- 1) John the Baptist lived in the desert, in terrible deprivation ... Qumran
- 2) He was no softie following the whims of fashion. He was the true poor man.
- 3) He was not given to luxury or the so-called "good life".
- 4) John the Baptist was a prophet of God.
- 5) He was the greatest prophet – the forerunner of the Messiah.
He was the greatest born of woman before the Kingdom of God. (Mt 11:11)

Why?

Because of the Holy Spirit and the fact that he was sanctified in his mother's womb
– a gift never given before then.

vs 29 (NB) Everyone born into the Kingdom of God is greater than John the Baptist in terms of privilege
because **"we are born of God"** in Baptism: Jn 1:14

- Anyone who is born of the Spirit (Jn 3) cannot be assessed on human terms alone.

Those who accept The Word / those who reject it vs 29-30

Since the Scribes, Pharisees and lawyers all rejected JB, they were in no position to understand Jesus. If they had accepted JB's baptism and repented, they would have received wisdom to understand Jesus' joyful way to God.

- All the people who listened to John the Baptist were baptised
- Also, public sinners like Tax Collectors

} 3:7, 10-14

a) They heard God's Word through John the Baptist and b) **thwarted God's plan for themselves.**

Jesus condemns "THIS generation": 7:31-35

- Were those people who were privileged to hear both John the Baptist and Jesus.
- " " " " **taught by God** through Jesus: Jn 7:16-17; Jn 6:63, 6:45
- Were those who received the miracles of Jesus...
- Were those present for "the Day of Salvation"...

- Of all human beings – **they** were the most privileged.
- They, therefore, had a greater responsibility to **"HEAR the WORD of God and KEEP IT"** Lk 11:28

vs 32 Jesus accused the adult population of remaining **'children' spiritually**

- No maturity, no gravitas, no depth, no understanding
- No wisdom, no discernment, no 'cop-on', no 'savvy', no growth to maturity

This generation lacked religious sincerity and seriousness.

- **They refused the penitential path** of John the Baptist which would have prepared them for The Word and Ministry of Jesus
- They **also refused the loving mercy and forgiveness of God through Jesus.**

vs 33-34 Their criticisms of both John and Jesus are invalid **because** of their rejection of them.
Cf. 5:29-39; 6:1-5; 6-11

"The children of wisdom" are God's servants who carry out his Will and Word on Earth.
When the whole drama of Jesus' Life is over, everyone will be able to see the Wisdom of God's Ways
Cf. 1 Cor 1:17 – 2:16

If the Scribes, Pharisees and lawyers had accepted John the Baptist, they would understand **why Jesus was a friend** of Tax collectors and sinners! (5:29-32)

It was because **they** had listened to John the Baptist, repented, been baptised and are now coming into the Kingdom of God.

They are among those who **weep blessedly** over their past lives and will go on to rejoice in the KOG 6:21

4. Salvation through Faith and Love: The Sinful Woman 7:36-50

Luke referred to **Jesus as LORD** in 6:46; 7:6, 13,19. Now we have an incident where a repentant woman **treats Jesus as LORD** thus evoking the question of identity again.

For those who join the New Israel they must recognise Jesus as the Son of Man – the human being par excellence – but also as LORD

This double recognition requires *both faith and love* on our part.

This incident brings *God's two types of children* into focus – religious self-righteousness on the part of the leaders, and sincere repentance on the part of sinners.

*Here we meet a Jewish sinner whose weeping is blessed...

*Back in 5:29-39 Jesus sat at the table of sinners - here in 7:36-50 he is the guest of "saints".

- Jesus accepted table fellowship with everyone. **The Pharisees didn't.**
- Usually, the Pharisees invited him to table to argue with him on **points** of Law

*an unexpected happening set the agenda for **this meal**.

A woman came in – uninvited - bringing an **alabaster jar** of ointment.

vs 38 she anointed Jesus' feet, wiped them with her hair, she covered his face with kisses
→ she showed adoring love and gratitude to **JESUS as LORD and SAVIOUR.**

vs 39 **THE PHARISEE** criticised Jesus **in his own heart**. Why? He presumed that a prophet would not allow a sinner **to touch him** – incurring defilement!

∴ he now has the "**proof**" that Jesus is **NO PROPHET!!**

vs 40 Jesus proved he **is** a prophet by reading the Pharisee's mind!

Parable: Jesus does to Simon what Nathan did to King David in 2 Sam 12:1-15
Through the parable both men judge **themselves guilty**.

Parable: **God is the Creditor**. All men are in debt to him.
Cf. Mt 18:23-35: **the unforgiving debtor**

- **Jesus does not emphasise God's Love and God's Forgiveness here.**

He merely looks at the **reaction of the debtor** who realises she has been relieved of such a burden.

- a) One debtor owes the Lord 500 days wages: 1½ years' wages
- b) The other owes the Lord 50 days wages: 1½ months' wages

Ⓝ • God pardoned them **both** Ⓝ God's love is given regardless of merit on our part.
His generosity is a mystery to us: cf. Mt 20:1-16: **the labourers in the Vineyard**

Ⓝ • Jesus asked Simon, the Pharisee, to give judgement: which of the two forgiven sinners would love God more - he said, correctly, the one who was forgiven more, of course!

Application of the Parable: Then came the revelation:

The two debtors were the **woman** at Jesus' feet who had been forgiven much and therefore loved much.
and Simon the Pharisee who had been forgiven little and therefore **showed little love!!**

God's way of thinking is as different from ours as the Heavens are from the Earth: Cf. Isaiah 55:8-10