

Title: A VISIT FROM GOD, LUKE 7:11 – 17
(Chatham, NJ; 06/05/16, AM) [Pc – Narrative Analysis]

Theme: Luke portrays Jesus as a direct link between him and the prophets, in particular Elijah and his miracles experienced during his time with the widow of Zaraphath.

Purpose: Not only to draw parallels between the stories, but also to demonstrate that God was present in the miracles and the message alike.

Introduction:

1. Luke has constructed his Gospel to demonstrate a connection between the prophetic experience with the Gentile world, the miracles they performed, and the message that always accompanies the presence of God's prophets.
2. Jesus began with an episode about Elisha: the healing of Naaman, Luke 4:25-27.
3. As we saw last week, Jesus encounters a Gentile with great faith; likewise Elijah encountered a Gentile widow who took him in for three years.
4. The Bible regularly tells us about those times that God visits his people.

I. A Widow's Chance Meeting, 1 Kings 17

- A. First, we see Elijah fed by ravens
 1. Elijah's first act was to pronounce judgment against Israel: a drought
 2. He hides in a wilderness and is fed by ravens
 3. Numerous ancient tales about heroes being cared for by wild beasts: Romulus and Remus, the founders of Rome, were supposedly raised by wolves
 4. I don't know if Elijah related this to the widow, but we clearly see the hand of God with Elijah
- B. Next, Elijah encounters a widow
 1. Seems like a chance meeting to her even though God tells Elijah that he has commanded her to take care of him
 2. She doesn't understand Elijah's request
 3. Elijah has to tell her that the food won't run out according to instructions from the Lord, the God of Israel, 14
 4. This was fulfilled "according to the word of the Lord that he spoke by Elijah"
- C. Tragedy strikes when everything had gone just right
 1. Her son dies after it seemed like she and he would survive
 2. She is deeply wounded and perplexed by this, 18
 3. Elijah brings him back to life
 4. She is now fully convinced of that Elijah has indeed spoken the words of God, 24

II. Another Widow's Chance Meeting, Luke 7:11-17

- A. The Occasion of a Funeral
 1. This strikes me as a chance meeting: Jesus happens to enter at the time of this funeral
 2. Another dead son
 3. Another moment of grief and despair
 4. Another widow facing a wilderness of hopelessness
 5. Jesus approaches: two crowds converge
 6. He says the wrong thing, "Don't cry!" (never say this at a funeral)
 7. Only Jesus can say this and take away the grief
 8. He stops the procession
 9. He raises the son: he sits up, speaks, and Jesus gives him back to his mother

B. The Crowd's Reaction

1. Remember the widow's reaction to Elijah raising her son, 1 Kings 17:24, "Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth."
2. The miracle leads her to believe Elijah's message.
3. The crowd: "A great prophet has arisen," "God has visited his people," 16.
4. Their reaction seeing life come from death could evoke no other conclusion
5. Yet we don't know how the crowd responded to Jesus' message after this
6. We know how John the Baptist responded

III. Their Certainty, John's Doubts

- The next section, Luke 17:18-35, is about the greatest prophet before Jesus
- John is in prison and he expresses doubts: "Are you the one?" (19)
- Jesus affirms his own role by allusions to Isaiah: the miracles the messiah will perform
- Remember that this prophet was the Elijah to come, Luke 1:17
- John never performed a single miracle; his was a ministry of the message
- Jesus was a unique combination of miracle and message
- His miracles pointed to who he was, but he also preached a message of repentance, redemption, and new life

Conclusion:

1. Elijah's miracle affirmed that his words were from God.
2. Jesus' miracles did much the same thing.
3. Yet the prophetic message is the most important part of the prophet's role.
4. Jesus came to give life; that happens by the message of the Gospel.
5. Won't you respond to it today? God has visited. He calls you to repent, etc.