MOROGORO BIBLE COLLEGE

6 EXEGESIS in PRACTICE (2)—Luke 7:11-17

# Look for Luke’s structure

## Translation

### v 16 ‘God has looked favourably on his people’ (NRSV); ‘God hascome to help his people’ (TNIV); ‘God has visited his people’ (RSV)—Greek is ‘visit’ (*episkesato*), see allusions this picks up below

## Context

### 7:1-10 forms a *partner story*

#### there Jesus heals

#### a gentile man (centurion) and a Jewish woman (widow)

### 7:18-23 flows from this story and 7:1-10—notice 7:22

## Form

### a classic *healing story* with the usual elements

#### the illness vv 11-12

#### the response of Jesus vv 13-14

#### what happened v 15

#### response of the crowds vv 16-17

## Structure

### *cause and effect*—Jesus speaks (v 14), the boy sits up and speaks (v 15)

### *means to an end*—Jesus touches the coffin to stop the bearers v 14

### *progression to climax*—climax with recognition of Jesus v 16

### *grammar*

#### *subjects of verbs*—who’s doing the actions?

##### vv 11-12 introduce the cast: Jesus v 11a; his disciples and the crowd v 11b; the dead son, the widow and the town crowd v 12

##### Jesus vv 13-15

##### the crowds vv 16-17

### *vocabulary/choice of words*

#### strong focus on *widow* in story

#### ‘he was moved with compassion’ v 13 derived from term for ‘bowels’ or ‘entrails’—modern equivalent as seat of emotions is probably ‘heart’

#### ‘visit’ v 16 cf. 1:68, 78

##### ‘visit’, usually for benefit of those visited when God visits—11x NT (3x Luke 4x Acts) note parallels in Luke 1:68, 78; 19:44

##### term used in OT for God’s interventions for his people’s benefit,notably Genesis 21:1; 50:24; Exodus 4:31; Ruth 1:6; Psalm 106:4

### *historical/cultural issues*

#### first-century Palestinian funeral customs

#### ritual impurity: Jesus touching a coffin (see below)

# Ask the seven key fact-finding questions

## Who?

### the characters: Jesus; his disciples v 11; large crowd v 11; the dead son v 12; the dead son’s mother v 12; the large crowd of mourners v 12

### their relationships

#### disciples and crowd following Jesus (cf. 6:17)

#### the dead son is passive

#### the crowds (both lots!) and the disciples are there as spectators (or perhaps, witnesses, since they speak in v 17)

#### the widow arouses Jesus’ compassion v 13

### Luke’s characterisation

#### *Telling* vv 12a (the widow); v 13 (Jesus’ compassion)

#### *Showing* v 14 implies Jesus’ authority, and note the flow of purity from Jesus to the impure corpse

#### *reactions we’re invited to have to characters*

##### sympathy with the widow v 12

##### empathy with Jesus v 13

##### empathy with the crowd vv 16-17

## Where?

### Nain, echoing the Elijah healing story (same district?) v 11

### atmosphere? positive towards Jesus following the healing in 7:1-10

## When?

### shortly after 7:1-10

## What?

### central event is the raising, which demonstrates Jesus’ authority as God’s spokesman (prophet) v 16—note vv 13, 14

### the raising leads to… fear, demonstrating the activity of God v 16; glorifying God v 16; recognition of Jesus as a great prophet who is the agent of God visiting his people v 16

#### note the parallel and contrast in 1 Kings 17:20-24

### Jesus as a prophet—note Luke 13:33-34

## How?

### terms used to describe Jesus: ‘the Lord’ v 13—the first time Luke uses ‘the Lord’ of Jesus as narrator, and he will continue to do it (Luke 7:19; 10:1, 39, 41; 11:39; 12:42; 13:15; 17:5-6; 18:6)

### touching the coffin would make Jesus ritually unclean (Num 19:10b-22)

## Why?

### Jesus’ compassion for the widow is his motive v 13

#### ‘…this is less an account of healing and more a disclosure of the character of Jesus’ mission and, therefore, of the nature of God’s redemptive intervention’ (Joel Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 291)

## So?

### we are left asking, ‘Who is this man who breaks convention in touching a corpse and, rather than being polluted by it, brings the dead back to life?’

### readers are invited to

#### share Jesus’ compassion for the widow v 13

#### recognise Jesus as prophet v 16

#### fear, glorify God and testify to Jesus’ power too vv 16-17

# Preparation for Friday 20 September

## use the method of exegesis from class 5 (look for the structure, and then apply the seven fact-finding questions), which we applied to Luke 7:11-17 in class 6 on one of the passages below. Remember to keep the focus on Jesus’ identity and what he has come to do.

### You are welcome to work with some friends on this, and share the research. Aim to come to the class on Friday 20 September ready to share your findings.

#### Matthew 8:23-27

#### Mark 7:31-37

#### Luke 17:11-19

#### John 12:12-16