**The Gospel of Luke**

**Witness to the Gentiles - #17**

**Jesus Heals a Servant, Raises Widow’s Son, Is He the Messiah?**

**Luke 7:1-10, 11-17, 18-22**

**The First Gentile Believer**

***Luke 7:1*** *Now when he had ended all his words to the people, he entered into Capernaum.* ***2*** [*And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and about to die.*](http://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Luke-7-2/)***3*** *And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, to ask him to come and save his servant.* ***4*** *And when they came to Jesus, they urged him strongly saying, that he was worthy for whom he should do this:* ***5*** *for he loves our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.* ***6*** *Then Jesus went with them.*

*And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not yourself no more: for I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof:* ***7*** *Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto you but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.* ***8*** *For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goes and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.*

***9*** *When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.* ***10*** *And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.*

**Notes and Studies**

1. A centurion is a Roman officer, chief of 100 men.

2. In our time, some who advocated same sex relationships have tried to advocate homo-sexuality by reading in some Greek Mss. the Greek word ***pais*** that is “body” in the text of Luke, but ***pais*** was a word used in the parallel telling of this story in Matt 8:6, but all Greek Mss. provide us with ***doulos,*** or**“**slave.” The allegation is that the Greek word *“pais”* (servant) was commonly used for the younger partner in a same-sex relationship. But gay persons have errantly concluded that the centurion was in a homosexual relationship with the “*slave who was dear to him,*” and that Jesus was willing to go into the centurion’s house to heal his lover, but the centurion stopped him, saying, “*Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant will be healed*.” As we shall see momentarily, this is false.

3. In fact a textual reading of Matthew, Luke and even John, will help:

a. Matthew used ***pais*** (servant).

b. Luke used ***doulos*** (slave)

c. John reported the miracle of the healed servant (4:47, 50, 52) used ***huios***, or “son.”

4. Luke used doulos, which was more common among Greek speaking Gentiles.

To conclude from the use of the word in Classical Greek, that the Greek word ***pais*** used in this story was used in the Greek as a synonym for the word ***eromenos*** – a Greek word meaning “the boy you love” and specifically denoting a homosexual relationship as in Plato (Symposium (385 B.C), Jesus says nothing about approval or disapproval. But Jesus as Jew is the one who knew that homosexuality was not approved by the Law. Jesus said to the adulteress woman “*Go and sin no more*”

**Pure fantasy**

First of all, his claim that ***pais*** is a synonym for ***eromenos*,** which would imply a homoerotic relationship between the centurion and his slave-boy, is pure fantasy.  We have no textual support of any biblical lexicon or language dictionary that supports such a reading or that these two words were synonymous. There is no such connection on good linguistic ground.  The use of these words in Plato in Greece some 350 years before Christ’s does not mean that this was a universal common use in Israel.  What matters is how the NT writers used the word and what “they” meant by its use.

Secondly, ***pais*** is used consistently throughout the NT as a description of a child, a young person either boy or girl, and a servant. It refers to age but never to a “sexual slave lover.”  There is no possible way it could mean a “sexual slave lover” in any of these passages – Matthew 2:16, 12:18, 14:2, 17:18, 21:16; Luke 1:54, 69, 7:7, 8:51, 54, 9:42; John 4:51; and Acts 3:13)

Third, that the Roman centurion merely asking Jesus to heal his **pais** implies it is a homoerotic relationship because everyone knows centurions had servants that merely served the purposes of fulfilling their sexual appetites.  But this is mere fantasy for it is a supposition without a historical foundation.

That “Jesus healed a centurion’s homosexual lover” lacks NT support. Jesus never approved of pederasty between an adult man and a child or young boy.  Our Lord willingly approving a sexual relationship between a centurion and a boy has no support from what we know from the historical record that this even was a practice known in Palestine

So, this story is about a Gentile who had faith that was so unique and the words of Jesus must be taken as the key witness,”*I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel*.”

**The Authority Of Jesus**

In verses 7-9 we see that the Roman wanted Jesus not to come to see the sick but to use his authority, and Jesus “marveled”: the human side appears vividly and recording it is highly important to remember that the union of the divine and the human in the Person of Jesus did not abolish what is human.

**Jesus Raises a Widow's Son – Luke 7:11-17**

***Luke 7:11****Soon afterwards he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a great crowd went with him.* ***12****As he drew near to the gate of the town, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and a considerable crowd from the town was with her.* ***13****And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, “Do not weep.”*

***14****Then he came up and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, “Young man, I say to you, arise.”* ***15****And the dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother.*

***16****Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, “A great prophet has arisen among us!” and “God has visited his people!”* ***17****And this report about him spread through the whole of Judea and all the surrounding country.*

**Notes and Studies:**

1. There seems to be a kind of parallels between this miracle and the raising the son of the “widow of Zarephath” by Elijah (1 Kings 17:8-24).
2. Jesus comes to Nain as did Elijah.
3. Both meet a widow at the gate of the town.
4. The son was restored to life.
5. Verse 16 though recorded the reaction of the crowd, yet there is one basic difference, Elijah prayed but Jesus commanded.
6. Nein was not far from Endor on the Northwest of Nazareth and was about 25 miles away from Capernaum

**The Compassion of Jesus**

When Jesus saw the woman, who must have been crying, he had compassion and told her “do not cry.” Here once more is the compassion of the Lord.

**A Note from Philemon**

What is human and good like mercy, love, and compassion was not abolished because of Jesus’ divine nature, but on the contrary became integrated into his personal life. Jesus wept, and looked at the widow who lost her son to death and asked her not to weep. In the letter to the Hebrews, the greatest words ever recoded are, “*For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted*.” (Heb 2:18). My beloved Jesus knows my pain not in a mental way, I mean just as an idea, but he had similar pains, and was tempted all his life by being rejected by Jews who hated him. But look at Jesus on the cross. He asked the Father to forgive those who crucified him. He did not accept anger or a desire for revenge or to ask even for just judgment.

**More Notes**

1. In verse 14, Jesus touched the “bier.” The Greek word used by Luke is ***soros***, which is a vessel for holding the dead body. From archeology, this could have been made of stone.

1. Verse 14 tells us the power of Jesus, “*Young man, I say to you, arise.*” There is nothing like this anywhere else in all religious books that we know.

1. Verse 15 says Jesus gave the son “back to his mother.” The miracle maintained the life of the two and kept them together.

**Is Jesus a great prophet … and no more?**

1. No message was ever centered on the life death and resurrection of any of the prophets. The uniqueness of Jesus is so clear that he gave his life to renew our life.
2. Jesus hardly speaks of God (twice) but all the time Jesus teaches us about the Father whom Jesus came to reveal as our Father and also as our God.
3. Prophets spoke the word of God, but Jesus brings us to a communion with the life of the Father (John chapter 17).
4. Jesus sends the Holy Spirit to us as the gift of the Father; no prophet ever promised to give the Holy Spirit to humanity.
5. More important we are initiated into his life, death and resurrection in Baptism (Rom chap 6). No prophet could give us such a gift to share his life.

**Messengers from John the Baptist ask: ‘Are you Jesus the Messiah?’ – Luke 7:18-22**

***Luke 7:18****The disciples of John reported all these things to him. And John,* ***19****calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to the Lord, saying, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?”*

***20****And when the men had come to him, they said, “John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?’”*

***21****In that hour he healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind he bestowed sight.* ***22****And he answered them, “Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them.*

**John the Baptist**

1. An account of John the Baptist is found in all extant manuscripts of the Jewish historian [Flavius Josephus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flavius_Josephus) in his book, [*Antiquities of the Jews*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antiquities_of_the_Jews) (book 18, chapter 5, 2) (37–100):

“Now some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God, and that very justly, as a punishment of what he did against John, that was called the Baptist: for Herod slew him [John], who was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another, and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism; for that the washing [with water] would be acceptable to him, if they made use of it, not in order to the putting away [or the remission] of some sins [only], but for the purification of the body; supposing still that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness. Now when [many] others came in crowds about him, for they were very greatly moved [or pleased] by hearing his words, Herod, who feared lest the great influence John had over the people might put it into his power and inclination to raise a rebellion (for they seemed ready to do anything he should advise), thought it best, by putting him to death, to prevent any mischief he might cause, and not bring himself into difficulties by sparing a man who might make him repent of it when it would be too late. Accordingly he [John] was sent a prisoner, out of Herod's suspicious temper, to [Macherus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Machaerus), the castle I before mentioned, and was there put to death. Now the Jews had an opinion that the destruction of this army was sent as a punishment upon Herod, and a mark of God's displeasure to him.”

2. According to Epiphanius the church father in Panarion, Gnostic groups known as the [Ebionites](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ebionites) held that John, along with Jesus and [James the Just](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_the_Just)—all of whom they revered—were vegetarians.  Epiphanius records that this group had amended their [Gospel of Matthew](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_Matthew), known today as the [Gospel of the Ebionites](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_the_Ebionites), to change where John eats "locusts" to read "honey cakes" or "[manna](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manna).”

3. As John was in prison, the question, “Are you the coming one?” is important because it is addressed to “the Lord.” Behind this question is what Moses said:

*The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you—from your fellow Israelites; you must listen to him.  This accords with what happened at Horeb in the day of the assembly. You asked the Lord your God: “Please do not make us hear the voice of the Lord our God any more or see this great fire any more lest we die.”  The Lord then said to me, “What they have said is good.  I will raise up a prophet like you for them from among their fellow Israelites. I will put my words in his mouth and he will speak to them whatever I command.”* (Deuteronomy 18:15-18)

We also have Malachi 3,

*“See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts.”*

**Three mistakes we must avoid:**

1. A prophecy is not a “blue print” but is a hint about a future event that we have to wait to see its fulfillment.
2. It does not give us details about the event. We are told a “virgin shall conceive” but nothing is said about where and when and who she is.
3. The language is about what we should expect here in the words of Moses: it is about “a prophet” who comes to lead the people. This is only a slice of the whole “event’ of the Coming One, who is also the angel or the Messenger.

So, when the Jews were confused between John and Jesus, Jesus answered the question by pointing to what he has been doing:

* Healing many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits
* Bestowing sight to the blind
* The lame walking
* The lepers are cleansed
* The deaf hear
* The dead are raised up
* The poor hear the good news or the gospel.

Jesus let his deeds speak for him.

**Class Contacts**

George & May Bebawi Bob & Pam Walters

403 Shoemaker Dr. 12281 Blue Springs Lane

Carmel, IN 46032 Fishers, IN 46037

317-818-1487 317-694-4141 / 317-727-7917

*Audio at GeorgeBebawi.com* rlwcom@aol.com