

## **The Raising of the Youth of Naim From the Dead**

The road to Naim crossed the valley of Magdalum above Peter's fishery to the east of the mountain that looked down upon Gabara, and then ran into the valley eastward of Bethulia and Giskala. Jesus may have journeyed with the disciples nine to ten hours when they put up at a shepherd inn about three or four hours from Naim. They had crossed the brook Cison once. Jesus taught the whole way, explaining to His disciples in particular how they would be able to detect false teachers.

Naim was a beautiful little place with well-built houses, and was sometimes known also as Engan-nim. It lay upon a charming hill on the brook Cison to the south, about an hour from Mount Tabor, and facing Endor on the southwest. Jezrael was more to the south, but was hidden by intervening heights. The beautiful Plain of Esdrelon stretched out before Naim, which was almost three or four hours distant from Nazareth. The country here was uncommonly rich in grain, fruit, and wine. The widow Maroni owned a whole mountain covered with the most beautiful vineyards. Jesus had about thirty companions. The path over the hill was rather narrow, so some went on before Jesus, and others behind Him. It was almost nine in the morning when they drew near to Naim and encountered the funeral procession at the gate.



A crowd of Jews enveloped in mourning mantles passed out of the city gate with the corpse. Four men were carrying the coffin, in which reposed the remains upon a kind of frame made of crossed poles curved in the middle. The coffin was in shape something like the human form, light like a woven basket, with a cover fastened to the top. Jesus passed through the disciples who, formed into two rows on either side of the road, advanced to meet the coming procession, and said: "Stand still!" Then as He laid His hand upon the coffin, He said: "Set the coffin down." The bearers obeyed, the crowd fell back, and the disciples ranged on either side. The mother of the dead youth, with several of her female friends, was following the corpse. They too paused just as they were passing out of the gate a few feet from where Jesus was standing. They were veiled and showed every sign of grief. The mother stood in front shedding silent tears. She may indeed have been thinking: "Ah, He has come too late!" Jesus said to her most kindly and earnestly: "Woman,

weep not!" The grief of all present touched Him, for the widow was much loved in the city, on account of her great charity to orphans and the poor. Still there were many wicked and malignant people around, and numbers of others came flocking from the city. Jesus called for water and a little branch.

Someone brought to a disciple, who handed them to Jesus, a little vessel of water and a twig of hyssop. Jesus took the water and said to the bearers: "Open the coffin and loosen the bands!" While this command was being executed, Jesus raised His eyes to Heaven and said: "I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones. Yea, Father, for so it hath seemed good in Thy sight. All things are delivered to Me by My Father, and not one knoweth the Son but the Father; neither doth anyone know the Father but the Son, and he to whom it shall please the Son to reveal Him. Come to Me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take up My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart, and you shall find rest to your souls, for My yoke is sweet and My burden light!" When the bearers removed the cover, I saw the body wrapped like a babe in swaddling clothes and lying in the coffin.

Supporting it in their arms, they loosened the bands, drew them off, uncovered the face, unbound the hands, and left about it only one linen covering. Then Jesus blessed the water, dipped the little branch into it, and sprinkled the crowd. Thereupon I saw numbers of small, dark figures like insects, beetles, toads, snakes, and little black birds issuing from many of the bystanders. The crowd became purer and brighter. Jesus then sprinkled the dead youth with the little branch, and with His hand made the Sign of the Cross over him, upon which I beheld a murky, black, cloudlike figure issuing from the body. Jesus said to the youth, "Arise!" He arose to a sitting posture, and gazed around him in questioning astonishment. Then Jesus said: "Give him some clothing!" and they threw round him a mantle. The youth then rose to his feet and said: "What is all this? How came I here?" The attendants put sandals upon his feet and he stepped forth from the coffin.

Jesus took him by the hand and led him to the arms of his mother, who was hastening toward him. As He restored him to her, He said: "Here, thou hast thy son back, but I shall demand him of thee when he shall have been regenerated in Baptism." The mother was so transported with joy, amazement, and awe, that she uttered no thanks at the moment. Her feelings found vent only in tears and embraces. The procession accompanied her to her home, the people chanting a hymn of praise. Jesus followed with

the disciples. He entered the widow's house, which was very large and surrounded by gardens and courts. Friends came crowding from all quarters, all pressing eagerly to see the youth. The attendants gave him a bath, and clothed him in a white tunic and girdle. They washed the feet of Jesus and the disciples, after which the customary refreshments were presented them. Now began at once a joyous and most abundant distribution of gifts to the poor, who had gathered around the house to offer congratulations. Clothing, linen, corn, bread, lambs, birds, and money were given out plentifully. Meantime Jesus instructed the crowds assembled in the courtyards of the widow.

Martial, in his white tunic, was radiant with joy. He ran here and there, showing himself to the eager throng, and helping in the distribution of gifts. He was full of childish gaiety. It was amusing to see school children brought by their teachers into the courtyard and approaching him. Many of them hung back quite timidly as if they thought Martial a spirit. He ran after them and they retreated before him. But others played the valiant and laughed at their companions' fears. They looked with disdain upon the cowardly and gave Martial their hand, just as a large boy touches with the tips of his fingers a horse or other animal of which the little ones are afraid.

Tables were spread both in the house and courts, and at them all were feasted. Peter, as the widow's relative, for she was the daughter of his father-in-law's brother, was especially happy and at home in the house. He discharged in a certain degree the office of father of the family. Jesus frequently addressed questions and words of instruction to the resuscitated boy. He did this in the hearing of those present, who all appeared to be touched by what He said. His words implied that death, which had entered the world by sin, had bound him, had enchained him, and would have dealt him the mortal blow in the tomb; furthermore, that Martial with eyes closed would have been cast into the darkness and later would have opened them where neither mercy nor help could be extended to him. But at the portals of the tomb the mercy of God, mindful of the piety of the boy's parents and of some of his ancestors, had broken his bonds. Now by Baptism he was to free himself from the sickness of sin, in order not to fall into a still more frightful imprisonment. Then Jesus dilated upon the virtues of parents.

Their virtues profit their children in after years. It was in consideration of the righteousness of the Patriarchs that Almighty God, down to the present day, had protected and spared Israel; but now, enchained in sin and covered with

the veil of mental blindness, they had become like unto this youth. They were standing on the brink of the grave, and for the last time was mercy extended to them. John had prepared the way and with a powerful voice had called upon their hearts to arise from the slumber of death. The Heavenly Father had now, for the last time, pity upon them. He would open to life the eyes of those that did not obstinately keep them closed. Jesus compared the people in their blindness to the youth shut up in his coffin who, though near the tomb, though outside the gate of the city, had been met by salvation.

“If,” He said, “the bearers had not heeded My voice, if they had not set down the coffin, had not opened it, had not freed the body from its winding sheet, if they had obstinately hurried forward with their burden, the boy would have been buried—and how terrible that would have been!” Then Jesus likened to this picture He had drawn the false teachers, the Pharisees. They kept the poor people from the life of penance, they fettered them with the bonds of their arbitrary laws, they enclosed them in the coffin of their vain observances, and cast them thus into an eternal tomb. Jesus finished by imploring and conjuring His hearers to accept the proffered mercy of His Heavenly Father, and hasten to life, to penance, to Baptism!

It was remarkable that Jesus blessed on this occasion with holy water, in order to drive out the evil spirits that held sway over several of the bystanders. Some of the latter were scandalized, others were envious, and some again were full of a certain malicious joy at the thought that Jesus would certainly be unable to raise the youth from the dead. When Jesus blessed with the water, I saw a little cloud, composed of the figures or shadows of noxious vermin, arise from the youth’s body and disappear in the earth. At the raising of others from the dead, Jesus called back the soul of the deceased, which was separated from the body and in the abode assigned it according to its deeds. It came at the call of Jesus, hovered over the dead body, finally sank into it, and the dead arose. But with the youth of Naim, it was as if death—like a suffocating weight—had been taken away from his body.

The meal over, Jesus went with the disciples to the beautiful garden of the widow Maroni at the southern end of the city. The maimed and sick lined His whole route, and He cured them all. The streets were alive with excitement.

It was already growing dark when Jesus entered the garden where Maroni with her relatives and domestics, several Doctors of the Law, Martial, and some other boys were gathered. There were several summer houses in the garden. Before one more beautiful than the others, whose roof was supported on pillars, and which might be shut in by movable screens, was a

flambeau placed high under the palm trees. Its flames lighted up the whole hall, and glistened beautifully on the long, green leaves. Near the trees on which fruit was still hanging, one could see as distinctly and clearly by the light of the flambeau as by day. At first Jesus taught and explained walking around; afterward, He entered the summer house. He often spoke to Martial in the hearing of others. It was a wonderfully beautiful evening in that garden. The night was advanced when Jesus and His followers returned to Maroni's house, in whose side buildings all found lodgings.

At the news of Jesus' presence in Naim and the resurrection of the boy, crowds of people, among them many sick, gathered into the city from the whole country around. They completely filled the street in front of Maroni's residence, where they stood in long rows. Jesus cured part of them the next morning, and established peace in several households. Several women had come to Him, asking whether He could not give them a bill of divorce. They complained of their husbands with whom, they said, they could no longer live. This was an artful device of the Pharisees. They were confounded by His miracles and could do nothing against Him; but yet being full of wrath, they resolved to tempt Him to say on the subject of divorce something against the Law, that they might be able to accuse Him as a teacher of false doctrine. But Jesus said to the discontented wives: "Bring me a vessel of milk and another of water. Then I shall answer ye." They went into a neighboring house and returned with a bowl of milk and one of water. Jesus poured one into the other and said: "Separate the two again, so that the milk shall be again by itself, and in like manner the water. Then I shall give you a bill of divorce."

The women replied that they could not do that. Then Jesus spoke of the indissolubility of marriage, and that it was only on account of the obduracy of the Jews that Moses had allowed divorce. But perfectly disunited husband and wife never could be, since they are one in the flesh; and although they might not live together, yet must the husband support the wife and children, and neither could remarry. After that Jesus accompanied the wives to their homes, where He had a private interview with the husbands. Then He saw each couple together, reproached both parties, the wives coming in for the larger share, and ended by forgiving them. The delinquents shed tears and afterward lived happily together, more faithful to each other than they had ever before been. The Pharisees were furious on seeing that their design had completely failed.

**That morning Jesus restored sight to many of the blind by mixing in His hand clay and saliva and smearing it to their eyes.**