

# LUKE

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## Chapter Seven

### Luke 7:1-10

*When He had completed all His discourse in the hearing of the people, He went to Capernaum. (2) And a centurion's slave, who was highly regarded by him, was sick and about to die. (3) When he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders asking Him to come and save the life of his slave. (4) When they came to Jesus, they earnestly implored Him, saying, "He is worthy for You to grant this to him; (5) for he loves our nation and it was he who built us our synagogue." (6) Now Jesus started on His way with them; and when He was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to Him, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself further, for I am not worthy for You to come under my roof; (7) for this reason I did not even consider myself worthy to come to You, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. (8) "For I also am a man placed under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it." (9) Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled at him, and turned and said to the crowd that was following Him, "I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith." (10) When those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave in good health.*

Matthew also relates this event but states that the centurion came to Jesus:

*Matt 8:5-13 And when Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, imploring Him, (6) and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, fearfully tormented." (7) Jesus \*said to him, "I will come and heal him." (8) But the centurion said, "Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. (9) "For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it." (10) Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled and said to those who were following, "Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel. (11) "I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; (12) but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (13) And Jesus said to the centurion, "Go; it shall be done for you as you have believed." And the servant was healed that very moment.*

Jesus finished His teaching to the crowds and went into Capernaum. A centurion was a Roman soldier in charge of 100 men and they were people of high character as stated in various verses such as Acts 10:22; 22:26; 23:17, 23; 27:1, 43. He had a slave who was very close to him and so he was very worried that the slave might die and Matthew relates that the man was paralyzed. Matthew relates that the centurion came to Jesus and Luke writes that he sent some Jewish elders to plead with Jesus for his slave's life. Some would say that there is a discrepancy between these

two accounts but it certainly may just be that the elders also presented the case to Jesus. Certainly in verse four, the word “they” includes the Jewish elders sent to Jesus by the centurion. The elders gave Jesus glowing recommendations for the centurion relating that he loved Israel and even built a synagogue for them. The centurion stated his understanding of his status in life before Jesus by stating that he was unworthy to come into the presence of Jesus. He then recognized Jesus as greater than man and himself as unworthy before Jesus. Stating that he had heard of Jesus means, in the context of his wanting the help of Jesus, that he had heard of His healing many people and of His teachings. He may have known the problem of a Jewish leader coming to the house of a Gentile so he stated that Jesus did not have to come to his house.

He may have been a ‘Godfearer’, one who worshiped God but declined to become a proselyte to Judaism. Being a man with authority over other men who would immediately obey him, he knew that Jesus must also be over any authority that was holding the death sentence over his slave. He knew that the power of Jesus was in the word that He could speak to control the illness. Jesus recognized that God had given this man great faith so that he could recognize the status of Jesus over forces unknown to man so He stated that this man had a greater faith than any He had seen in Israel.

Matthew relates that Jesus then stated that in the End Times many would come to be served at the table in the kingdom of heaven with the leaders of the Jewish faith but some of those who had been physically born into the Jewish religion would be cast away into outer darkness. The many coming from all areas of the world would have to be the Gentiles and the sons of the kingdom would be the Jews who were not accepted into God’s presence at the “messianic banquet”. Jesus is then stating again that being born physically a Jew did not automatically qualify someone to be allowed into God’s presence. Also note that believing is a result of having been given faith. One can believe something mentally without such believe meaning anything about one’s spiritual state. The weeping suggests suffering and the gnashing of teeth relates to despair. This statement would have shocked the Jewish hearers and led to their hatred of Jesus. Jesus then stated that the slave had been healed and Luke reports that when the people returned home they found the slave in good health.

### **Luke 7:11-16**

*Soon afterwards He went to a city called Nain; and His disciples were going along with Him, accompanied by a large crowd. (12) Now as He approached the gate of the city, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and a sizeable crowd from the city was with her. (13) When the Lord saw her, He felt compassion for her, and said to her, "Do not weep." (14) And He came up and touched the coffin; and the bearers came to a halt. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise!" (15) The dead man sat up and began to speak. And Jesus gave him back to his mother. (16) Fear gripped them all, and they began glorifying God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and, "God has visited His people!"*

This city is only mentioned here in the Bible but it is thought to be the modern city of Nein that is about a day’s journey from Capernaum. His disciples and a large crowd traveled with Jesus so His popularity has spread throughout the region. As this large crowd was entering the city a large

crowd was leaving the city with a dead man being taken for burial. The mother was a widow and the dead man was her only son so she was now alone in the world and the large crowd testified to her situation being important to many people in the city. She would now be without a protector and there were few ways for a woman to earn a living. When Jesus saw the woman He had great compassion for her and moved toward the body. The body was probably being carried on a funeral bier such as was used to carry the body of John Paul:



The Jewish practice was to use an open bier with the body wrapped in a shroud. According to Jewish ceremonial laws, a person would be polluted by touching a dead person but Jesus touched the bier and the ceremony stopped. Jesus then addressed the young man and told him to arise. The dead man then sat up and began to speak to illustrate that he was again alive and not just in some state of rigor causing him to arise. There is no mention of what he said and Jesus then gave him to his mother probably with His arms around him to lead him to his mother. Luke states that fear gripped them all and they began glorifying God. They then recognized that a great prophet had come to them as they recognized Jesus as a prophet. This is an inadequate title for Jesus but it is probably the highest title they could give Him at this point. Such a title may reflect what some other prophets had done:

*1Kings 17:17-24 Now it came about after these things that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became sick; and his sickness was so severe that there was no breath left in him. (18) So she said to Elijah, "What do I have to do with you, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my iniquity to remembrance and to put my son to death!" (19) He said to her, "Give me your son." Then he took him from her bosom and carried him up to the upper room where he was living, and laid him on his own bed. (20) He called to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, have You also brought calamity to the widow with whom I am staying, by causing her son to die?" (21) Then he stretched himself upon the child three times, and called to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, I pray You, let this child's life return to him." (22) The LORD heard the voice of Elijah, and the life of the child returned to him and he revived. (23) Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper room into the house and gave him to his mother; and Elijah said, "See, your son is alive." (24) Then the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is truth."*

2Kings 4:32-37 *When Elisha came into the house, behold the lad was dead and laid on his bed. (33) So he entered and shut the door behind them both and prayed to the LORD. (34) And he went up and lay on the child, and put his mouth on his mouth and his eyes on his eyes and his hands on his hands, and he stretched himself on him; and the flesh of the child became warm. (35) Then he returned and walked in the house once back and forth, and went up and stretched himself on him; and the lad sneezed seven times and the lad opened his eyes. (36) He called Gehazi and said, "Call this Shunammite." So he called her. And when she came in to him, he said, "Take up your son." (37) Then she went in and fell at his feet and bowed herself to the ground, and she took up her son and went out.*

The people then stated that God had indeed visited His people. This is not an uncommon statement in the Old Testament and usually represents a blessing such as:

- Ruth 1:6 *Then she arose with her daughters-in-law that she might return from the land of Moab, for she had heard in the land of Moab that the LORD had visited His people in giving them food.*
- 1Sam 2:21 *The LORD visited Hannah; and she conceived and gave birth to three sons and two daughters. And the boy Samuel grew before the LORD.*

#### **Luke 7:17-20**

*This report concerning Him went out all over Judea and in all the surrounding district. (18) The disciples of John reported to him about all these things. (19) Summoning two of his disciples, John sent them to the Lord, saying, "Are You the Expected One, or do we look for someone else?" (20) When the men came to Him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to You, to ask, 'Are You the Expected One, or do we look for someone else?'"*

As a result of the healing of the centurion's slave and the bringing the man back to life from death, there was an increase in the fame of Jesus over a wide area of the country. Word of Jesus had also been brought to John the Baptist in prison (3:20) by some of his disciples. The "Expected One" is not a common designation for the Messiah but this is clearly the way John is using the term. John had already testified to the coming of Jesus as a mighty one but in the book of Luke he did not say that Jesus was that One (3:16). Comparing the three gospels rendition of the baptism of Jesus we see the following:

- Luke 3:21 *Now when all the people were baptized, Jesus was also baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased."*
- Mark 1:9-11 *In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. (10) Immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him; (11) and a voice came out of the heavens: "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased."*
- Matt 3:13-17 *Then Jesus \*arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him. (14) But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?" (15) But Jesus answering said to him, "Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he \*permitted*

*Him. (16) After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him, (17) and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."*

The Matthew rendition indicates that John saw the Spirit of God descending upon Jesus as well as lighting on Him. It is not clear in any of the three narratives if others heard the voice from heaven. In light of John's baptism of Jesus and the events that transpired there, it is rather strange that John should now question the identity of Jesus. However we know that he is in prison (Matt 11:2) and could be depressed and even tired of waiting. Also if the Messiah was to release prisoners (Isa 61:1) and if Jesus is that Messiah, why had He not released him. If this last reason is appropriate it would show that John did not understand the type of Messiah Jesus is for He came to release those in spiritual prisons, not in physical prisons. Also John had not seen Jesus perform any miracles nor had he heard from Jesus how He described Himself. The fact that he still had disciples does not mean that he was maintaining a ministry in prison but that there were still people devoted to him.

#### **Luke 7:21-23**

*At that very time He cured many people of diseases and afflictions and evil spirits; and He gave sight to many who were blind. (22) And He answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM. (23) "Blessed is he who does not take offense at Me."*

Verse 21 seems to be a statement from Jesus concerning some of the messianic works He had accomplished for such works should have demonstrated His role appropriately. Jesus then told John's disciples to report to John what they had seen and heard for those actions are what Isaiah prophesied of the Messiah (Isa 61 as quoted by Jesus at Nazareth; Isa 42:7; 35:5-6). Remember that Jesus stopped short of completing the sentence in Isaiah 61: 1-2. He left out the judgment and John may have been looking for that aspect of the coming of the Messiah. Those who do not take offense at Jesus would be those who could understand the truth revealed by Jesus. Certainly the Jewish leaders did take offense at Him for they did not believe the truth.

#### **Luke 7:24-28**

*When the messengers of John had left, He began to speak to the crowds about John, "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (25) "But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Those who are splendidly clothed and live in luxury are found in royal palaces! (26) "But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and one who is more than a prophet. (27) "This is the one about whom it is written, 'BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER AHEAD OF YOU, WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY BEFORE YOU.' (28) "I say to you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."*

Jesus then began to tell the crowds about the high status of John the Baptist by asking them questions. Crowds had gone to hear John and to be baptized by him so He first asked them what they went out to see. He asked if they had gone to see a reed shaken by the wind, which is a reference to the commonplace that might be seen anywhere. He then asked if they had gone out to see a person dressed in soft clothing, living in luxury, and living in royal palaces. Actually John lived in rough conditions and dressed in very rough clothing. These are rhetorical questions that He asked to get them to thinking about John's role. He finally asked if they had gone out to see a prophet. He proclaimed that John was a prophet but he also was one who is more than a prophet. Jesus quotes from Malachi 3:1 to state that John the Baptist was the one sent by God to be the forerunner of the Messiah. Jesus then proceeded to declare that John was the greatest person born among women, which is a way of saying that he was also born in a natural manner rather than the way that Jesus was born. John's birth was miraculous but still in a natural manner although Jesus was born not of a human father. So Jesus is not saying that John was greater than He but that he was the greatest of all naturally born men. But Jesus did not stop with that comparison. Jesus came to inaugurate a kingdom and those who enter into that kingdom are greater than any other person; not because of any of their personal attributes but because of the works of Jesus that are attributed to them to allow them access into that kingdom. Jesus is also stating that there will be categories for people in that kingdom and we can discuss that later. There is a very real sense in which every Christian is already in that kingdom (*and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus*, (Eph 2:6). So even the very least of those is greater than John in his human state.

#### **Luke 7:29-35**

*When all the people and the tax collectors heard this, they acknowledged God's justice, having been baptized with the baptism of John. (30) But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God's purpose for themselves, not having been baptized by John. (31) "To what then shall I compare the men of this generation, and what are they like? (32) "They are like children who sit in the market place and call to one another, and they say, 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not weep.' (33) "For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, 'He has a demon!' (34) "The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' (35) "Yet wisdom is vindicated by all her children."*

The people who heard this statement of Jesus about John acknowledged the justice of God for these are some of the people who had been baptized by John unto repentance. By repenting from their sins they acknowledged that God was just to condemn them apart from a repentance and subsequent baptism. However the Pharisees and scribes had not repented and been baptized by John so they rejected the purpose of God through John the Baptist. Jesus is probably comparing their reactions to John and to Him to simple games children played. Those rejecting John complained because he would not be merry. Those rejecting Jesus complained because He would not be gloomy. They responded neither to Jesus in His cheerfulness nor to John in his solemnity. John ate no bread for his food was locusts and wild honey (Mark 1:6) and drank no wine. This was not an acceptable lifestyle for them so they said that John had a demon and refused to believe anything he said. But Jesus was not an ascetic for He ate and drank as ordinary people.

They called Him a drunkard and a glutton and further complained that he was a friend of tax collectors and sinners. The word translated vindicated means “declared just” so those who are really wise will pronounce the right way whether it is ascetic or social for they see the wisdom of God in both John and Jesus.

### **Luke 7:36-50**

*Now one of the Pharisees was requesting Him to dine with him, and He entered the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. (37) And there was a woman in the city who was a sinner; and when she learned that He was reclining at the table in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume, (38) and standing behind Him at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing His feet and anointing them with the perfume.*

Each gospel has the event of an anointing of Jesus by a woman (Matt 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; John 12:1-8 as seen below). However this anointing as told by Luke occurs in the earlier part of the ministry of Jesus and the others are in the last week of the life of Jesus. There is also no reason to suppose that the woman in the other gospels was a “sinner” for John says she was Mary of Bethany and some interpreters think the woman in the gospel of Luke was Mary Magdalene. Simon was a very common name and Matthew and Mark say the man was Simon the leper. We see in verse 40 that Luke identifies the Pharisee as Simon and certainly this would not be a leper.

Jesus readily accepted the invitation to the Pharisee’s home to share a meal. He entered the house and reclined at the table as was the habit at this time. A meal like this was not a private affair for people could enter and watch if they chose to do so. However a prostitute would not have been very welcome so it took a lot of courage for her to enter. But she had heard that Jesus was there and her faith led her to come to the affair. An alabaster vial was a globular container whose long neck would be broken when the contents were needed. Jewish women wore such a small container suspended by a cord around their neck.

People removed their shoes before reclining at the table with their head toward the table and the body stretched away from it. The woman could then easily approach the feet. Her emotions overcame her and she began to shed tears that fell on His feet. Jewish women would not unbind their hair in public but she was oblivious of her public appearance. Normally the perfume would have been put on the head but she anointed His feet with the perfume. This was the act of a slave and the entire process seems to be an act of a person who had been forgiven by Jesus of her sins and she was then acting as a slave to Him. It is not known if she had met Jesus earlier but the acts certainly are of a forgiven sinner. We will see in verse 48 that Jesus does declare that her sins have been forgiven.

### **Luke 7:39-46**

*Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a sinner." (40) And Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he replied, "Say it, Teacher." (41) "A moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. (42) "When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both. So which of them will love him more?" (43) Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have judged correctly." (44) Turning toward the woman, He said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. (45) "You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet. (46) "You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume.*

Jesus knew what Simon was thinking so He engaged him in conversation to teach him a lesson. Simon thought about Jesus not being a prophet and of not knowing the status of the woman and Jesus was about to correct both of his opinions. Jesus told Simon that He had something to say to him and Simon replied rather cynically for Him to go ahead and say it. Simon did refer to Him as Teacher but not as Lord so we see the reason for his inviting Jesus was to test Him as a teacher. Jesus told a story about two debtors and asked Simon which person who had been forgiven would love the lender the most. Simon grudgingly replied that he supposed the person who had been forgiven the most would love the lender the most. Jesus did not address the manner of the reply but just said that he was correct and then He proceeded to make His point.

Jesus then asked Simon if he saw the woman, which is an interesting question for Simon could not see the woman as she currently was but only as she had been. Jesus then began to compare Simon's actions toward Him with those of the woman. The host should have provided the guest with water for his feet (Gen 18:4; Judg 19:23) but Jesus had not received this treatment. Instead, Jesus's feet were washed with the tears of the woman and her hair. A kiss of welcome should have been given Jesus (Gen 19:13; 45:15) by His host but that also did not happen. Instead the woman had kissed His feet. Simon had omitted to anoint Jesus's head (Psa 23:5; 141:5) with cheap olive oil but the woman had anointed His feet with her expensive perfume. Because of what He was about to say, these comparisons go unanswered.

### **Luke 7:47-49**

*"For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little." (48) Then He said to her, "Your sins have been forgiven." (49) Those who were reclining at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this man who even forgives sins?" (50) And He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."*



The reason is related to what He has just said to Simon regarding the forgiveness that is based upon how much has been forgiven. Jesus does not gloss over her sins for He says that her sins are many. He is not stating that her loving much is in any way a cause of her being forgiven. But her showing forth such love shows that she has already been forgiven much. Simon sowed little love indicating not much forgiveness has been given. Jesus then addressed the woman to tell her that her sins have been forgiven. The guests were appalled at this statement for only God can forgive sins. They were all wondering then who is this person who forgives sins. Jesus completely ignores them and turns His attention totally to the woman to tell her that her faith has saved her. The love she showed earlier was the result of her sins being forgiven by the faith that God had given her. The New Testament is very clear that faith is a gift of God and we usually see that Jesus sees this faith before pronouncing forgiveness. Jesus then told her to go in peace but the best translation is “go into peace”. The rabbis believed that “go in peace” was proper in bidding farewell to the dead but “go into peace” was how one addressed the living. Thus Jesus is stating that she now is in peace with God and can continue her walk in the world with that peace leading her.

### **Three Other Writings About a Woman Anointing Jesus**

- *Matt 26:6-13 Now when Jesus was in Bethany, at the home of Simon the leper, (7) a woman came to Him with an alabaster vial of very costly perfume, and she poured it on His head as He reclined at the table. (8) But the disciples were indignant when they saw this, and said, "Why this waste? (9) "For this perfume might have been sold for a high price and the money given to the poor." (10) But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why do you bother the woman? For she has done a good deed to Me. (11) "For you always have the poor with you; but you do not always have Me. (12) "For when she poured this perfume on My body, she did it to prepare Me for burial. (13) "Truly I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be spoken of in memory of her."*
- *Mark 14:3-9 While He was in Bethany at the home of Simon the leper, and reclining at the table, there came a woman with an alabaster vial of very costly perfume of pure nard; and she broke the vial and poured it over His head. (4) But some were indignantly remarking to one another, "Why has this perfume been wasted? (5) "For this perfume might have been sold for over three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor." And they were scolding her. (6) But Jesus said, "Let her alone; why do you bother her? She has done a good deed to Me. (7) "For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you wish you can do good to them; but you do not always have Me. (8) "She has done what she could; she has anointed My body beforehand for the burial. (9) "Truly I say to you, wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be spoken of in memory of her."*
- *John 12:1-8 Jesus, therefore, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. (2) So they made Him a supper there, and Martha was serving; but Lazarus was one of those reclining at the table with*

*Him. (3) Mary then took a pound of very costly perfume of pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. (4) But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, who was intending to betray Him, \*said, (5) "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and given to poor people?" (6) Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it. (7) Therefore Jesus said, "Let her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of My burial. (8) "For you always have the poor with you, but you do not always have Me."*