



MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

# Did Jesus Ask: 'What Would Elijah or Elisha Do ?'

Bible Reading: Luke 7:1-17

**Bible Reading:** *Luke 7:1-17*

## SUMMARY:

Luke 7:1–17 is not a mundane report of miracles—it's a bold revelation of who Jesus is and what His kingdom does. What He proclaimed in the 'Sermon on the Plain,' Jesus now enacts before our eyes. Death is interrupted. A son is raised. Grief turns to joy. An outsider is honored. A widow's despair is reversed; a Gentile's faith is met with mercy and authority. Like Elijah and Elisha, Jesus reaches the vulnerable—but He goes further, showing that the living God has come near in His own flesh. This is the kingdom breaking into the world. And Jesus does not stop with demonstration—He calls for our imitation. This city is full of the poor, displaced, grieving, and forgotten. Our congregation includes refugees, immigrants, widows, and single parents. If we are truly 'children of the Most High God,' we must embody His compassion. Let the kingdom be seen in Toronto, now, in 2026.

## I. "What Would Elijah or Elisha Do?"

A. References & Allusions to Elijah-Elisha in Luke's Gospel

• "Luke suggests...readers...approach Jesus' ministry by asking the...question, 'What would Elijah or Elisha do?'" –Jonathan Huddleston

• "Luke...re-narrates Jesus as a prophetic figure who both resembles & surpasses [Elijah–Elisha]." –F. Bovon

B. What Would Elijah & Elisha Do?

• "What would Elijah or Elisha do? ...[They] would perform miraculous signs ...[They] would confront rulers... [They] would anoint successors." –Jonathan Huddleston

## II. Jesus' Miracles Illustrate the Application of the 'Sermon on the Plain' (Lk. 7:1-17)

• Luke 7's ...miracles of healing [emphasize] the covenant duty to care for the foreigner...the widows and orphans...[Luke] shows...by example, how Jesus enacts the blessings..." –JA. Draper

## III. Jesus' Healing the Centurion's Servant (7:1-10)

A. The Gentile Centurion is the Main Character (Not Jesus!)

B.The Gentile Centurion –Not Economically 'Poor,' but an 'Outsider'

•'The Poor' are "those marginalized economically, socially, culturally, or religiously from full participation in the life of the community [God's people, e.g.,] the centurion; the grieving widow." –Rachel Coleman

C.Jesus and the Centurion—the First Encounter?

•"It is a very unusual 'encounter,' for...the chief characters of the story do not physically meet...[they] do not actually converse or even meet... This is a first encounter that is not." –Matthew Wilson

D.The Centurion's Servant (Slave) was Dying (7:2)

➤Was this Servant "very dear" to his master, or "highly respected/valued"?

•"I believe this passage details Jesus' encounter with someone who today would be regarded as a gay man." – Jack Clark Robinson, "Jesus, the Centurion, & his Lover," Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide

•"Speculation...the centurion's servant must be his slave also in a sexual sense...is most improbable." –W. Loader

#### IV.The Centurion's Double Delegations

•"Luke recounts...2 different delegations – a surprisingly positive...delegation of Jewish elders who argue for the centurion's worthiness & a 2nd delegation...the centurion startlingly asserts his lack of worth." –Bart Bruehler

##### A.Who Is Worthy of Divine Blessings?

1.Reversal: From 'Unworthy'...

a.'Unworthy' –in traditional Judaism

•"On his own, as a Gentile, he would've been 'unworthy,' outside the boundaries of ...divine grace. This sets the centurion, despite his material resources...within... 'the poor'." –Rachel Coleman

b.'Unworthy' –in his own self-evaluation

•"Through the second set of envoys, the centurion...describes himself twice as 'unworthy' of a face-to-face encounter with Jesus." –Rachel Coleman

2....to 'Worthy' of Divine Grace (Blessing)

a.'Worthy' – in Jewish Elders' Estimation

•Jewish elders say "the commander...[is] 'worthy' ...because of his [generosity] toward the Jewish people." – Rachel Coleman

b.Worthy' –in Jesus' Eyes

•"Jesus'... final...word...Who is 'worthy' to receive divine favor [grace. The centurion,] a wealthy man who is yet 'poor' because of his foreignness, a man of authority who nevertheless humbles himself before Jesus' authority...whose faith excites astonishment in Jesus –this is the 'worthy one'." –Rachel Coleman

B.Jesus is Amazed at the Centurion's Faith (Lk. 7:9)

•"Jesus...was amazed at [the centurion] ...he said, "I tell you, I've not found so great a faith even in Israel." (7:9)

•It's "the only instance...that Jesus marveled at the particular faith of a man, & he is a Gentile..." –Morgan Snyder

C.The Centurion Recognizes Authority –"I also am a man set under authority" (7:8)

#### V.Jesus' Raising the Widow's Dead Son (7:11-17)

A.Setting the Scene (Lk. 7:11-12)

B.The Worst Possible Tragedy

•"A man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother (who was a widow) ..." (Lk. 7:12)

C.Jesus' Unconditional Compassion

•"Only here is Luke's Jesus explicitly said to 'have compassion' for anyone." –F. Scott Spencer

•"Jesus' compassion...requires no expression of faith...raising the widow's son is unconditional." –Mary Obiorah

D.Jesus took the initiative

#### VI.Jesus the Prophetic Messiah, Like Elijah

A.People glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has risen among us" Great Prophet =>Elijah

•"The reference to Jesus being a 'great prophet'...makes an Elijah allusion irresistible." –Michael Barber

B.Jesus Recognized as a "Great Prophet," not yet as Messiah

1.This is "Not a failure to recognize Jesus' divinity" — Bernard Babierra

2.Jesus later revealed as Messiah (Lk. 9:20)

3.Jesus' Transfiguration has not yet occurred (Lk. 9:35)

C.Luke's Allusions to Elijah's Reviving the Zarephath-Widow's Son

•Luke 7:15 Quotes 1 Kings 17:23 –"he gave him back to his mother" –Exact Correspondence

•"Everyone recognizes that...the raising of the widow's son...echoes...Elijah's raising ...the widow of

Zarephath's son... an echo made explicit by Luke's using... 'he gave him to his mother'." –Luke T. Johnson  
D.Differences: