

Luke 3 & 4 – Chapter Study

INTRODUCTION

Ch. 2 ends with a simple comment that as Jesus grew into manhood there in Nazareth, He was well-regarded by those who knew Him. As we saw at the conclusion of our study last week, at some point, Joseph leaves the scene.

Most scholars believe he died, leaving Jesus as the eldest son, responsible for providing for the needs of the family.

Because of what we know about role of rabbis in Galilee at this time, we can safely conclude that Jesus pursued a *dual track* of both work & study as he provided for the needs of his mother & siblings, while at the same time preparing to take on the role of rabbi as soon as his younger brothers were old enough to take on the needs of providing for the family.

That means Jesus would have been very busy – & it helps explain why He would be held in such high esteem by the people of Nazareth.

Tonight we see the transition from *preparation for ministry* to the launch of His public work.

The story begins with John the Baptist . . .

IV. John The Baptist's Ministry 3:1-22

A. The Time of John's Ministry 3:1-2

¹ Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea & the region of Trachonitis, & Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, ² while Annas & Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

Once again we see that Luke is thinking like an historian; he wants to locate his narrative of the life of Jesus in a specific timeline.

This is no myth or legend he's weaving; *it's history*.

So Luke uses 6 time-markers.

Tiberius was the successor to Augustus. The 15th year of his reign would be sometime between 26–29 AD.

The title “*tetrarch*” means “*ruler of a fourth*.”

Nations were often divided into 4 provinces; the governor of

each was called the *tetrarch*.

Upon the death of Herod the Great, Israel was divided among his sons; Antipas, Philip, Archelaus, & a 4th guy we know nothing about – Lysanias.

Archelaus was given control of Judea but was so brutal & such a poor ruler the Jews appealed to Caesar.

Rome responded by removing Archelaus & replacing him with Pontius Pilate.

Luke's reference to 2 high priests creates immediate controversy, because only 1 high priest served at a time.

His comment that there were 2 high priests seems absurd, until we realize that by this time the office of high priest had become a political as well as religious position in Israel.

The high priest served as the head of the Jewish high court, the Sanhedrin.

As such, among the Jews, it was the most powerful position in Israel.

The Romans therefore exerted control over the position by deposing or assigning whoever they wanted to the seat of the high priest.

In the space of just 63 years, 28 different high priests were appointed by the Romans. ^[1]

The law of Moses said the high priest served *until his death*.

So at *this* time, the *real* high priest was Annas.

But he'd ticked off the Romans, who'd deposed him & put his sons in his place.

This happened with 4 successive sons until they finally appointed his son-in-law Caiaphus.

Even with him the real power, the one the Jews looked to as high priest was Annas.

This is why when Jesus was arrested, He was taken to Annas's house before being hauled off to Caiaphus'.

All of these times markers place the beginning of John's ministry right around 28-29 AD.

B. John's Message 3:3-18

[3 And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of](#)

sins, ⁴ as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying:

This is from Isaiah 40:3-5 -

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the LORD; *Make His paths straight.* ⁵ Every valley shall be filled And every mountain & hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight And the rough ways smooth; ⁶ And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’ ”

As Luke writes this, he’s looking back at the ministry of John from the perspective of the Christian faith where baptism means something very different than it did for John & the people *he* baptized.

That’s why he refers to it as “a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.”

Baptism wasn’t some religious innovation John dreamed up.

It was something already practiced in Israel, but not by Jews!

It was Gentile converts *to* Judaism who were baptized.

Baptism was a symbol of being cleansed of sin & of birth into a new identity as one of God’s people.

By being baptized, a Gentile was saying that he repented of his previous sins & renounced his previous life.

The Jews considered baptism a radical act by which a Gentile formally ended his godless life & became someone God could work with.

What John did was issue the call for Jews to be baptized!

His was a message of *radical renewal*, saying that the Judaism of his day had departed so far from what Moses intended that the Jews were no better than the Gentiles.

Quoting the OT prophets, John said that God wanted to visit them, but that they must prepare themselves for that visitation.

Vs. 3-18 are my text for this Sunday, so I’ll leave further comment till then.

C. John’s Imprisonment 3:19-20

¹⁹ But Herod the tetrarch, being rebuked by him concerning Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife, & for all the evils which Herod had done, ²⁰ also added this, above all, that he shut John up in prison.

John's ministry as a prophet meant rebuking sin publicly.

He'd not played it safe & only called attention to those sins which were common & easily rebuked.

He also dared to call Herod's incestuous marriage to his sister-in-law wrong. For this, he was imprisoned.

Not because he violated any law, but simply because Herod had the power to do so.

Every one of the rulers Luke names in vs. 1 & 2 were brutal, corrupt, wicked men.

This gives us a flavor of the times & shows us what kind of moral environment John's message of repentance came in.

Morality & ethics were at a low.

Government was corrupt at every level & religion was little more than just one more means to obtain political power.

Luke's comment here in vs. 19-20 tell us just how hard it was to take a stand for righteousness – it meant being thrown into prison.

There are many places in the world today where preaching Christ would get you beaten up or thrown in jail.

Many of our brothers & sisters in China & other places have been imprisoned for the cause of Christ.

Here in the US we enjoy religious liberty & are free to proclaim the Gospel.

But recent laws have placed restrictions on what is called "hate-speech."

The problem is, hate-speech is whatever a judge determines it is.

Already, some have been arrested for simply proclaiming what the Bible says about homosexuality & false doctrine.

What do we do in a time when fidelity to Christ & loyalty to the Word of God puts us at odds with the World?

We follow John's example & continue to proclaim the truth, even if it means we end up in jail.

As your pastor, I want you to know that I will never short-sell or back-pedal when it comes to the Word of God.

D. Jesus' Baptism 3:21-22

21 When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; & while He prayed, the heaven was opened. 22 And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily

form like a dove upon Him, & a voice came from heaven which said, “You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased.”

The baptism of John was one of repentance.

So why was Jesus baptized? He had no need to repent; He was sinless.

Jesus was baptized because He came to identify *completely* with fallen man.

By being baptized He was giving evidence to the fact that what John was calling the people of Israel to was right & good & something everyone ought to do in preparation for the coming of the Lord.

As One of the people of Israel, Jesus ought to come & be baptized as well – even though in Himself he was without sin.

Luke & the other gospels tell us that as Jesus came up out of the water, praying to the Father, something remarkable happened; The veil between the physical & the spiritual realms was lifted for a moment as the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus in a visible way & a voice was heard announcing the Father’s affirmation & approval of the Son.

As we track Jesus from this point on, we see that this was the real launching point for His ministry.

From here He goes into the wilderness for 40 days to be alone with God.

But it is during that time that He is sorely tempted by the devil. After that He emerges from the wilderness & begins preaching & healing in Galilee.

It all began with His anointing by the Holy Spirit.

We’ll come back to that in a moment.

Before Luke tells us about Jesus’ time in the wilderness, he gives us Jesus’ genealogy.

V. Genealogy of Jesus 3:23-38

²³ Now Jesus Himself began *His ministry at about thirty years of age,*

While a Jewish boy officially became a man at 13, he was not accounted to have come to full maturity until he was 30.

In Numbers 4, priests weren’t allowed to begin serving until they

turned 30.

23 Now Jesus Himself began His ministry at about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph,

Luke traces Jesus' lineage from Adam, through Abraham to King David.

But from David on, his lineage differs from that given by Matthew.

Matthew traces David's line through Solomon down to Joseph.

Luke goes from David to his son Nathan & down to Mary.

That's why in v. 23 here Luke says Jesus was, "as was supposed" the son of Joseph, then the next phrase -

the son of Heli,

Is understood to be, "The son-in-law of Heli;" for Heli was Mary's father, not Joseph's.

Matthew 1:16 tells us Joseph's father was Jacob.

Luke's lineage for Jesus contains the names of **no women** as was standard for a genealogy in the ancient world.

Matthew included the names of some women in Jesus' genealogy because as he wrote his gospel to a Jewish audience, he wanted to include the names of some of the notable people of their history.

Luke was writing his gospel for a Gentile audience & they simply did not factor women into their genealogies.

What's interesting is that as Matthew traces Jesus' lineage back to David through Solomon, he follows the royal line through the kings that ruled Judah.

A problem arises when we get to Jeconiah, the last descendant of David to rule, who was so evil God made an oath, saying that none of his descendants would ever sit on the throne of Israel. That seemed to present a problem since the Messiah, as the King of Israel was a descendant of David's.

Joseph came from that cursed line – so Joseph's son could never be the Messiah.

Jesus' actual **physical** link back to David comes, not through the cursed line of Solomon, but from an elder son of David's, Nathan.

Mary was the actual blood link to David, while Joseph, as his adoptive father, provided the **technical**, or **legal** link back to the

throne.

I'll save you the trauma of having to endure my pronunciation of this list of names in vs. 24-38.

VI. Jesus In The Wilderness 4:1-13

1 Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan & was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,

This links directly to v. 22 of ch. 3 & the baptism of Jesus.

Let's read the 2 sections as a continuous narrative . . .

Ch. 3 –

21 When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; & while He prayed, the heaven was opened. 22 And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, & a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased."

Ch. 4 –

1 Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan & was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,

It's not difficult to see the emphasis Luke places on the presence & power of the Holy Spirit in the ministry of Jesus.

It's crucial we see this.

You see, we need to understand that in His role as Messiah, what Jesus did in saving us & reclaiming what was lost in the Fall, He accomplished *as a man*.

But not *just* a man – *what* He did, He did as *a man anointed & empowered by the Spirit*.

In His baptism at the Jordan by John, He identified fully with mankind.

Taking that step of radical identification with man, God then showered His approval & equipped Jesus with the *gear* He would need to fulfill His mission – the Holy Spirit.

It's interesting that the very first thing Jesus did in His ministry & mission was to head out to the wilderness.

Even though this was the beginning of His public ministry, it commenced with a time of solitude.

Why? Because solitude is something every truly effective servant of God needs now & then.

Before one can come before men & women & deliver a message worth speaking, that message must first be acquired in a quiet & private place.

Joseph had his vision of a ladder to heaven when all alone at Bethel.

Moses was alone in the wilderness when God came to him in the burning bush.

In Luke 1 we read that John's time of preparation for his ministry was in solitude in the wilderness.

Not long after Paul was converted to Christ, he spent 3 years in solitude in the wilderness of Saudi Arabia & it was during this time that the Spirit taught him the great truths of the gospel of grace.

The Spirit didn't take Jesus into the wilderness to try or test Him, but to use the solitude to strengthen & prepare Him for the trying times to come.

In the solitude of the wilderness, there are no distractions to get in the way of paying attention to God.

The world with all its allures are miles away.

There is just nature & nature's God to deal with.

Well, the devil knew what was up – & the danger the solitude would pose him when Jesus returned from the wilderness, so he laid in a devious strategy.

2 being tempted for forty days by the devil. And in those days He ate nothing, & afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry.

Jesus fasted the entire time He was in the wilderness, & the devil came often with various thoughts that tried to distract Him from seeking God.

The way Luke says this gives us the idea the temptations the devil brought during the 40 days were the general kind of temptations & thoughts common to man.

But not being at all successful in this kind of temptation, satan tried a new tactic -

3 And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread."

After 40 days of fasting, the hunger Jesus would be feeling at this point is unlike anything anyone in this room has ever experienced, unless they've been on such a fast.

This is the hunger where the body is beginning now to eat itself in order to keep the vital organs alive. If Jesus doesn't eat soon, he will die.

Jesus knows that, & the devil knows it too.

Jesus will soon be leaving the wilderness & entering a city where he can get some food. But the devil suggests He needn't wait.

Why – if He really is God, He could turn the stones of the wilderness into nice hot, fresh baked bread.

One of the great temptations men & women face is the desire for others to know who we are & to recognize our dignity.

Jesus has lived His whole life in quiet simplicity in Nazareth, waiting for the day when His real work & mission would begin.

Now that He's been anointed & stands on the very edge of His work, there had to be a great temptation to flex His spiritual muscles a bit.

Satan's temptation was subtle & aimed right there, right at that very human urge to gain recognition.

He said, “***IF*** You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.”

Note Jesus' answer -

4 But Jesus answered him, saying, “It is written, ‘*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.*’ ”

The devil's appeal had been for Jesus to prove who He really was by using His divine power to satisfy His own needs.

Jesus' answer let the devil know in what realm of His identity He would fulfill His role as Messiah – *as a man*.

The devil has said, If you are the Son of God . . .”

Jesus answered, “Man shall not live by bread only.”

Here's what's going on . . .

Dominion of earth had been given to man by God, then forfeited to satan in the fall.

Only a man could reclaim man's lost dominion.

But all men & women are born in sin, & so slaves of sin. The children of slaves are also slaves.

So none of Adam & Eve's descendants were qualified to enter into

the contest of reclaiming mankind's lost dominion.
Jesus was the only human being ever born who was not a slave of sin.

Being Mary's son He was fully human, but being conceived by the Spirit, with no human father, He was without sin.

He was the second Adam – & as such, came to reclaim what Adam lost through sin.

But it meant He had to live *as a man*, & not out of His power as God.

This is why the anointing of the Holy Spirit was so important to His role & work as the Messiah – because as a Man, Jesus gives us the pattern for how we're to live as His followers.

It is only when our humanity is anointed by the presence of the Holy Spirit that we can become all we were created to be & live the life we were created to live.

The devil tried to distract Jesus & get Him to deal with life through some means other than his Spirit-filled humanity.

If Jesus had yielded to this temptation, He would have been disqualified from his mission as the Messiah.

Jesus came as a man, & defeated the devil as a Spirit-filled man. Our victory over the enemy comes through precisely the same route.

⁵ Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. ⁶ And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, & their glory; for *this* has been delivered to me, & I give it to whomever I wish. ⁷ Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours."

If the first temptation had been subtle, this was is blatant!

The devil knew Jesus wasn't fooled by his attempts at subterfuge so he cut to the chase.

If Jesus came to reclaim man's lost dominion, satan offers it to Him right now.

Why go the route Jesus intended – the difficult route of open warfare with the devil's realm.

Why not just get what He'd come for without all the hard stuff – just bow to the devil & it could all be His!

Interesting that Jesus never argued with the devil about who the

kingdoms of the world belonged to.

The fact is, this was a *real temptation* because the authority *had* been given to the devil.

This verse gives us an insight into just what Adam & Eve forfeited in the Fall.

If what the devil showed Jesus in that moment was in fact tempting, then think about what God originally intended for humanity!!!!

Now – here’s what’s cool – Jesus won it back & will bestow it on His people.

8 And Jesus answered & said to him, “Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, & Him only you shall serve.’ ”

Jesus would take no shortcut to glory by showing devotion to anyone other than the One to whom worship is due.

He made it clear that He wasn’t only concerned with getting the job of His mission done.

The means for doing it were as important as the result.

There are many who think the ends justify the means.

Not so. Just as important to God as the ends ARE the means.

In fact, for the follower of Christ, the results are up to God – the only thing that matters *is* the means, being faithful.

While the world says, “The ends justify the means,”

The Christian says, “Just means *are* the end – the rest is up to God.”

9 Then he brought Him to Jerusalem, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, & said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here. ¹⁰ For it is written: ‘He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you,’ ¹¹ &, ‘In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.’ ”

Twice now Jesus has quoted Scripture in His refutation of temptation.

So the devil does some quoting too, but as he does, as always, he twists the Word of God to make it say something it doesn’t mean.

The Word of God in the mouth of a liar is always spoken to cause the very opposite of what the Word *really* says – & such is the

case here.

The temptation here is another aimed at Jesus' identity as the Son of God.

The devil knew that in the Incarnation Jesus had emptied Himself of the glory He'd enjoyed for all eternity.

As a fallen angelic being, Satan knew the longing for a return to glory – so he appealed to that desire in Jesus by suggesting He jump off the pinnacle of the temple.

Directly below the pinnacle was a flat pavement where thousands of people were coming to & going from the temple.

Since so many of the people of Israel were looking for the Messiah to descend from the clouds in glory – the devil suggested Jesus give them what they wanted -

Jump from the pinnacle, & as the scriptures said, the angels would swoop in & bring Him to a safe landing while the crowds watched.

Jesus had already lived 30 years of His life among people who didn't know who He was.

As we saw last week, when He was 12 His own parents had seemingly forgotten Who He was.

All that confusion could be cleared up in an instant – just jump off the pinnacle of the temple.

12 And Jesus answered & said to him, "It has been said, 'You shall not tempt the LORD your God.' "

Jesus rebuffed this temptation with a simple reply, one drawn from a *correct* interpretation of the Word – that no one is to put God to a silly test.

God will not be provoked to prove Himself or His power by stupid dares, & that's what this would be.

Jesus didn't yield to this temptation because He didn't have the need to prove Himself to man.

He already had the affirmation of His Father's approval at His baptism.

13 Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.

This wasn't the only time Jesus was tempted.

The devil returned at other times after this to tempt Him.

There's a huge amount of spiritual insight to glean from this story.

But what I want to concentrate on is what it tells us about how we can overcome temptation.

First, note that the story begins with Jesus' identification with man in his baptism.

3:21 When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized;

If we would overcome temptation, we must recognize that because we **ARE** human, we *are* going to be tempted!

The person who thinks he/she is above temptation is an arrogant fool.

Never think you are too good, too mature, too strong to be tempted.

Never fall into the trap of thinking there are some sins you will never have a problem with.

The fact of the matter is, apart from the grace of God, there is NO sin we couldn't or wouldn't commit.

Second, Jesus was filled with the Spirit.

3:22 And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, . . .

4:1 Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan & was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,

Apart from the power of the **HOLY** Spirit, there is no way we can stand against the devil.

Third, Jesus was armed with the reminder of who He was, God's Son.

22 . . . & a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; . . ."

Knowing who we are as new creatures in Christ is one of the most important elements of resisting temptation.

The devil tries to get us to identify ourselves purely as earth-bound beings whose satisfaction comes from the things of this world.

We need to remember who we *really* are – eternal beings who's only real & lasting satisfaction comes from spiritual things.

Fourth, Jesus was reminded of the Father's love & approval.

22 . . . & a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased."

Temptation loses its force when our hearts are confident in the

love & approval of God.

As Psalm 63:3, “Your love O Lord, is better than life.”

Fifth, Jesus resisted temptation with the Word of God.

At each temptation, He drew forth a specific truth with which to combat the deceit of the devil.

All temptation comes by twisting a good into a bad.

The *appeal* of temptation is that on the surface it seems *good*, it suggests something *desirable*.

It’s only when we look at it through the lens of the Word of God that we can see the truth.

In each temptation the devil suggested to Jesus, he lied.

The lie was unmasked by the truth Jesus replied with.

If you want to overcome temptation, you need to be a diligent student of God’s word.

And note – Jesus didn’t have a laptop with Bible software & do a search when the temptation came. He’d committed the Word to memory.

VII. The Galilean Ministry 4:14-9:50

A. His Fame Spreads 4:14-15

14 Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, & news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. 15 And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.

As a new rabbi, Jesus was well received.

As we’ll see, His style of teaching was very different from the other teachers of the time.

Don’t miss Luke comment that when Jesus returned to Galilee, it was in the power of the Spirit.

That’s exactly why He’d gone into the solitude of the wilderness in the first place – to immerse Himself in God.

Even though the time had seen fierce spiritual combat, it had also honed Him to a place of spiritual power & presence.

Solitude is an important spiritual discipline, but unfortunately, not one that is practiced much today.

Anyone who wants to develop real spiritual depth needs to get away from all worldly influences & voices, & find a place of quiet solitude where it’s just God & them; no radio, no TV, no

MP3's, no music; nothing but nature & nature's God.

B. In Nazareth 4:16-30

16 So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, & stood up to read.

It was Jesus' habit to attend the synagogue on the Sabbath.

If there was anyone who didn't need to attend church, it was Jesus. Compared to Him, the people were all hopelessly carnal & spiritually immature.

Of the many rabbis He'd listen to over the years, probably none had ever been able to teach Him a thing.

Compared to the angelic choirs He'd heard in heaven, the rough voices of the Jewish worshippers was pitiful.

But still He went because it's where He belonged as One who believed in God.

As Jesus has been working His way through Galilee, He's gained a reputation as a remarkable rabbi.

As was the custom for a visiting rabbi, He was invited to read from the prophets that day, then make some remarks on it.

17 And He was handed the book [scroll] of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:

Isaiah 61 -

18 "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; 19 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD." 20 Then He closed the book, & gave it back to the attendant & sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him.

When we read that He *sat down*, we think He *ended* – but seated was the posture a rabbi would take as he taught.

He stood as He read in honor of the Scriptures, then sat as He commenced His commentary.

That's why all eyes were on Him; they waited with intense anticipation to hear Him teach since the word had gone out

about His skill as a rabbi.

21 And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

This was a bold claim, for all knew that Isaiah was speaking in this passage of the Messiah.

They understood this passage to refer to the beginning of the Messianic Age when the glory of David’s throne would be restored to Israel & the nation would become the premier power on earth.

But actually, Jesus didn’t read the whole prophecy. He ended it mid-verse.

Isa. 61: 2 says

To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, & the day of vengeance of our God –

Then the passage goes on to describe the rest of the work of the Messiah in restoring Earth to Paradise.

Jesus ended the reading at this point because there are two phases to Messiah’s coming;

One in humility to provide redemption for all people.

The second in glory to reclaim Earth from the tyranny of sin & satan.

The first coming, in humility, had happened – & that day in Nazareth, Jesus was announcing the fact that His mission had begun.

22 So all bore witness to Him, & marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, “Is this not Joseph’s son?”

They were all so proud of the local boy who made good!

But Jesus won’t let them rest on their own distorted ideas of who He is or what His mission as the Messiah would be.

23 He said to them, “You will surely say this proverb to Me, ‘Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in Your country.’ ”

He foretells the time when instead of being proud of Him, they will taunt & mock Him.

24 Then He said, “Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country. 25 But I tell you truly, many

widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years & six months, & there was a great famine throughout all the land; ²⁶ but to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarephath, *in the region of Sidon*, to a woman *who was a widow*. ²⁷ And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, & none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.”

Jesus refers here to God’s favor shown to the Gentiles in days gone by.

His point is that while the Jews, His own people, will reject him, the Gentiles will welcome Him.

While a true prophecy, this comment was sure to raise the ire of those who heard Him – for the Jews utterly loathed the Gentiles.

²⁸ So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, ²⁹ & rose up & thrust Him out of the city; & they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff. ³⁰ Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way.

This is an awfully strong reaction.

All Jesus did was refuse to take their interest in Him seriously because He knew it was based on a faulty premise.

When He failed to come through according to their expectations, they would turn on Him.

And in their place, the very ones who would respond were people they deemed total losers.

Notice how quickly the crowd went from *digging* Jesus to wanting to dig Him a *grave*.

And all it took was for Him to refuse to accept their false praise & a sobering word about how God loves those they hate.

One of the quickest ways to tick people off is to refuse their flattery.

Another is to rebuke their prejudices.

Jesus does both in the space of a couple minutes – and for this they are ready to kill Him.

But it wasn’t His time & He simply made His exit when the

opportunity presented itself.

C. In Capernaum 4:31-41

31 Then He went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, & was teaching them on the Sabbaths.

He spent several weeks there.

32 And they were astonished at His teaching, for His word was with authority.

As we've seen repeatedly in our study in the gospels of Mark & Matthew, Jesus' was unique in that while the rabbi's of Galilee gained their authority by recognizing one another's skill in interpreting the Word of God, Jesus hadn't come up through the typical discipleship & rabbi making process.

Jesus' authority to teach hadn't come by the conferring of the other respected rabbis.

Each rabbi could name who'd laid hands on him & conferred on him the authority of previous generations.

Jesus' authority came directly from heaven and it was obvious to all who heard Him that His teaching was on a level far above the other rabbis of the day.

33 Now in the synagogue there was a man who had a spirit of an unclean demon. And he cried out with a loud voice,

34 saying, "Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are— the Holy One of God!" 35 But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, & come out of him!" And when the demon had thrown him in *their* midst, it came out of him & did not hurt him. 36 Then they were all amazed & spoke among themselves, saying, "What a word this *is!* For with authority & power He commands the unclean spirits, & they come out."

There in the synagogue of Capernaum, which we'll visit in the Fall by the way, there was a demon-possessed man.

The demon knew that the coming of Jesus marked the beginning of the end for the devil & his cohorts. So it cried out, asking what Jesus intended to do.

I find this interesting as it suggests the angelic realm is learning about the redemptive plan of God as it unfolds.

This demon didn't know if the time of the final judgment had arrived or what?

Jesus told it to button it – then with a simple word, set the man free. Now – the people were stunned at the ease with which the man was delivered.

Jewish exorcisms were not unheard of, but setting a person free was a long & tiring affair, sometimes taking days.

That Jesus delivered this man with just a few words was stunning. It all served to reinforce the sense of His spiritual authority.

37 And the report about Him went out into every place in the surrounding region.

This deliverance acted as a kind of spiritual fuse that shot the news of Jesus into the entire countryside.

38 Now He arose from the synagogue & entered Simon's [Peter's] house. But Simon's wife's mother was sick with a high fever, & they made request of Him concerning her. 39 So He stood over her & rebuked the fever, & it left her. And immediately she arose & served them. 40 When the sun was setting, all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; & He laid His hands on every one of them & healed them. 41 And demons also came out of many, crying out & saying, "You are the Christ, the Son of God!" And He, rebuking *them*, did not allow them to speak, for they knew that He was the Christ.

They began to come to Peter's door at sunset because that's when the Sabbath ended.

The people would have used up the Sabbath day's allotted travel so they had to wait till sundown & the start of Sunday before they would make the trek to Peter's door.

D. The Other Cities 4:42-44

42 Now when it was day, He departed & went into a deserted place. And the crowd sought Him & came to Him, & tried to keep Him from leaving them; 43 but He said to them, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent." 44

And He was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee.

Eventually it got too late that Saturday night, so the crowd thinned and Peter's door closed.

Jesus knew they'd be back early in the morning to renew their requests for His healing touch, so He got up early and went outside of town to an isolated place.

The solitude He sought as He began His ministry was something He returned to again & again.

If it was important for Jesus, it's important for us.

As soon as the crowd of needy realized Jesus wasn't at Peter's house, they went looking for Him and when they found Him they pleaded that He stay.

But Jesus told them He hadn't come just to Capernaum.

The other towns & villages of Galilee needed to hear the message He brought.

[1]

The Gospel of Luke. 2000, c1975 (W. Barclay, lecturer in the University of Glasgow, Ed.). The Daily study Bible series, Rev. ed. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.