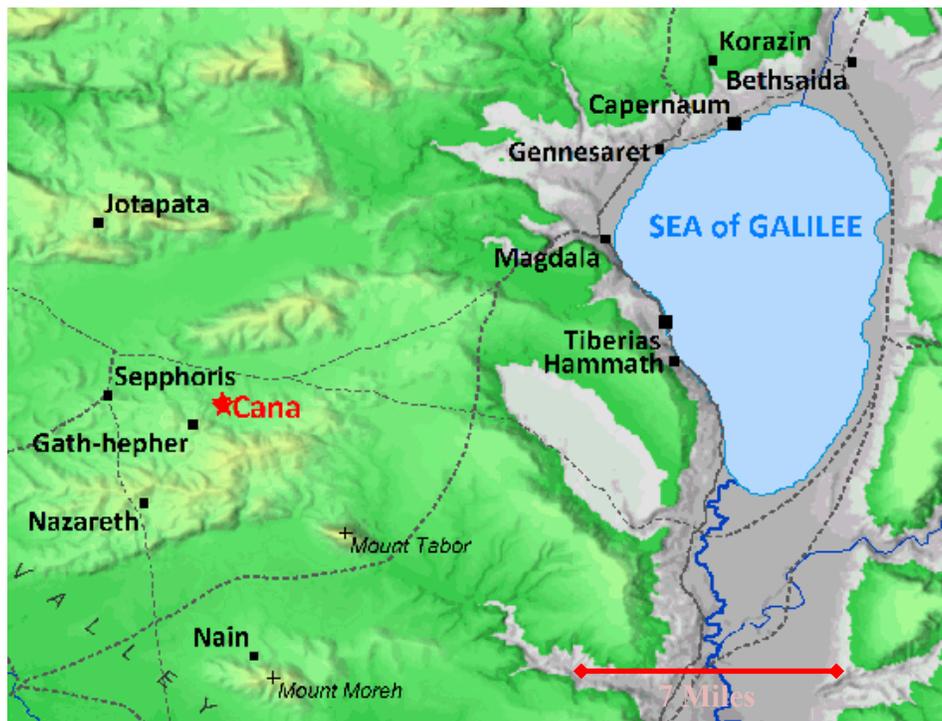


The Story of the Life of Christ – Lesson 12
Date: Between late October to early November 26 AD

In Lesson 11 we concluded with the arrival of Jesus and His first six disciples at the wedding at Cana. This was just after Jesus had emerged from His trial of forty days in the desert, where He was tempted by Satan. It is likely that Jesus and his disciples went through Nazareth on the way to Cana. It is possible that it was there that Jesus and His new disciples joined Mary and Jesus' brothers and sisters on the way to the wedding. We have already seen that Jesus had four half-brothers and probably at least three half-sisters.¹

John 2:1a **On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee.**

Cana is about 4 miles north of Nazareth. Nathanael, who was one of Jesus' first six disciples, and had accompanied Him to Nazareth, was from Cana originally (John 21:2). It may be that he knew the wedding couple as well. This was the third day since John the Baptist had first seen Jesus walk by him on the road from Bethabara to the Sea of Galilee. The second day, a little farther north, He had seen Jesus on the road again, and the Apostles, John and Andrew had followed Him. After spending the rest of the day with Jesus, they had recruited their brothers James and Peter as well as Phillip and Nathanael. This was now the third day.



Map of Galilee with Cana

¹ *Matthew 13:56 Aren't all his (Jesus') sisters with us?*

John 2:1b-2 Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.

As noted in the last lesson, there were several possibilities as to how Jesus knew about the wedding. He had been gone in the wilderness for at least forty-three days if not longer. The Holy Spirit may have informed Him. Another possibility is that He may have been invited before he had left Galilee to be baptized. He also may have found a letter informing Him of the wedding when He got back to the place He had been staying before He left to be baptized. It seems certain that His disciples were invited to join the wedding feast only after they had arrived in Cana.

John 2:3 When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."

It occurs to me that Mary might have felt her family was partly responsible for the wedding party running out of wine. After all, Jesus had brought along six unexpected guests in the persons of His disciples.

John 2:4a "Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied.

This is the NIV translation which is incorrect.

John 2:4a "Dear lady, it is not a problem for me and you." Jesus replied. *Correct translation.*

I left the NIV translation in place to illustrate its problems. I have inserted below it what I believe is the correct translation. To me this verse is one of the most misunderstood in the New Testament. It is both mistranslated and misinterpreted. There are two problems.

The first problem is the address of Mary. Most translations start with the word "Woman." The KJV, NASB, NRSV, and ASV are all guilty of this. In English, it sounds like a rebuke! The NIV does ameliorate it somewhat by translating it "dear woman." The Greek word here is γυνή {gü-nā'}, which I concede is technically "woman." However, we need to understand that in the Greek the address "woman" is not cold and impersonal, although it sounds that way in the English. In the English it sounds like a rebuke, but in the Greek that address, γυνή {gü-nā'}, was a term of respect. It was the same address Jesus used to address his mother when she was mourning Him at the foot of the cross:

John 19:26 "When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, 'Dear woman (γυνή {gü-nā'}), here is your son.'"

It is also the term of address Jesus used to address Mary Magdalene when she was weeping at His tomb:

John 20:15a “‘Woman (γυνή {gü-nā'}),’ he said, ‘why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?’”

It was also a term used to speak of a wife in 92 out of 221 occurrences in the New Testament. The term applies no disrespect. I believe that in the English “dear lady” would be closer to the sense of the original.

The second problem is the first part of Jesus’ reply to Mary. The Greek is a very simple four words. They are “Τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί.” They are literally translated “What – to me and you.” Many of the most popular translations have missed the mark completely:

KJV “What have I to do with thee?”

NKJV “What does your concern have to do with Me?”

RSV “What have you to do with me?”

NIV “Why do you involve me?”

ASV “What have I to do with thee?”

However, some of the less well known versions are closer to the mark:

NLT “How does that concern you and me?”

NASB “What does that have to do with us?”

The theme of the wrong translations seems to flow from the idea that Jesus was rebuking His mother by calling her “woman.” We have seen that the Greek form of the address “dear lady” was actually a mark of affection. It was not an address by which Jesus was rebuking Mary. I can only conclude that this slanted translation by Protestant translators was the result of the correct Protestant distaste over the worship of Mary by the Roman Catholic Church. The translators probably took delight in picturing Mary in this scene as displeasing Jesus. I think they let their prejudice distort their translation. They may have felt that this incorrect translation would help their correct argument against the blasphemous worship of Mary. However, I think that there is more than enough in Scripture to discredit that practice without distorting God’s Word. I can think of no other reason that that such a simple sentence would be so badly mangled. Incidentally, the Roman Catholic translation into Latin (the Vulgate) has it correctly translated.

As literally and correctly translated as “What – to me and you”, it could be taken at least two ways. The first way it could be taken is, “It doesn’t concern me and you” which is how the NLT and NASB have it. That implies that it was a problem for someone else to handle.

The second way it could be taken is, “It is not a problem for me and you.” That is to say that Jesus had the situation well in hand, and Mary need not be concerned. It would not be a hard problem for Jesus to solve. I have to believe this is the correct meaning. It explains Mary’s

immediate instructions to the servant: “Do whatever he tells you.” Those instructions imply that Mary understood that Jesus was about to perform a miracle.

John 2:4b “My time has not yet come.”

There is also a problem with this second part of Jesus’ reply to Mary: “My time has not yet come.” Strictly speaking, the Greek word translated “time” here is ὥρα {hō'-rā} which means “hour.” However, “time” is an equally acceptable translation. All of the versions are unanimous in that translation of the word. The problem here is not in the translation, but the interpretation. Many interpretations, following up on the bad translation in the previous part of the verse, have said that Jesus’ “hour” or “time” was the beginning of His ministry. Their interpretation is that Mary was anxious for Jesus to begin His ministry of miracles, and Jesus was telling her it was too soon. I believe that if we impartially investigate what Jesus’ “hour” or “time” was, we have to conclude it was the end of His ministry, not the beginning. Witness the following verses, also from John:

John 7:30 “At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his time (ὥρα) had not yet come.”

John 8:20 “He spoke these words while teaching in the temple area near the place where the offerings were put. Yet no one seized him, because his time (ὥρα) had not yet come.”

John 13:1 “Now before the feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that his time (ὥρα) was come that he should depart out of this world unto his Father, having loved his own that were in the world, he loved them unto the end.”

My conclusion about the interpretation of this passage is that Jesus was telling His mother that until the hour of His death He still had power granted to Him from the Father. He was telling her that her shy request would be granted. That is why she immediately told the servants to do what He said. She had not browbeaten Him into changing His plans as some interpretations imply. There was also an underlying assumption here, that during the previous thirty years of Jesus’ life with Mary, Jesus had, on occasion, demonstrated His miraculous power of prayer to His mother. That was precisely why she had approached Him here.

John 2:5 His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.”²

With the correct translation and understanding of what went before, Mary’s reaction was not one of her taking the lead in what was about to be done, but her understanding of Jesus’ unspoken determination that He would take care of the situation.

² This implies that Mary was held in unusual respect by these servants.

John 2:6 Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.³

The Greek is two or three measures or “μετρητής” {me-trā-tā's}. The Greek word μετρητής {me-trā-tā's} means “measures” and referred to the standard measuring instrument for water which contained about nine gallons in our measurement. Two to three measures would be eighteen to twenty-seven gallons.

John 2:7 Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water”; so they filled them to the brim.

It is worth noting that this would have amounted to about 150 gallons of wine, or enough for 600 people to have had a quart to drink. The Lord is not sparing in either quantity or quality when He provides.

John 2:8a Then he told them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.”

He told the servants to draw some of the fluid out of one of the jars into a smaller container, possibly a cup, and take it to the master of the banquet. It would be interesting to know if this was white or red wine. If it was white wine, the servants might have been wondering why they were carrying a cup of water to the host. I like to think it was white wine. If it had suddenly turned red, the servants would probably have created a commotion immediately when they drew the wine and discovered that the water had turned red.

John 2:8b-9a They did so, and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine.

Many of the miracles recorded in the scriptures have a clear figurative meaning. When Moses struck the rock at Horeb and brought forth water,⁴ Paul said that the rock symbolized Christ.⁵

³ *Stone jars were unusual and costly. These jars were used for the purpose of ceremonial washing, so they were probably only to be found in the house of a priest. Wedding guests were largely made up of relatives. This backs up the contention that Mary's mother was from the priestly lineage of Aaron as was her sister who was Mary's Aunt Elizabeth (Luke 1:5).*

⁴ *Exodus 17:5-6 “The LORD answered Moses, ‘Walk on ahead of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink.’”*

⁵ *1 Corinthians 10:2-4 “They (the children of Israel) were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.”*



*The Valley between Cana and Capernaum
The Sea of Galilee lies just beyond the far Hills*

Here also, there may be a figurative meaning. It is worth remembering that in the first communion, Jesus said that the wine represented His blood (death). Perhaps the six stone water jars in this miracle (six is the number of man because he was created on the sixth day) represented the fact that Jesus would die for the sins of the world (all mankind) and His sacrifice would please the Father (the master of the Banquet). The fact that God had saved the best until last would speak of the fact that the reality of God's grace in Christ's self-sacrifice and life of righteousness was far better than the shadows of those things in the Law. Also, the fact that this wine was served out of stone jars used for ceremonial washing cannot be ignored. The wine of Jesus' death washes away the stain of Adam's sin. It had also come from the stone jars, and Jesus was "the stone that the builders rejected" (Psalms 118:22-23).

John 2:9b He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew.

It seems like the servants who had drawn what they thought was water from the jars didn't know that it had been turned into wine. They thought it was still water. The master expected wine.

John 2:9b-10 Then he called the bridegroom aside and said, “Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink;⁶ but you have saved the best till now.”

It was only after the master drank what had been handed to Him and made this statement that the miracle became apparent. Evidently the bridegroom asked the servants where they had gotten the wine, and they told him it wasn't wine but water. I leave it to you to imagine the stir that happened as all the guests asked to taste this wine and the servants explained where they had gotten this prodigious amount of the finest wine anyone had ever tasted.

John 2:11 This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.

This was the first of His public miracles that Jesus performed at the beginning of His ministry.

John 2:12 After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples.⁷ There they stayed for a few days.

This trip of Mary and her family seems to me to back up my previous contention that Mary and her family hadn't been in contact with her sister's family since the flight of Mary and Joseph to Egypt, and her sister's relocation from Nazareth. Probably, at the wedding banquet Mary had discovered from John and James (her previously unknown nephews) that her sister Salome had been living in Capernaum with her husband Zebedee and two sons. Evidently, they had lost track of each other when Mary and Joseph had fled to Egypt. We know from Josephus, that a siege and the destruction of Sepphoris and the surrounding area had occurred during that time some thirty years before and had been accompanied by a massive dislocation of many of the inhabitants by flight or enslavement. Having discovered where her sister was living, Mary decided to have a family reunion in Capernaum.

So, Jesus' next movement was to travel from Cana to Capernaum with his mother, brothers and His disciples. As we will find out in Luke 4, while in Capernaum Jesus performed other miracles. Luke 4 records the next chronological event in the life of Jesus. He returned to Nazareth with His disciples, probably accompanying His family when they returned from Capernaum. The Gospel of Luke includes that earliest visit.

⁶ Evidently, the sense of taste gradually dulls after the first wine is drunk.

⁷ We know that Jesus probably had at least three sisters. Considering that Jesus was nearly thirty, it is quite possible that all of Jesus' siblings were eighteen or over. In that case, His sisters might have already been married and no longer living at home and that is why they were not mentioned as going down to Capernaum.

Luke 4:14-15 Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He taught in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

The rest of the events in this chapter of Luke occurred before Jesus traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover of 27 AD as recorded in John 2:13. It happened after the wedding feast at Cana and the subsequent trip to Capernaum as we have just read in John 2:1-11.

Luke 4:16a He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up,

This was the first of two post-baptism visits to Nazareth recorded in the New Testament. The other, recorded in Matthew 13:54-58 seems to have occurred over a year later after He returned from His year of ministry in Judea.

Luke 4:16b and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read.

There were two ways in which Jesus may have been given the floor. The first way would have been predetermined before the start of the service. This was the custom in the synagogues where male members of the congregation read a predetermined portion of scripture at the beginning of the service. The second way would have been the custom of asking an eminent visitor to stand up after the end of the main service and deliver a message to the congregation. We see this custom described often in Acts. There we see Paul being asked to address the congregations of the synagogues he was visiting.⁸ I feel sure that the occasion for Jesus addressing this congregation in Nazareth was this second way. Having been invited to speak at the end, He then asked for the scroll of Isaiah.

Luke 4:17 The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

In those days, and even today, the books of the Scripture were written down on scrolls and kept in a chest, meant to represent the Ark of the Covenant, at the front of the synagogue.

Luke 4:18-19 “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me⁹ to preach good news

⁸ Acts 13:14b-15 “From Perga they went on to Pisidian Antioch. On the Sabbath they entered the synagogue and sat down. After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the synagogue rulers sent word to them, saying, ‘Brothers, if you have a message of encouragement for the people, please speak.’” Also see Acts 14:1, Acts 17:1-2, Acts 17:10-11, Acts 18:4, Acts 18:19, and Acts 19:8.

⁹ In the original Hebrew text, the word here is מָשַׁח {mä-shakh'} which means “anointing” and, by extension “consecrating.” It could be done either by smearing on, or pouring on, the anointing substance. The ritual of anointing identified the subject with the anointing substance.

to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Jesus read from Isaiah 61:1-2 which is copied below. It is worth noting that Jesus stopped short of reading the last phrase which I have underlined:

Isaiah 61:1-2a "The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me,¹⁰ because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.¹¹ He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,¹² to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God."

The last underlined phrase, "and the day of vengeance of our God," referred to His Second Advent. This was His First Advent, so He omitted that last phrase.¹³

Luke 4:20a Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down.

The normal expectation in the Synagogue here would have been for the speaker to expound on the meaning of this passage. All He did was to read it, and then He sat down. He had been expected to comment on what the Word of God was saying. Instead of doing that, He had just sat down.

Luke 4:20b-21 The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

It is my belief that the ritual anointing of Jesus Christ took place at the Baptism of John when he was identified with our sins in the water of the Jordan. Water can stand for either judgement for sin, or God's blessing. When John the Baptist had baptized the Jews, he was identifying them with God's blessing in washing away their sins. When John baptized Jesus, he was identifying Him with our sins, although John the Baptist himself did not understand that meaning at the time. It is also significant that מָשַׁח {mä-shakh'} is the root word of "Messiah." In this way Jesus was indicating to the people of Nazareth that He was the Messiah for those who had ears to hear.

¹⁰ The Spirit was the sign of the Messiah's power. Matthew 3:17, Mark 1:10, Luke 3:20, and John 1:32.

¹¹ "The poor" are understood as those who are poor toward God in the sense of Revelation 3:17 "You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked."

¹² Again here the captivity and prison speak of the captivity to sin and the prison where it puts us (2 Timothy 2:25). Also see Zechariah 9:11, Psalms 68:18, Isaiah 42:6-7, Isaiah 49:8-9a.

¹³ The Bible student should be aware that, as here, OT passages often merge both Advents.

Because Jesus had sat down suddenly as if He was completed, He caught the attention of everybody in the synagogue and they looked at Him expectantly. Then He explained why He had stopped in a few short words. The voice speaking from the written Word of God was actually His, even though it had been recorded by Isaiah seven hundred years before. He was the Word of God. He was the Messiah.

Luke 4:22a **All ~~spoke well of~~ began speaking about him**

The Greek word which the NIV translated “spoke well of” is μαρτυρέω {mār-tü-re'-ō} in the imperfect tense. It means “begin to testify” or “begin to give evidence.” The testimony can be positive, negative, or neutral. For some reason, the translators chose to translate it “spoke well of him.” Just “began speaking about Him” would have been the accurate translation. The accurate implication is that, after Jesus last spoke, they immediately turned to their neighbors and began sharing with each other what they knew about Jesus or had heard about Him. This also points to this reading being at the end of the service rather than at the beginning.

Luke 4:22b **and were ~~amazed at~~ startled by¹⁴ the gracious words that came from his lips.**

They weren't “gracious words,” in the sense that the Nazarenes thought of them as gracious. Their subsequent actions proved that wasn't the case. They were “gracious words” in the sense that they were, in fact, words which denoted the ultimate astounding grace of God's plan.

Luke 4:22c **“Isn't this Joseph's son?” they asked.**

Their immediate response was to recall that He was after all, only the son of Joseph the carpenter, and was a carpenter Himself. Among the many that were talking there were undoubtedly some who began to dredge up the old rumors about whether His birth was legitimate.

Luke 4:23 **Jesus said to them, “Surely you will quote this proverb¹⁵ to me: ‘Physician, heal yourself!’¹⁶ Do here in your hometown¹⁷ what we have heard that you did in**

¹⁴ I think “startled by” is a better understanding than the NIV's “amazed at.”

¹⁵ This wasn't a quotation from the Biblical Book of Proverbs, but only a common saying.

¹⁶ “Physician, heal yourself” by implication means “Heal your own people.”

¹⁷ The word “hometown” used here and in verse 24 might be better translated “homeland” or “home country.” Here Jesus was talking about the rejection of the people from the area around Nazareth, but in a larger sense he was talking about the coming rejection of Him by the bulk of the Jewish people. That was what led up to His next point that two Old Testament Gentiles were more willing recipients of God's grace in the case of the widow and Naaman (both Gentiles). In John 4:44 Jesus referred to this saying on his second visit to Nazareth. There it contrasted the recent eager reception of Christ by the Samaritans with his rejection by the Jews.

Capernaum.’”

There may have been many things that Jesus heard viciously spoken about Him in the crowd before He and His disciples left the synagogue. Considering His response, one of them must have been that if He was going to say such things, He had better perform some miracles like He had done in Capernaum. Evidently, Jesus had performed miracles during his visit to Capernaum with His family. They are not recorded in Scripture. They were just some of the thousands of unrecorded miracles of His ministry. However, the report of them had already reached Nazareth.

Luke 4:24 “I tell you the truth,” he continued, “no prophet is accepted in his hometown.”¹⁸

Jesus repeated this saying (John 4:44) when He was on His way back to Galilee about a year later. There He said it as being something He had said in the past, thus supporting my contention that this visit to Nazareth (recorded in Luke) occurred before Jesus’ visit to Jerusalem and His ten-month ministry in Judea recorded in John 3 and 4.

Jesus was not dismissing the people of Nazareth on short evidence. He had lived among them for about a quarter of a century and knew their hearts intimately. Nathanael’s earlier comment to Phillip was evidently not far off of the mark: John 1:46 “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?”

Luke 4:25 I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah’s time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land.

Here Jesus alluded to the time of great rejection of the LORD during the time of Elijah which is recorded in 1 Kings 17.

Luke 4:26 Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon.

In that account, the LORD sent Elijah, the messenger of the LORD, to a Gentile woman who believed in the God of Israel.¹⁹

Luke 4:27 And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only Naaman the Syrian.”

¹⁸ The word translated “hometown” here and “country” in John 4:44 is the same word *πατρίς* {pă-trē’s} which can be translated either way.

¹⁹ 1 Kings 17:12 “‘As surely as the LORD your God lives,’ she replied.”

Here Jesus alluded to another time of great rejection of the LORD during the time of Elisha which is recorded in 2 Kings 5. In that account, a Gentile from Syria came seeking the messenger of the LORD (Elisha).

Luke 4:28 All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this.

The people understood perfectly that Jesus was saying that if the Jews rejected His message, there would be those among the Gentiles who would accept it. There was no section of Judea or Galilee which was more under the sway of the Zealots than the area around Nazareth. It was the center of their origin and influence. The Zealots were extreme in their resentment of Gentiles and in their determination to drive them out of Israel. Jesus' words, which implied that the Gentiles were worthy to be co-recipients of God's grace, enraged all of the crowd. They reacted with fury.

Luke 4:29 They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him down the cliff.

Up to this point they had still been seated in the synagogue muttering to each other. At Jesus' last words they erupted into action. Here the extreme hatred of the Zealots was on display. Forty years later, after they had seized power during the Jewish revolt in 70 AD, the Zealots starved hundreds of thousands of their own people to death during the siege of Jerusalem, rather than let them surrender to the Gentile Romans. They themselves often committed suicide rather than surrender to the Romans, as at Masada in 73 AD.

Luke 4:30 But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way.

We aren't told whether they were knocked aside as if by an invisible force, or whether they were hypnotized into not being able to recognize Jesus and He walked right by them. This wouldn't be the only time during Jesus' ministry that the Father had to intervene in this miraculous way to deliver the Son from harm.

Back in Capernaum, the Healing of Peter's Mother-in-Law

It seems obvious that the story of the healing of Peter's mother-in-law is the same one in all three Gospels, but they are all told in different places in the various texts. The question is: When did it happen? I picked Luke's positioning as the best from a chronological standpoint. The accounts in Matthew and Mark are not time specific but are told as one of a number of episodes that occurred at an unspecified time during Jesus' ministry in Galilee. Furthermore, Luke clearly established the sequential method as his pattern of storytelling in both of his New Testament books, the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts. Matthew and Mark, on the other hand, sometimes tend to group related episodes around a central theme rather than around a time frame. In Luke, Jesus had just finished His first trip to Nazareth. As you will see, I have

grouped the accounts of all three Gospels together. Luke started his account with the time referent word “then.”

Luke 4:31-32 **Then he went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and on the Sabbath began to teach the people. They were amazed at his teaching, because his message had authority.**

Mark 1:21-22 **They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law.**

Remember, when He had been in Nazareth, they said Jesus had already been to Capernaum and performed miracles when He had been there (Luke 4:23). Thus, Jesus was returning to Capernaum after having already established a reputation by His miracles. Thus, when He returned, He had a ready audience waiting.

Jesus could teach with authority because He understood the Word of God and understood that it all pointed toward the life and sacrifice of the Messiah and a personal relationship with the LORD. The teachers of the law in that time had tried to make the Word of God not much more than a system of ethics and meaningless rituals. Without the understanding of the grace and mercy underpinning the Word it was incomprehensible.

Luke 4:33-34 **In the synagogue there was a man possessed by a demon, an evil spirit. He cried out at the top of his voice, “Ha! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!” “Be quiet!” Jesus said sternly. “Come out of him!” Then the demon threw the man down before them all and came out without injuring him.**

Mark 1:23-26 **Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an evil spirit cried out, “What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!” “Be quiet!” said Jesus sternly. “Come out of him!” The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.**

I can only suppose that Satan and his demons never figured out the true purpose of Jesus’ ministry. This is revealed in 1 Corinthians:

1 Corinthians 2:8 “None of the rulers of this age (*Satan and his angels*) understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”

They must have been perplexed that Jesus hadn’t announced who He was. They must have decided that if He was keeping it quiet, that they should do their best to make it public. Later, the religious leaders used the proclamations of the cast out demons that Jesus was the Holy One of God to claim that Jesus must be from Satan.

Luke 4:36-37 All the people were amazed and said to each other, “What is this teaching? With authority and power he gives orders to evil spirits and they come out!” And the news about him spread throughout the surrounding area.

Mark 1:27-28 The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, “What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him.” News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.

I suppose that it would not be unreasonable to conclude that the concentration of demonic forces in Judea and Galilee to oppose in Jesus was at a historic high for any region or period in all of human history. Hence, there would have been an unusual number of those plagued with demon possession and the maladies they caused. After all, Satan and the demons knew that Jesus’ birth meant that this was a time of crisis for them. It is also probable that the concentration of demons in that day, with a total world population of about 250 million would have been less than today when there are over 5 billion people. We know that fallen angels can no longer reproduce.²⁰

Luke 4:38-39 Jesus left the synagogue and went to the home of Simon. Now Simon’s mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Jesus to help her. So he bent over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. She got up at once and began to wait on them.

Matthew 8:14-15 When Jesus came into Peter’s house, he saw Peter’s mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever. He touched her hand and the fever left her, and she got up and began to wait on him.

Mark 1:29-31 As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. Simon’s mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told Jesus about her. So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them.

Here Jesus rebuked the fever (the micro world of bacteria and viruses). Earlier he rebuked the evil spirits (the invisible world beyond measurement). Later (Luke 8:24) He rebuked the wind (the macro world). Nothing is beyond the power of God! The meal that Peter’s mother-in-law prepared was evidently the evening meal.

Luke 4:40-41 When the sun was setting, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he healed them. Moreover, demons came out of many people, shouting, “You are the Son of God!” But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Christ.

²⁰ *Matthew 22:30, Mark 12:25, Luke 20:35-36.*

Matthew 8:16-17 When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: “He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases.”²¹

Mark 1:32-34 That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. The whole town gathered at the door, and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.

After dinner, word had spread about the casting out of the demon and the miraculous healing and everyone who heard about it brought their suffering people to Jesus. He cast out all the demons but wouldn't allow these demons to speak before they were cast out. He also healed all the sick.

Luke 4:42-44 At daybreak Jesus went out to a solitary place. The people were looking for him and when they came to where he was, they tried to keep him from leaving them. But he said, “I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent.”

Mark 1:35-38 Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. Simon and his companions went to look for him, and when they found him, they exclaimed: “Everyone is looking for you!” Jesus replied, “Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.”

Of course, the people of Capernaum wanted Jesus to remain and provide free medical care. However, Jesus hadn't come to heal the sick or cast demons out of the possessed. He had come to shine the light of God's Word and provide the eternal defeat of sin and death. Although many of Jesus' disciples came from Capernaum the overall response of the people of Capernaum to Jesus' ministry was shallow. Perhaps their lack of faith was partly reflected in the fact that there were so many demon possessed among them. Jesus later said of them:

Matthew 11:23 “And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths. If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day.”

Mark 1:39 So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

²¹ *Isaiah 53:4*

In Mark's Gospel it only mentioned the preaching in Galilee as they moved southward toward Judea.

Luke 4:44 And he kept on preaching in the synagogues of Galilee. KJV

The Textus Receptus is correctly translated “And he kept on preaching in the synagogues of Galilee.” The inferior Codex Sinaiticus, on which the NIV translation is largely based, is full of transcription errors. The erroneous NIV is “And he went to preach to the synagogues in Judea.” That is wrong! Although a few months later Jesus would go down to Judea for the Passover of 27 AD (John 2:13) and continued there almost a year, He didn't do that at that time. At that time, He continued to preach in Galilee.

I have here included a short description and history of the fallen angels and the demons of Satan.

Categories of Fallen Angels or Demons

1. Those angels under confinement in Hell consisted of:

a. Those who were imprisoned for the transgression of Genesis 6.

Jude 1:6 “And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority ²² but abandoned their own home—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.”

1 Peter 3:19b-20a “He went and preached to the spirits in prison ²³ who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built.”

b. Those who were imprisoned for other offenses.

The possibility that this category existed is implied by the plea of some demons that Jesus cast out later:

Luke 8:31 “And they begged him repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss.”

²² “Positions of authority” is literally ἀρχή {är-khā'} which means “first,” or “beginning.” Often translated “first estate.” Probably indicates that these fallen angels came down to earth which was not their proper abode.

²³ It has been suggested that Jesus proclaimed his victory to the fallen angels, and the reason why He was leading out of Hell His people, the Old Testament Saints who were living in the part of Hell known as Paradise.

Of those confined in Hell, some will be temporarily released at different times. They include:

a. Those released at the start of the Tribulation under the command of Apollyon:

Revelation 9:1-3, 11 “The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss. When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss. And out of the smoke locusts came down upon the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth. --- They had as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon,²⁴ and in Greek, Apollyon.”²⁵

a. Of these, others will be released near the end of the Tribulation under the command of four bound fallen angels.

Revelation 9:14-16 “It said to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.” And the four angels who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind. The number of the mounted troops was two hundred million.²⁶ I heard their number.”

2. Those Fallen Angels (known as demons) confined to the face of the Earth. They include:

a. Those that have possessed the bodies of humans.

Luke 8:27-30 “When Jesus stepped ashore, he was met by a demon-possessed man from the town. For a long time this man had not worn clothes or lived in a house, but had lived in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at his feet, shouting at the top of his voice, ‘What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don’t torture me!’ For Jesus had commanded the evil spirit to come out of the man. Many times it had seized him, and though he was chained hand and foot and kept under guard, he had broken his chains and had been driven by the demon into solitary places. Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” “Legion,” he replied, because many demons had gone into him.”

²⁴ Both “Abaddon” and “Apollyon” means “destroyer.”

²⁵ This demon is the one who kills the two witnesses in Jerusalem (Revelation 11:7) at the midpoint of the Tribulation..

²⁶ Some have proclaimed that these are human soldiers of the Kings of the East. I do not see this as indicated at all. They look to me more like demon forces under the command of the four fallen angels.

Luke 4:33-35 “In the synagogue there was a man possessed by a demon, an evil spirit. He cried out at the top of his voice, ‘Ha! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are--the Holy One of God!’ ‘Be quiet!’ Jesus said sternly. ‘Come out of him!’ Then the demon threw the man down before them all and came out without injuring him.”

Luke 4:41 “Moreover, demons came out of many people, shouting, ‘You are the Son of God!’ But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Christ.”

b. Those that have possessed the bodies of animals.

Luke 8:32 “A large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside. The demons begged Jesus to let them go into them, and he gave them permission.”

c. Those that are disembodied, but looking for a body to possess.

Jesus speaking in Matthew 12:43-45 “When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, ‘I will return to the house I left.’ When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first.”

3. Those fallen angels that have the liberty of the Heavens along with Satan and will be flung to earth with him during the end of the first half of the Tribulation.

Job 1:6 “One day the (*elect*) angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them.”

Isaiah 24:21 “In that day the LORD will punish the powers in the heavens above (*fallen angels*).”

Revelation 12:3-4 “Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns ²⁷ and seven crowns on his heads. His tail swept a third of the stars (*fallen angels*) out of the sky and flung them to the earth.”

This last is also referred to in Revelation 6:13 and Isaiah 34:4. The term “the stars” refers to the universe. This means that the fallen angelic inhabitants that control one third of the universe

²⁷ There are four beasts in prophecy with ten horns which relate to the end times. This beast, the fourth beast in Daniel 7:7, the beast out of the sea in Revelation 13:1-2, and the scarlet beast Revelation 17:3-8 on which the woman rides.

will be cast to the earth. Since we know that the number of elect angels is recorded at 100 trillion,²⁸ the number of fallen angels might number at least that much.

²⁸ *Revelation 5:11-12* “Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living beings and the elders. In a loud voice they sang: “Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!”