



# “I Say unto Thee, Arise”

Luke 4:14 – 9:50

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## Introduction

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In these chapters, which cover the bulk of Jesus’ Galilean ministry, Jesus revealed his identity by his deeds and words. He extended God’s mercy to Gentiles and women. He called others to be with him in the ministry. He taught John’s disciples about who he was and praised John. Women were featured as disciples—quite unusual for that day—and a sinful woman was praised over an obstinate Pharisee. Teaching with parables, Jesus proclaimed his ministry in word, stilled the storm on the lake, and healed a possessed tomb-dweller in Gentile country. He raised a girl from the dead and healed a woman with a long-standing disease and called the Twelve to do the same kinds of works and take his message out. These chapters end with Jesus feeding the crowd, teaching the disciples about his identity, confirming it with the Transfiguration and the casting out of a devil. The end of chapter 9 (next lesson) starts Jesus’ ten-chapter journey to Jerusalem and his final mortal acts.

A developing theme is the growing animosity of Jewish leaders, especially scribes and Pharisees. Though it’s not clear what all their motivations for opposing Jesus were, it is clear that Jesus challenged them directly and provoked them intentionally. When someone’s beliefs and practices are challenged, they have two typical responses: they either humble themselves and consider the new approach or they become angry and defensive. It could be that Jesus was giving them every opportunity to do the former but that they typically chose the latter, building a wave of opposition that later leads to his death.<sup>1</sup>

## Outline of Luke

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An overall outline for the book of Luke is as follows, with the section covered in this lesson in bold:

- Prologue (1:1-4)
- Infancy and Boyhood of Jesus (1:5 – 2:52)
- Preparation for Public Ministry (3:1 – 4:13)
- **Ministry in Galilee (4:14 – 9:50)**
- Journey to Jerusalem (9:51 – 19:27)
- Ministry in Jerusalem (19:28 – 21:38)
- Last Supper, Passion, Death, and Burial (22:1 – 23:56)
- Resurrection Appearances (24:1-53)

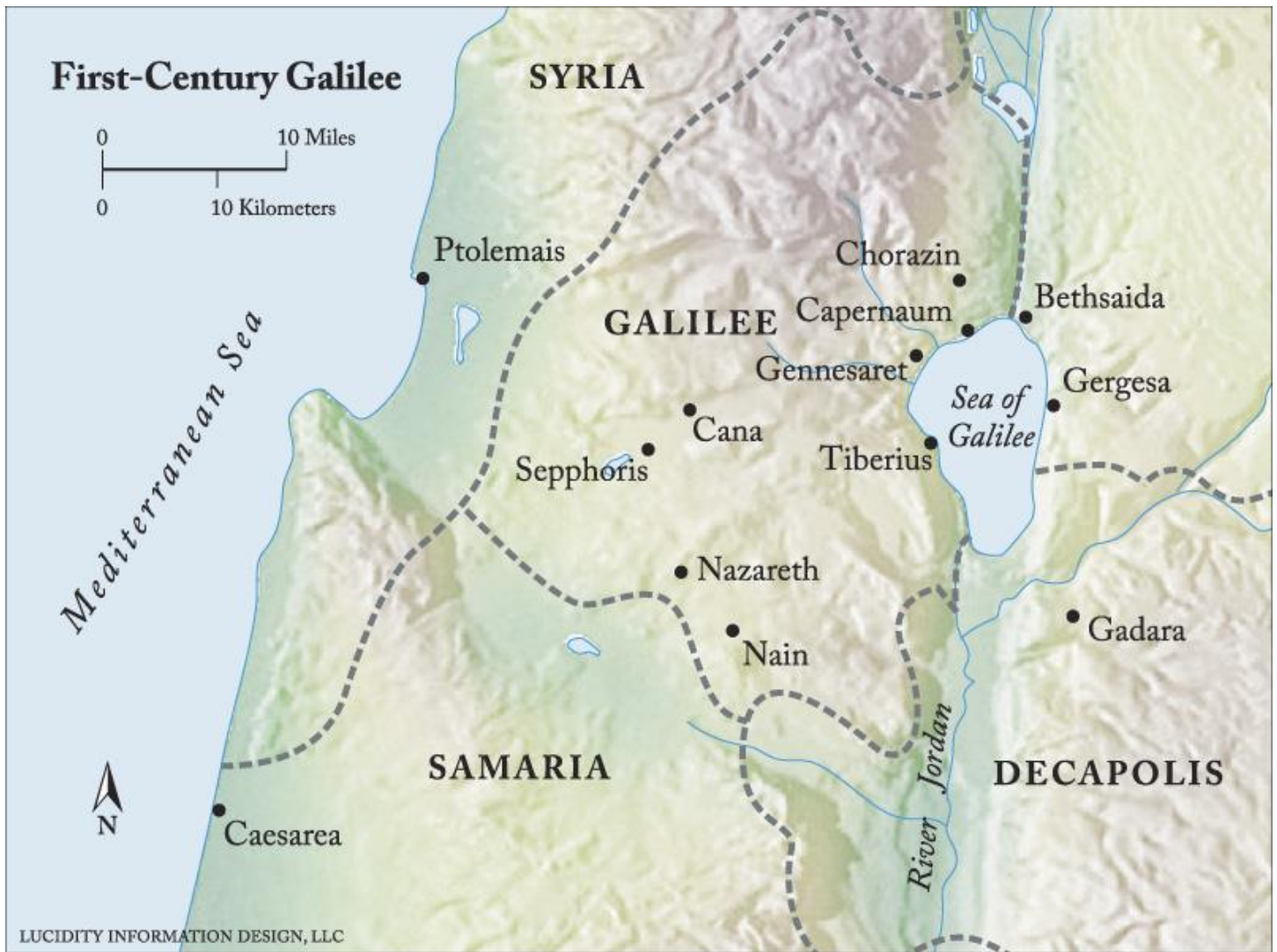
Note: In each lesson on the gospels, where there are overlapping or parallel texts, those will be noted in the heading. References in bold are the preferred reading(s) and will be the principal section of analysis, though some unique points in the current gospel will be noted, as well as helpful JST changes.<sup>2</sup>

These events took place in a small area, as can be seen on the map below:

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<sup>1</sup> Jennifer C. Lane, “From Opposition to Hostility: Changing Reactions During Jesus’ Ministry,” in Holzapfel and Wayment, *Life and Teachings*, v. 2, 125-130.

<sup>2</sup> Not all JST changes are noted, only those of textual or doctrinal interest. Interested readers are encouraged to see Wayment, *The Complete Joseph Smith Translation of the New Testament* or the manuscripts themselves on the Joseph Smith Papers website ([josephsmithpapers.org](http://josephsmithpapers.org)).



## Ministry in Galilee (4:14 – 9:50)

Rejected at Nazareth – [Luke 4:14-32](#) (Matt 4:13-16; Mark 1:21-22; 6:1-6; John 2:12)

Though Luke hasn't portrayed other teachings and miracles yet like Matthew and Mark, they are clearly implied as Jesus goes to his home town synagogue. In Luke's gospel, this is his first public act, setting the stage for future rejections and his move to Capernaum as the base of operations during the Galilean ministry.

4:14 **Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit.** Having concluded his direct confrontation with the devil, Jesus returned from the desert back to the Galilee, being empowered by the Spirit of God to begin his mission.

4:14 **there went out a fame of him.** Though not specified in his account, Luke alludes to early teachings and miracles as causing Jesus to be well-known among the Galileans.

4:15 **he taught in their synagogues.** He taught in "their" synagogues; perhaps he didn't feel quite welcome there? Luke's language marks the beginning of an activity, indicating that Jesus did this on an ongoing basis.<sup>3</sup>

4:15 **JST**

**Luke 4:15 KJV**

**JST**

<sup>3</sup> Brown, *The Testimony of Luke*, 237.

And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all **who believed on his name.**

The addition in the JST clarifies that Jesus was glorified of those who believed in him, which sounds more realistic than that all glorified him, something those opposed to him certainly didn't do.

4:16 **And he came to Nazareth.** It is difficult to know exactly when, but at some point, after his return to Galilee (presumably Capernaum; Matt. 4:13), Jesus went back to Nazareth, his home for most of his life. Luke puts this event at the beginning of his six chapters covering the Galilean ministry, while Mark puts the rejection at Nazareth later in his narrative, after much more teaching and healing. Mark's is probably more correct chronologically, but Luke puts it first as a foreshadowing of the rejection he will later receive of the Jews in general.<sup>4</sup>

4:16 **he went into the synagogue.** Synagogues were the common places of worship, as opposed to the temple which had specific rituals and restrictive attendance. Anyone could come into a synagogue, even Gentiles. They were built facing either east or Jerusalem, were rectangular in shape with a single open room and a raised platform toward the front for the reading of scripture. Seating was built into the walls but other seating would be placed throughout the room, or people sat on the floor. The more senior men sat at the front, the younger ones in the back. Women were probably seated separately, behind a screen so they could see and hear what was going on but without being fully part of the meeting.

This incident and that in Acts 13 are the earliest accounts of a synagogue service. Rabbinic sources, which are later but agree with these accounts, give us more details about the program.

- There was private prayer upon entry to the synagogue.
- The *Shema* (Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 11:13-21; and Numbers 15:37-41) was recited.
- Various communal prayers were given, especially the *Shemoneh Esreh* or 'Eighteen Benedictions.'
- Readings from the Law (*Torah*) was next, followed by readings from the Prophets (*Nabi'im*)
- An oral *targum* in Aramaic (translation / paraphrase) of the scriptures just read was given.
- A sermon or commentary on the scriptures read was offered.
- A closing benediction was given, often accompanied by the singing of Psalms (*Ketubim*).

Prayers were offered standing, facing the Most Holy Place in the temple. The service was overseen by a synagogue ruler (*archisynagōgos*) and an assistant (*hupēretēs*). They would invite any qualified male (a son of the Law) to give the *targum* and sermon.<sup>5</sup>

Jesus was certainly well-known now from his previous ministry (though Luke doesn't recount it). He was establishing a reputation as a rabbi, and visiting rabbis were normally invited to speak. It would be very natural for them to offer him the opportunity to participate in the service that day, even with a certain amount of curiosity as the 'home town' boy now teacher had returned.

4:16 **stood up for to read.** A person stood up to read out of respect for the scriptures.

Some scholars note a chiasm in verses 16-20, with the center point (the emphasis) being the phrase "and recovering sight to the blind." Compare to Psalm 146:8 and Isaiah 29:18; 35:5.<sup>6</sup>

4:17 **delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias.** Later Judaism set up a three-year reading schedule for going through all the scriptures during synagogue services. It is not clear if that was in place in Jesus' day. Either way, he was given the Isaiah scroll and turned to what is today chapter 61, reading the first and part of the second verse (there were no chapters or verse numbers in that day).<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Arnold, *Zondervan*, 1:361.

<sup>5</sup> Stephen D. Ricks, "No Prophet is Accepted in His Own Country," in Jackson and Millet, *Studies in Scripture: Vol. 5*, 202-203; Brown, *The Testimony of Luke*, 241-242; Arnold, *Zondervan*, 1:361.

<sup>6</sup> Smith, *Search, Ponder, and Pray*, 62.

<sup>7</sup> Arnold, *Zondervan*, 1:362.

4:18-19 **The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.** Compare four versions of this: The KJV and LXX of Isaiah 61:1-2a, the KJV of Luke 4:18-19, and an alternate translation of Isaiah 61:1-2a from the Hebrew:

Luke 4:18-19 KJV	Isaiah 61:1-2a KJV	Isaiah 61:1-2a LXX
The Spirit of the Lord <i>is</i> upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.	The Spirit of the Lord GOD <i>is</i> upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to <i>them that are</i> bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.	The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me; he has sent me to preach glad tidings to the poor, to heal the broken in heart, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind; to declare the acceptable year of the Lord.

Careful comparison shows that the Hebrew of Isaiah has a unique phrase about opening the prison to the bound and that the LXX version has a unique phrase about giving sight to the blind, while Luke’s quotation has both. Some scholars see the variation between Luke v. 18 and Isaiah v. 1 in the last phrase as coming from Isaiah 58:6 and not as simply an alternate translation (since it’s not in the LXX).<sup>8</sup>

4:18 **The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.** It descended on him at his baptism (3:21-22) and came to him powerfully after his temptations in the wilderness (4:14).

4:18 **because he hath anointed me.** “Anointed” is the Hebrew verb *mashach*, which is related to the noun for *messiah*.

4:19 **the acceptable year of the Lord.** This refers to the Jubilee year (Leviticus 25:10-12) where debts are cancelled, property is returned, and slaves set free.<sup>9</sup>

The next phrase in Isaiah 61:2, which he *didn’t* read, is interesting: ‘To announce the day of the vengeance of our God.’ He was the Messiah who would bear the sins of the people, but at this time he was not the Messiah who would be the political leader to overthrow the Romans.

4:20 **he closed the book.** Or, he rolled up the scroll and returned it.

4:20 **minister.** The *hupēretēs* or assistant of the synagogue, who probably handed Jesus the Isaiah scroll and took it back when he was done reading.

4:20 **sat down.** As mentioned with v. 16, a person stood to read, but when it was time to speak and teach, generally sat, though it wasn’t required.<sup>10</sup>

4:21 **This day is this scripture fulfilled.** Jesus broke with tradition; instead of giving a *targum* and commentary, he simply announced the fulfillment of the words—in fact, that *he* was the fulfillment of the words he had just read.

4:22 **gracious words.** This is better translated: ‘words of charity’; though we only have one verse, Jesus clearly said more in order for his ‘words of charity’ to be appreciated.

<sup>8</sup> Beale and Carson, *Commentary*, 289.

<sup>9</sup> Arnold, *Zondervan*, 1:362.

<sup>10</sup> Brown, *The Testimony of Luke*, 241.



4:22 ***Is not this Joseph's son?*** How can the Messiah be this man, whom we all know? Have we not watched him build houses among us? Have we not seen him here in the synagogue each Sabbath most of his life? His father was poor and so is he—how can he be the one to save us all?

4:23 ***whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum.*** Jesus is speaking here but he is paraphrasing what he believes they want to say to him. This comment alludes to many miracles Jesus had already enacted, which Luke simply doesn't record; it demonstrates his dependence on Mark who has this event later in his story after telling many of Jesus' miracles.

4:24 ***No prophet is accepted in his own country.*** The saying is perhaps proverbial in Jesus' day (as it has become in ours because of this passage and its equivalent in the other three gospels) but leads to him citing two examples of prophets that worked miracles among Gentiles but who were rejected by Jews.

4:25 ***in the days of Elias.*** Sensing their rejection and their mood to require a sign of him (v. 23), he compared the situation to when prophets blessed the lives of Gentiles even though there were many in need in Israel. Both Elijah and Elisha were rejected by their own people. The two examples Jesus used were Elijah and an unnamed Gentile woman (vv. 25-26; see 1 Kings 17:1-9) and Elisha with a leprous Gentile man named Naaman (v. 27; see 2 Kings 5:1-14), both of whom were considered unclean and were blessed by miraculous, divine power. Jesus contrasted these unclean Gentiles to them, which was a great insult because he said the unclean people accepted the prophets while they did not.

4:28 ***filled with wrath.*** Jesus' comparison of them to unclean Gentiles turned their wonder at his gracious words to anger at such an insult. This was a man who had grown up among them, had perhaps worked in or on many of their homes. They were expecting to hear or see great things from him based on things they had heard about his ministry, but instead he simply insulted them and they were not going to tolerate that from this home-town boy.

4:29 ***led him unto the brow of the hill.*** This describes a classic stoning situation (such as described in Deuteronomy 13:5-10) where they would take the person to the edge of a cliff, cast him off, then throw large stones on him to try and kill him. But Jesus somehow escaped, "passing through the midst of them" (verse 30). Whether they calmed down and let him go or Jesus somehow escaped miraculously, Luke doesn't explain.

4:31 ***came down to Capernaum.*** As far as Luke records (or the others in their similar accounts), that was his last visit to his home town; he moved his place of residence to Capernaum. According to John 2, he moved his mother and family there as well, and many of his disciples also moved there, probably to be near him. Other events happened in this town, but mostly the scriptures picture him coming home here after traveling.

4:31 ***taught them on the sabbath days.*** He went into the synagogues in Capernaum and taught them with no record of offensive words or any attempts to stone him.

4:32 ***they were astonished . . . his word was with power.*** Most rabbis taught by quoting the opinions of other rabbis. Jesus taught with a personal authority: "Verily, I say unto you" was a common phrase with him.

### [A Sabbath day in Capernaum – Luke 4:33-41 \(Matt 8:14-17; Mark 1:23-34\)](#)

These verses give us a picture of a single Sabbath day in Jesus' life. Luke is also giving us evidence of what Jesus announced in the synagogue in Nazareth—that he came to preach, teach, and bless the lives of the poor, the downtrodden, the suffering, and the outcast. See also Mark. This is a wonderful example of what we should do on the Sabbath. It's not a day of 'rest' as in take a nap (though sometimes that's the right thing to do), but rather a rest from our normal activities with our attention turned to worshipping the Lord and serving others.

Note the 'gender pair' in the first two stories, with a man and a woman both healed.<sup>11</sup> Compare and contrast the stories to gain greater insight into why Luke pairs them in this way.

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<sup>11</sup> Smith, *Search, Ponder, and Pray*, 63.

### Healing a man with an unclean spirit – Luke 4:3-37

4:33 **in the synagogue there was a man.** He went to the synagogue in Capernaum to worship but was confronted with a man possessed. Some speculate that this was merely mental illness, though we can't be sure (certainly many things ascribed to evil spirits in that day would be diagnosed differently today). The fact that the evil spirit speaks through the person about Jesus' mission indicates more than a health problem. Many other scriptures indicate the reality of demonic possession.

4:34 **I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of Israel.** The evil spirit spoke through the person, declaring Jesus' identity, first as Jesus of Nazareth, which everyone knew, then as "the Holy One of Israel" which might not be a name that many yet associated with Jesus (see Habakkuk 1:12; Isaiah 48:17). To be "holy" means to be set apart or distinguished for a specific purpose, according to the will of God. The devil knows exactly who he is, even if the mortals all around him do not.

4:35 **Hold thy peace, and come out of him.** "Hold thy peace" is a great William Tyndale phrase; the Greek is merely a command to be silent. Jesus commanded the evil spirit without any preamble, negotiating, or posturing, as other exorcists of his day might have done. With authority, he simply spoke, and the devil obeyed. This significantly different method and result was recognized by the crowd in the synagogue, who marveled that he spoke "with authority and power" and the devils "come out" (v. 36).

### Healing of Simon's Mother-in-Law – Luke 4:38-39

4:38 **he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house.** After the synagogue service, Jesus went to Simon's house for dinner. This is the first mention of any future disciple by name—in Luke's gospel, Jesus has not yet called anyone to follow him. Simon's mother-in-law was ill, and they asked him if he could help her. Luke surely presents this as a foundational experience to Simon Peter's testimony.

4:38 **taken with a great fever.** Luke says she had a "great fever," a specific medical term used in his day that indicated the high seriousness of her illness and served to emphasize the power of Jesus's healing.<sup>12</sup>

4:39 **it left her.** He healed her and "immediately she arose and ministered unto them," likely meaning that she helped served the meal, showing that she was fully healed.<sup>13</sup>

### Healing many others – Luke 4:40-41

4:40 **when the sun was setting.** Now the day was nearly over, but does Jesus get any rest? People from all over learned he was at Peter's house and came seeking his blessing. They came at sunset (the start of the next day) so they could walk a greater distance and carry their sick, both things that would have violated the Sabbath by strict Jewish law. Notice what he does: "he laid hands on every one of them, and healed them."

4:41 **devils also came out of many.** Not just the man from the synagogue but many others with similar issues. They called him "Christ the Son of God" even as he cast them out, Luke noting, "for they know that he was Christ."

### Jesus preaches and heals in Galilee – Luke 4:42-44 (Matt 4:23-25; Mark 1:35-39)

4:42 **he departed and went into a desert place.** The next day (Sunday), Jesus went out to a "solitary place" (both the Greek and JST agree on that word). Mark says it was to pray.

4:42 **people sought him, and came unto him.** In spite of his efforts to be alone, people found him there, and he let them know he needed to visit other cities besides Capernaum (v. 43).

4:44 **he preached in the synagogues of Galilee.** Some early manuscripts have "Judea" here instead of Galilee. This is either an indication of incomplete geographical knowledge on Luke's part or perhaps an early scribal error.

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<sup>12</sup> Arnold, *Zondervan*, 1:366.

<sup>13</sup> The alternative meaning is that she joined Jesus in the ministry in some fashion, perhaps as other women are recorded to have done (Mark 15:41).

## Jesus calls his first disciples – Luke 5:1-11 (Matt 4:18-22; 13:1-3; Mark 1:16-20; 4:1-2)

See also Matthew and Mark. Luke's account combines two stories from Matthew and Mark and gives some unique information as well. Up to this point, Jesus had been laboring alone; no one is mentioned as even being his disciple. That changed with this event at the beginning of chapter 5 as he uses an extended life metaphor—providing an abundance of fishes, then calling men to fish for men and women.

5:1 **the people pressed upon him.** Jesus' fame began to exceed his capacity to minister, with large crowds seeking to be near to him perhaps at all hours of the day and night (4:40, 42).

5:1 **lake of Gennesaret.** Another name for the Sea of Galilee. Lake is the more appropriate term, which only Luke uses (e.g., Matt 4:18; Mark 1:16; John 6:1).<sup>14</sup>

5:3 **entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's.** In Matthew and Mark, Simon and Andrew were cast-net fisherman (Matt 4:18; Mark 1:16) while James and John were drag-net fisherman (Matt 4:21; Mark 1:19). Generally, cast-net fisherman did not use a boat (though it was possible). In Luke, Simon has a boat which Jesus uses to push away from shore, so he can teach without being mobbed. The word used indicates a smaller vessel, similar to the one found in the Sea of Galilee in 1986 near Capernaum, where this story took place.<sup>15</sup>

5:4 **Launch out into the deep.** Fishing from ships using nets was usually done at night (v. 5) so the fish could not see the net. As it was pulled behind the ship or between two ships, the fish would become trapped. During the daytime, there was little chance of catching the fish, so Jesus' request to try fishing during the day was very unusual, as reflected in Simon's response.

5:5 **at thy word I will let down the net.** Though he explains their lack of success from the night before, he has seen enough miracles at Jesus' hand to have learned not to question.

5:6 **a great multitude of fishes.** Brown notes that the great catch would have brought significant income to the four fishermen, just in time for Jesus to call them away from the labors—a great blessing to their families. Some of the fish would have been sold in the local fresh fish markets, while most of it likely went to a town just four-and-a-half miles down the coast which specialized in drying and salting fish to preserve it. The name of the town was Magdala, also called Taricheae, which means 'dried or smoked fish,' and was the home town of an important woman in the gospels, Mary Magdalene.<sup>16</sup>

5:6 **their net brake.** Or, 'their nets were about to burst.' The brake had not yet happened, but it was about to.

5:7 **they beckoned unto their partners.** The first "they" shows that Simon was not alone; from other texts we know that he was in business with brother, Andrew (Matt 10:2). "Their partners" were James and John (v. 10), who apparently also went out at Jesus' word. They hauled in enough fish to fill both ships.

5:8 **Simon Peter.** This is Luke's first mention of Simon's nickname given him by Jesus (6:14).

5:8 **he fell down at Jesus' knees.** To catch any fish would be unusual in the daytime; to catch so many the net nearly broke was miraculous. Simon recognized this, and it made him see Jesus as a man sent from God. He is the first recorded human to see Jesus as Lord.

5:8 **Depart from me; for I am a sinful man.** Faced with the miracle before and a sudden realization, prodded by the Holy Spirit, that Jesus was more than a preacher and even healer, Peter's reaction was to repent and seek forgiveness, perceiving that he wasn't worthy to be in Jesus' presence.

5:10 **from henceforth thou shalt catch men.** Matthew and Mark use the phrase "fishers of men." Luke's phrase means to 'catch men alive.' It evokes Jeremiah 16:16, where the Lord sends for many fishers and hunters.

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<sup>14</sup> Brown, *The Testimony of Luke*, 272.

<sup>15</sup> Brown, *The Testimony of Luke*, 272.

<sup>16</sup> Brown, *The Testimony of Luke*, 275-276.



5:11 **they forsook all, and followed him.** Having just made one of the best catches of their lives, the four men nevertheless left it all behind—business, home, and family—and followed Jesus, becoming his first disciples.

### A leper cleansed – Luke 5:12-16 (Matt 8:2-4; Mark 1:40-45)

See Mark, with a couple Luke notes. This healing continues the theme of Jesus ministering to the outcast and those on the edges of society.

5:12 **a man full of leprosy.** Luke, as a physician, is more concerned about the details of the man’s disease than are Matthew and Mark, who just label him a leper, which could mean that he only had a small rash. Luke is clear that whatever skin disease the man was experiencing was covering his body.

5:16 **he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed.** Jesus’ popularity was such that people thronged him wherever he went. At times, he also needed to be alone to rest and commune with his Father, so he slipped away from the cities into solitary places to recharge and refresh. Making time to ponder and pray was as essential for Jesus as all of us.

### Heals a man with palsy – Luke 5:17-26 (Matt 9:2-8; Mark 2:1-12)

There is a progression of confrontations in all the gospels, as Jesus intentionally does things to aggravate Jewish leaders and their disdain for him grows into active hatred. This incident is an important one in that progression. Like other miracles, it also serves to demonstrate Jesus’ authority; he has power not just over disease but over sin itself, which no previous prophet had ever claimed.

5:17 **Pharisees and doctors of the law.** Luke’s first mention of the Jewish leaders shows that Pharisees and scribes had come from all areas to observe and evaluate Jesus. This is the start of the opposition that will result in Jesus’ death.

5:17 **the power of the Lord was present to heal them.** The KJV language makes it sound like Jesus had power to heal the Jewish leaders come to observe him. While that is certainly true, that is not the point of the Greek text, which is to say that Jesus had the power of the Lord with him, so he could heal others. He did not heal like the physicians of his day, with incantations and ritual that were designed to tap into a magical world’s power. He also asked for no money and often requested no publicity or fame. Instead, he simply touched, spoke, or did some small action (like spitting and making mud to put on the person’s eyes).<sup>17</sup>

5:18 **brought in a bed.** Mark 2:4 uses the term *krabbatos* for the bed, which means a palette or small, portable bed for sleeping outside. Luke uses *klinē*, which is a bed/couch used for reclining at meals, probably more like a mattress or futon.

5:19 **let him down through the tiling.** Houses in Galilee at this time were normally made of rock walls, usually without mortar, and plastered over. Roofs were typically long poles or beams, which were then covered with straw or reeds, then a layer of dirt or clay.<sup>18</sup> Each year the homeowner would have to repair the roof, adding more dirt, pulling the weeds, and flattening it out with a stone roller. Many used their roofs as places to sleep or eat when the weather was nice, with stairways leading to the roof built into the outside of the house. When the paralyzed man’s friends broke apart part of the roof to lower the man in, they were not doing any permanent damage, and likely repaired it themselves after their friend was healed. Luke mentions “tiling” which reflects a Greek and Roman style of roofing that he may have known but which was not found among the poorer people in Galilee. His use of the term may have made the event more clear to his readers, who might not understand a thatch roof.

5:20 **Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.** This was likely not the expected answer and perhaps not the reason his friends carried him here, broke through the roof, and lowered him down next to Jesus. The reaction of the friends and others in the crowd may have been similar—“What? Aren’t you going to heal him?”

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<sup>17</sup> NIV Cultural Backgrounds, 1752-1753.

<sup>18</sup> Arnold, *Zondervan*, 1:371.

5:21 **Who can forgive sins, but God alone?** They were all in agreement that this statement was accurate. The only question was, then, did Jesus have that authority from God? He used this opportunity to demonstrate that he did.

5:23 **JST.**

Luke 5:23 KJV	JST
Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk?	Does it require more power to forgive sins than to make the sick rise up and walk?

The emphasis is on the comparison of the authority or power required to perform the two activities, showing that Jesus did indeed have the power to forgive sins if he could also demonstrate power to cure the paralyzed man. In other words, speaking words was obviously much easier than performing the healing.

5:24 **But that ye may know.** Jesus may have been invoking similar thinking in Exodus 6:7 and 7:5, when the Lord set out to prove his own power to both the Israelites and the Egyptians: “ye shall know that I am the Lord your God.”<sup>19</sup>

5:24 **Son of man.** This is the first occurrence of this phrase in Luke. From the Writings of Moses we learn that God’s name is “Man of Holiness,” and therefore “the name of his Only Begotten is the Son of Man” (Moses 6:57). The title is a literal translation into Greek of a Hebrew phrase from the Old Testament, *ben ’adam*, used in several places but prominently in Ezekiel and Daniel. It signifies Jesus’ humanity but at the same time his messianic identity (see Daniel 7:13).

Pres. Harold B. Lee: “The greatest miracles I see today are not necessarily the healing of sick bodies, but the greatest miracles I see are the healing of sick souls, those who are sick in soul and spirit and are downhearted and distraught, on the verge of nervous breakdowns. We are reaching out to all such, because they are precious in the sight of the Lord” (*Stand Ye in Holy Places*, 123).

5:25 **took up that whereon he lay.** The paralyzed man stood, picked up the bed his friends had used to lower him down from the roof, and walked out the door on his own, “glorifying God.”

5:26 **We have seen strange things to day.** “Strange things” is *paradoxos*, meaning remarkable, unexpected, uncommon, or wonderful. Certainly no one who witnessed what just happened had ever seen anything like it—a man who has the power to forgive sins and heal a paralytic. The record notes that like the paralyzed man himself, the witnesses also “glorified God.”

### [Levi called; gives a feast – Luke 5:27-32 \(Matt 9:9-13; Mark 2:13-17\)](#)

See also Matthew, who gives a shorter account with fewer details, letting Luke provide some unique insights. Perhaps out of gratitude or as a missionary opportunity (or both!), Luke called many together to celebrate Jesus’ new influence in his life.

5:27 **a publican, named Levi.** Only from Matthew’s account do we learn that this is also Matthew; Luke only refers to him as Levi. A publican is a tax collector. The Romans imposed various taxes on their people, using local authorities to collect them. The taxes included poll and land taxes as well as customs on goods in transit. The local tax collectors were allowed to collect whatever amount they wanted, leading to abuse. Tax collectors were despised, therefore, both because of their reputation for corruption, and because they collaborated with the hated Roman government. There were tax collectors and chief tax collectors; the latter supervised the first. Matthew/Levi was the former (he was sitting in a booth collecting them) while Zacchaeus (see Luke 19:2) was the latter.

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<sup>19</sup> Brown, *The Testimony of Luke*, 292.

5:27 **sitting at the receipt of custom.** A custom post has been located just east of Capernaum, on the border between Galilee (Herod Antipas) and Gaulanitis and Traconitis (Herod Philip II), just a couple miles west of the entrance of the Jordan River into the Sea of Galilee. This is probably where Levi was sitting collecting taxes.<sup>20</sup>

5:27 **Follow me.** Jesus' call to Levi was the same as to Peter, Andrew, James, and John. The invitation to be his disciple (learner) was a full commitment. Verse 28 indicates he did just that, leaving everything on the spot, walking away from his job and turning completely to Jesus (v. 28).

5:29 **Levi made him a great feast in his own house.** Levi called his fellow publicans and Jesus and his disciples. Just entering into Levi's house would have made them all unclean, according to Pharisaic beliefs. But eating a full meal with a house full of publicans, who were all unclean and hated by virtue of their jobs, added to that judgment.

5:30 **scribes and Pharisees murmured.** Not addressing Jesus directly but some of the disciples who may have been coming and going from the house during the meal, the scribes and Pharisees were incensed that Jesus would spend so much time with these unclean sinners.

5:31 **Jesus answering said unto them.** Either Jesus heard their questions from inside the house or by divine means he perceived their thoughts, and stepped outside to respond, starting with an obvious fact: the sick need a physician, not the healthy. Then he applied that metaphor to this situation.

5:32 **not to call the righteous, but sinners.** A key theme of Jesus' mission was his outreach to those others considered not worthy of association. "Publicans and sinners" (v. 30) were treated like lepers and women—marginalized and considered less important by the Pharisees and scribes Jesus confronted in this event.

However, if we could hear sarcasm in the scripture, we might note that there is nothing recorded saying that Jesus spent the dinner calling the publicans to repentance but seems only to have been eating and drinking and enjoying his time with them. Perhaps he gesturing toward the dinner group when he said "righteous" and nodded toward the scribes and Pharisees when he said "sinners."

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#### [A question about fasting – Luke 5:33-39 \(Matt 9:14-17; Mark 2:18-22\)](#)

See Matthew.

5:34 **make the children of the bridechamber fast.** No one would expect the guests at a wedding to fast when all around them is a feast and celebration. So Jesus' coming is a cause for celebration and joy.

5:35 **the bridegroom shall be taken away.** This was Jesus' first hint of his death, which would cause the wedding guests to mourn and fast.

5:39 **The old is better.** This concluding verse is unique to Luke, playing off the new and old wine comment of verses 37-38. New wine might taste good but wine that has aged a bit is generally preferred. One commentary proposes that this was actually a condemnation of many in that day who preferred the "old" law of Moses to the "new" doctrine that Jesus was teaching.<sup>21</sup>

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#### [The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath – Luke 6:1-5 \(Matt 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28\)](#)

See Matthew.

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#### [Healing of a man with a withered hand – Luke 6:6-11 \(Matt 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6\)](#)

See also Matthew.

6:6 **a man whose right hand was withered.** The rabbis had determined that to give medical help to someone on the Sabbath was only allowed if the situation was life threatening. Since the man's life here was clearly not

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<sup>20</sup> Brown, *The Testimony of Luke*, 295.

<sup>21</sup> Ogden and Skinner, *The Four Gospels*, 251.

threatened, they were anxious to see what Jesus would do.<sup>22</sup> Jesus healed him—and did nothing to violate their rules; he merely spoke the words and the man was made whole. Here again he challenged the accepted beliefs about the Sabbath law, affirming that doing good to one another took precedence over the specific rules they had put around the Law, showing that the true purpose of the Sabbath is to worship God and serve others.

Only Luke mentions it is the man's right hand that is "withered." The Greek term, *xēros*, can mean 'dried' or 'withered.' He had probably lost the use of his right hand (in an injury?) and it atrophied.<sup>23</sup> This is significant because the right hand is the 'clean' hand; without its use, he is forced to use his left 'unclean' hand for all interactions, rendering him socially outcast. There is also evidence that without a healthy right hand, a person could not participate in temple ceremonies (sacrifice of animals), nor could a proxy act in his behalf, thereby disallowing him from any blessing from temple worship.<sup>24</sup>

**6:7 scribes and Pharisees watched him.** The Greek implies watching closely; they are there to see if he will heal again on the Sabbath day in order to accuse him of violations of the law before the people. Their main goal in coming this day is to discredit Jesus, not to worship. In Matthew's account, they asked him directly if healing on the Sabbath was acceptable.<sup>25</sup>

**6:8 he knew their thoughts.** This phrase is unique to Luke in this context and set up the confrontation that allowed Jesus to establish his identity and authority.

**6:8 stand for in the midst.** Jesus called the man with the hand to the center of the room in the synagogue, where all would be focused on him.

**6:9 Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good.** The Pharisaic answer would be, 'It depends . . .' But Jesus asked the question in a way that required a yes or no answer, which forces them to reluctantly agree that good should be done.

**6:10 looking round about upon them all.** Jesus made sure he had their full attention for what he did next: he didn't want anyone to miss his total lack of doing anything but speaking.

**6:10 Stretch forth thine hand.** Perhaps the man hid his diseased hand inside his clothing in some way, to avoid offending someone in the synagogue. Jesus did not touch him, declare him healed, or do anything that his enemies would consider a violation of their Sabbath rules: he simply told the man to show everyone his hand. As he did so, all could see that it was fully restored.

**6:11 filled with madness.** Literally, they were 'filled with mindless fury.' In their anger, they plotted evil against Jesus, the true Sabbath violation in this story.

### Jesus calls the twelve – Luke 6:12-16 (Matt 10:2-4; Mark 3:13-19a)

With crowds getting larger and antagonism building, Jesus needs help in his ministry. He is also looking ahead to when he will be gone—who will run the church then?

**6:12 In those days.** Which days? During this time of intense persecution. How did it feel to have all these people plotting against him? Jesus had been laboring alone for perhaps a year or more. Perhaps he was starting to feel overwhelmed with the crowds and the burden of it all. Perhaps the Spirit merely whispered that it was time for the next step. How did Jesus cope? He went out alone to pray all night and commune with his Father.

**6:12 Continued all night.** The Greek is *dianuktereuo* meaning 'enduring a task all night', 'toiling.' It was hard work and struggle; this is not a phrase used with 'sleeping all night.' We can imagine him struggling with the Father,

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<sup>22</sup> Arnold, *Zondervan*, 1:375.

<sup>23</sup> Arnold, *Zondervan*, 1:375.

<sup>24</sup> Brown, *The Testimony of Luke*, 312-313.

<sup>25</sup> Lane, "From Opposition to Hostility," 144-145.

saying, “How shall I continue? How can I succeed against all this opposition?” And the Father, replies, “Call Twelve, and here are some names . . .” Luke is the only one to mention this prayerful labor before calling the Twelve.

6:13 **of them he chose twelve.** After praying all night, Jesus called together many disciples and from among them chose Twelve to have a special calling, different from a normal disciple. There is in the New Testament a clear progression in the involvement of these men in the kingdom. He didn’t just walk up to them on this day and say, “Congratulations, now you’re an apostle.” First, they were converted to his teachings—they gained testimonies. Second, they became disciples—*mathetes* meaning ‘learner’ or ‘student’. Then finally they were ordained apostles. And finally, after several months of teaching, he gave them power and authority and sent them out on their own.

6:13 **apostle.** Though the New Testament is written in Greek, Jesus didn’t speak Greek as his everyday language, but Aramaic. So the words we see in the New Testament are a translation of what he actually called these men. What was the word he used? Probably the Aramaic term *shaliah* (similar to the Hebrew word *seliah* in the Old Testament). This word means a ‘representative’, a person that ‘speaks for another.’ It was a legal term used by the Sanhedrin, giving the one ‘sent out’ authority to settle disputes and otherwise act in the full authority of the council. Some rabbis also had a *shaliah*, a ‘sent one’ who taught the rabbi’s message. The *Mishnah* says of *shaliah*: “The one sent by the man is as the man himself.” These Twelve chosen by Jesus were his *shaliah*, his sent ones, his delegates, his ambassadors, his surrogates. They spoke his message with his authority.

Interestingly, Saul, as he went after the Christians, was a *shaliah* of the Sanhedrin, carrying letters from them to attest to his authority. But after the experience on the Damascus road, he became *shaliah* to another cause. Same title, different Master, very different results.

There are four lists of the Twelve which seem to naturally cluster them into three groups of four:

<b>Matthew 10:2-4</b>	<b>Mark 3:16-19</b>	<b>Luke 6:14-16</b>	<b>Acts 1:13</b>
Simon Peter Andrew James John	Simon Peter James John Andrew	Simon Peter Andrew James John	Peter James John Andrew
Philip Bartholomew Thomas Matthew	Philip Bartholomew Matthew Thomas	Philip Bartholomew Matthew Thomas	Philip Thomas Bartholomew Matthew
James ben Alphaeus Lebbaeus surnamed Thaddaeus Simon Judas Iscariot	James ben Alphaeus Thaddaeus Simon Judas Iscariot	James ben Alphaeus Simon Zelotes Judas of James Judas Iscariot	James ben Alphaeus Simon Judas of James -----

### [Sermon on the Plain: Beatitudes – Luke 6:17-26 \(Matt 5:1-12\)](#)

See Matthew. However, it is important to note that Luke’s version of the sermon is quite different. Luke gives the sermon after the apostles are called, Matthew before. Matthew presents it as a single discourse, while Luke puts the teachings in several different contexts and chapters (6, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16). There are many differences in the wording of the two sermons.

6:17 **stood in the plain.** Luke’s account is often referred to as “The Sermon on the Plain” because of the location here, though some note that the word translated “plain” just means ‘a level place,’ so it could refer to a flat place or plateau on the side or top of a mountain.<sup>26</sup>

In terms of the Beatitudes themselves, Luke only provides four of them accompanied by four woes (vv. 20-26). Condemnation of the rich plays an important part in Jesus’ message in Luke.

<sup>26</sup> NIV Cultural Backgrounds, 1755.



## Sermon on the Plain: Fulfilling the Law – Luke 6:27-36 (Matt 5:17-48)

See Matthew.

6:29 *JST*

Luke 6:29 KJV	JST
And unto him <del>that</del> smiteth thee on the <del>one</del> cheek offer also the other; and him <del>that</del> taketh away thy cloke forbid not <i>to take thy coat</i> also.	And unto him <b>who</b> smiteth thee on the <i>one</i> cheek offer also the other; <b>or in other words, it is better to offer the other, than to revile again.</b> And him <b>who</b> taketh away thy cloke forbid not <i>to take thy coat</i> also. <b>For it is better that thou suffer thine enemy to take these things than to contend with him. Verily I say unto you, Your heavenly Father, who seeth in secret, shall bring that wicked one into judgment.</b>

Though definitely in the spirit of Jesus' other teachings, this expansion offers an explanation of the teaching to turn the other cheek, etc. Jesus advocates peace with enemies with an affirmation that God will himself deal with the wickedness of the enemy.

6:33 The JST deletes this verse entirely. It is similar to Matthew 5:47 which suggests that even Gentiles love others whom they care about, while Luke uses the term "sinners" instead for the same purpose.

## Centurion's servant – Luke 7:1-10 (Matt 8:5-13)

See Matthew. Matthew's and Luke's versions are substantially the same, except for a very interesting detail: in Luke, the centurion never speaks to Jesus directly, but rather through the elders of the Jews, who favor him because he built them their black basalt synagogue, discovered in excavations there under the so-called "white" synagogue made of limestone and built in the fourth century on the same location. As Jesus nears his home, he also sends "friends" (v. 6) with his request. Both Luke and Matthew may include this story as evidence of Jesus reaching beyond the Jews to the Gentile world. Luke may even be thinking ahead to another centurion named Cornelius in Acts 10 who was the first recorded Gentile convert after Jesus' resurrection.

Because Roman soldiers were not stationed in Galilee until AD 44, the presence of this soldier in Capernaum indicates that he was either there helping with tax collection or customs, or was a retired soldier who had chosen to live among the Jews. If the latter, then that decision and his building the synagogue shows that he was probably a convert to the Jewish faith, though not a full convert—what the New Testament elsewhere refers to as 'God fearers' (Acts 13:16).

## Widow's son raised from the dead – Luke 7:11-17

Only Luke tells this story, and it is the first recorded miracle of Jesus raising someone from the dead. The most striking thing here is that he does this out of pure love and concern for the mother of the dead man, since the latter can exhibit no faith when deceased. It also echoes the miracles of Elijah (1 Kings 17:17-24) and Elisha (2 Kings 4:18-37), especially Elijah's who raised an only son of a woman who would otherwise be left alone. In fact, the home of the widow in Elijah's story is not far from Nain, just "on the backside of the hill of Moreh" near Nain.<sup>27</sup>

7:11 *Nain*. This is probably the modern city of Nein, about six miles southeast of Nazareth and eighteen or so miles southwest of Capernaum, near Mount Tabor.<sup>28</sup> Since the text says they arrived "the day after" the healing of the centurion's servant in Capernaum (7:1-10), that means they made the uphill hike in one day, a vigorous activity that would have brought them to Nain near the end of the day.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Brown, *The Testimony of Luke*, 364.

<sup>28</sup> Arnold, *Zondervan*, 1:384-385.

<sup>29</sup> Ogden and Skinner, *The Four Gospels*, 229.

7:12 **nigh to the gate**. When someone died, they were wrapped in linen cloth and anointed with spices, then laid on a board or placed in a coffin, carried out of the city, and buried, usually the same day, since there was no way to keep the body fresh.<sup>30</sup> Jesus and his group of disciples were entering the city at the same time the funerary group was making its way out of the city to the tomb.

7:12 **only son of his mother, and she was a widow**. There was nothing more tragic in Jesus' day than a widow losing her only son, because with his demise, she had no means of support or legal protection. Additionally, she has no sons-in-law because she has no daughters—Luke's term that he is her *monogenēs*, meaning her only offspring (her 'only begotten'). Such a situation would certainly be the ultimate manifestation of sorrow. More than one-half of all families in Jesus' day lost one or both parents during the child-bearing years. Widows and orphans were abundant.

7:13 **he had compassion on her**. This miracle is different than most others performed by Jesus. He did not ask the mother or anyone else about their faith but acted purely out of his love for them. This same word is used in Luke in the two parables of the Good Samaritan (the Samaritan has compassion on the injured man) and the Prodigal Son (the father has compassion on his son who returned home).

7:13 **said unto her, Weep not**. The custom was for the widow or mother of the deceased to lead the procession, with others following the body behind. Jesus must have come toward the city as this was happening, as he encounters the mother before the body.<sup>31</sup> If the young man was also married (likely), the widow would have been walking with the mother, but she is not mentioned in the story. A widow could return to her family for support, could remarry, or could stay with her in-laws. The mother has none of those options.

7:14 **touched the bier**. Touching the funeral plank or coffin immediately rendered Jesus unclean, according to the Mosaic Law (Numbers 19:11-16). Such an action from a stranger would certainly cause those carrying the young man to stop. However, Jesus reversed the direction of the exchange, and instead extended his own purity to the dead man, 'cleansing' him from death.

7:14 **Young man, I say unto thee, Arise**. He didn't know his name or his story, he just knew the need and acted accordingly, after first reassuring the mother to "Weep not."

7:15 **he that was dead sat up, and began to speak**. Luke is clear that it was not just some kind of physical oddity of the dead body that he sat up, for he also spoke, which requires full capacity. He was truly brought back to life.

7:16 **a great prophet is risen up among us**. The people did not recognize Jesus as the Son of God from this one incident but recognizing that great prophets like Elijah and Elisha had raised the dead, they correctly concluded that such a miracle testified of Jesus' truly being called of God.

7:17 **this rumor of him went forth**. A prophet raising someone from the dead was something only heard in the synagogue, certainly not something witnessed for hundreds of years. The news of this action spread all through Judea and the other areas around it.

### [Messengers sent from John – Luke 7:18-23 \(Matt 11:1-6\)](#)

See Matthew. Looking at this incident, some see doubt on John's part; he was languishing in prison, having declared Jesus as Messiah, but now Jesus wasn't doing anything Messianic, they claim. But Latter-day Saints have a loftier view of John, interpreting this as an opportunity to train some of his disciples and even transfer their allegiance to Jesus. Jesus' own subsequent words (next section) bear testimony to John's faithfulness. For more details, see the Bible Dictionary under "John the Baptist."

### [Jesus testifies of John – Luke 7:24-35 \(Matt 11:7-19\)](#)

See Matthew.

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<sup>30</sup> Arnold, *Zondervan*, 1:385.

<sup>31</sup> *NIV Cultural Backgrounds*, 1759.

## Woman anoints Jesus feet at Simon's house – Luke 7:36-50

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This is another story unique to Luke with an interesting contrast between a man and a woman. Jesus consistently showed significantly greater respect and compassion for women than was done by most in his day. He treated women as equal to men, as disciples, and taught them from the scriptures—all unheard-of activities for first century Jewish men. Matthew and Mark both place a similar event in a different setting (Bethany) and much later in Jesus' ministry (just before his crucifixion). Luke's point may be to show some acceptance of Jesus at this early stage, but the pericope ends up increasing animosity.

**7:36 *one of the Pharisees.*** We learn that his name was Simon in v. 40. After the confrontations he has experienced, this invitation is a bit surprising. Given how the story turns out, it was unlikely he was sympathetic to Jesus; perhaps Simon was trying to find ways to accuse Jesus of wrongdoing, as with other Pharisaic encounters.

**7:37 *a woman in the city, which was a sinner.*** We are not told the nature of her sin, but it was somehow obvious or well-known to those at the meal; the Greek is *hamartōlos*, meaning 'one who lives in opposition to divine will.' We might surmise from this statement that she was a local prostitute (and many have), yet this was apparently a woman of means based on the gift she gave to Jesus. Thus we are left to wonder at her full story, not knowing that or even her name.

**7:37 *alabaster box of ointment.*** This is better translated 'an alabaster jar (or bottle) of perfume.' Expense oils or perfumes were stored in such containers, often for a one-time use only since the jar would be broken at the base of the long, skinny neck to open it. We don't know exactly what she used on Jesus, but if it was very expensive (such as nard, as Matthew and Mark say), it could have cost up to year's wages.<sup>32</sup>

**7:38 *stood at his feet behind.*** The woman came into the house because doors were always open during the day and it was not unusual for someone just to walk in. The male-only dinner would have been eaten reclining on the left arm on a pillow or pad, eating with the right hand, everyone facing a low, common table. All the diners' feet would thus be facing away from the table. She "stood at his feet behind him" since he was facing the table. It could be that she actually wanted to anoint his head, but when she couldn't reach it because of his position or the crowd around the table, she determined spontaneously to anoint his feet instead.<sup>33</sup>

**7:38 *wipe them with the hairs of her head.*** It was unacceptable for woman to unbind her hair before a man who was not her husband. The rabbis determined that if this happened, the man could not recite the *Shema* (the twice-daily prayer) in her presence. Some rabbis said a woman could be divorced for doing this. But she had kneeled down and cried on his feet with no towel, so she used her hair to wipe them, then she kissed and anointed them with the contents of her alabaster jar. All of these acts towards what was considered the dirtiest part of the body showed her great humility.

**7:39 *if he were a prophet.*** Simon clearly did not believe that Jesus was divinely chosen and sent; as soon as he saw something he didn't like, he voiced his disbelief in Jesus' calling.

**7:39 *what manner of woman this is that toucheth him.*** Based on Leviticus 5:1-5, her act of touching him, as a known sinner, may have rendered Jesus ceremonially unclean in the eyes of some, with great irony, since she was cleansing his feet with the symbols of her own humility.

**7:40 *Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee.*** Jesus could have let the moment pass without comment, but as someone always looking for an opportunity to teach, he used this woman's actions to instruct Simon and all others present on forgiveness.

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<sup>32</sup> Arnold, *Zondervan*, 1:389.

<sup>33</sup> Arnold, *Zondervan*, 1:389.

7:41 **creditor which had two debtors.** Indebtedness was fairly common where poor farmers paid 35-40% of their crop in taxes. They took out loans for seed and other supplies, and if the harvest was poor, could not always repay the loan.<sup>34</sup>

7:41 **five hundred pence . . . fifty.** The debt is in denarii, with the first one owing ten times the amount of the second, though both loans are substantial (fifty denarii equals several weeks' work, five hundred perhaps a year).

7:42 **which of them will love him most?** Jesus led Simon and the rest down a path where only one answer was possible. Love is a term that might seem out of context yet gets to the heart of Jesus' message. Would a debtor love his creditor? Yet that is precisely the point of the story. It could also be that he meant 'thank' for which there is no term in Aramaic so "love" was used in its place.<sup>35</sup>

7:43 **I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most.** Simon sees there is only one correct answer given the story, but perhaps senses where this is going and only reluctantly answers.

7:44 **Seest thou this woman?** Since she walked in the room, it's likely that they had been noticing little else. Jesus drew their attention specifically to her after his short parable in order to correct their perceptions about her.<sup>36</sup>

7:44 **thou gavest me no water for my feet.** Simon had treated Jesus poorly. Any good host would have offered water to wash, greeted him with a friendly kiss, and put perfumed oil on his head to make the meal taste better. Instead, the woman performed all those functions with her own tears and hair and with a costly sacrifice (vv. 45-46). Jesus broke with the honor society 'code' and dishonored his host by revealing these details about Simon's poor treatment to all.

7:47 **her sins, which are many, are forgiven.** Jesus showed that he was well aware of the woman's situation but also recognized her humility and true repentance, and once again exercised his authority to forgive those sins.

7:47 **for she loved much.** Her acts of crying, washing, and anointing did not earn her forgiveness. Rather, her acts demonstrated her love and humility and true repentance, which led to Jesus forgiving her.

7:48 **Thy sins are forgiven.** Directly addressing the woman broke with the customs of the day, but Jesus was far more interested in her well-being than the practices of their culture.

7:49 **Who is this that forgiveth sins.** The group at the table asked the same question as those who had seen him heal the paralyzed man (5:17-26). Since no one but God can forgive sins, Jesus was equating himself with that authority.

7:50 **thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.** Jesus was careful to give visibility to a woman who was fundamentally invisible to the society around him because of her sin and gender. We don't even know her name today, yet she is the example of faith and forgiveness, not Simon, who was the host and whose name is ironically preserved.

## Female followers – Luke 8:1-3

Jesus continued to minister all through Galilee with a crowd that followed and attended to him. In the crowd, were the Twelve he had called and others, including women, who saw to his financial needs and the Twelve while they traveled. Jesus broke from the norms of his society in including these women and treating them as equals.

8:1 **the glad tidings of the kingdom of God.** As he announced in Nazareth (4:18-21), Jesus was going from city to city in Galilee preaching the good news—the gospel—of the coming of the kingdom of God among them.

8:1 **the twelve were with him.** The image we sometimes have of Jesus and the Twelve traveling alone is not accurate much of the time. Certainly, they did sometimes travel alone, but generally there were other men in the company, as evidenced by many occasions when other disciples are mentioned. Even the calling of a new apostle in

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<sup>34</sup> Arnold, *Zondervan*, 1:389.

<sup>35</sup> Arnold, *Zondervan*, 1:390.

<sup>36</sup> Brown, *The Testimony of Luke*, 384.

Acts 1:15-26 to replace Judas gives us this idea, for they chose Matthias and Joseph from *among* the men (meaning there were more than two) who had journeyed with the Twelve “from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he [Jesus] was taken up from us” (Acts 1:22). These men were called to leave homes, families, and occupations to follow Jesus.

8:2 **certain women.** But in addition to men, these verses make it clear that Jesus counted among his disciples many women. They, too, would have been called to leave homes, families, and other responsibilities. He conversed with them, taught them at his feet, and discussed the scriptures with them—all contrary to the customs of the day. Here Luke names three of these women but we will mention one more.

8:2 **Mary called Magdalene.** Mary is ‘Miriam’ (meaning ‘their rebellion’ or ‘bitter,’ reflecting back to Moses’ sister, Miriam, Exodus 15:20-21) and the most common female name of that period. There are a number of women named Mary in the New Testament; this one is surnamed ‘Magdalene’ because she comes from Magdala. Because “Mary” was such a common name, many false legends around Mary Magdalene have been created, including one highlighted in popular fiction that she was the wife of Jesus and bore his child, but also that she was a prostitute, that she was the sinner that anointed Jesus in Simon’s house, or that she was Lazarus’ sister. These are all wild suppositions and not borne out by any scriptural account of her.

Magdala was a prosperous fishing town on the west side of the Sea of Galilee, known especially for its fish drying business. We have no details of Jesus meeting Mary, except that he seems to have cast “seven devils” out of her. As a result, she left her previous life behind and spent her time instead ministering to his needs. She appears to have been a woman of some means and to have played a leadership role among the women, given that her name is always mentioned first among the group of women in all four gospels. She was, of course, the first to see the resurrected Savior, and was charged with reporting that back to the other (male) disciples.

8:3 **Joanna.** Her name means ‘Jehovah is a gracious giver.’ When John the Baptist preached in Herod’s palace, many there would have heard his message. One of those was probably Joanna. Her husband, Chuza (Greek *Choutzas*, ‘the seer’) was Herod Antipas’ “steward,” perhaps meaning he managed the household or other lands of the tetrarch.<sup>37</sup> Joanna is only mentioned by name twice, here and in Luke 24 where she was among the women at the empty tomb. (Interestingly, she is mentioned as often as Joseph of Arimathea, yet there are no legends of Joanna as with Joseph.) We know nothing of her first encounter with Jesus, but she left life at the palace to follow him. Herod’s palace was located at Tiberias on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. It was a large and well-furnished residence on a hill overlooking the city. Herod moved there in A.D. 20 from Sepphoris, the largest city in Galilee, and renamed the city in honor of the Roman emperor at the time, Tiberias. It was mainly a Gentile city.

Joanna was also apparently wealthy and may have been the source for expensive oils and spices used at his burial, and perhaps for a room and meal which would become the Last Supper. She stood with Jesus in his trial, his crucifixion, his burial, and his resurrection. At least one scholar thinks she may be the same person Paul called Junia in Romans 16:7, who was one of his “kinsmen” and “of note among the apostles.”<sup>38</sup>

8:3 **Susanna.** We know nothing of this woman but her name, which means ‘a lily.’ She was no doubt included in “the women that followed him” at the crucifixion.

8:3 **and many others.** Other women are mentioned in other parts of the gospels. One is Salome. By a careful study of all four gospels, such as cross-referencing the lists of those at the cross and tomb, we can identify some details about her. We can conclude that Salome is the mother of James and John. Her husband was Zebedee, a successful fisherman at Capernaum and a partner with Peter and Andrew. The scriptures make it clear that Salome had access to some of the family wealth to help support Jesus. She asked Jesus for a special blessing for her sons (something we sometimes see as inappropriate today, but which was entirely natural in her day). Like Mary and Joanna, she stood by Jesus during the crucifixion and burial.

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<sup>37</sup> Arnold, *Zondervan*, 1:391.

<sup>38</sup> Smith, *Search, Ponder, and Pray*, 73.



8:3 **which ministered unto him of their substance.** “who provided for them out of their resources” (NRSV). The women paid expenses for Jesus and his core disciples out of their own funds. It was uncommon for women to have disposable income, especially in such large amounts as would have been required for this purpose. Married women traveling without their husbands was also grounds for criticism by many in society.<sup>39</sup>

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### Parable of the sower – Luke 8:4-15 (Matt 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-20)

See Matthew.

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### Nothing is Secret – Luke 8:16-18 (Matt 5:15; 13:12 Mark 4:21-25)

8:16 **lighted a candle.** Meaning, a lamp, not a candle. This verse is very similar to Matthew 5:15 but with a different point. In the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew, when Jesus says this, it is part of a series of verses encouraging his disciples to be examples to those around them. But Jesus’ interpretation of the statement in Luke is quite different than Matthew, though similar to Mark where Jesus is saying that hidden knowledge about him will one day be fully revealed (v. 17).

8:18 **Take heed therefore how ye hear.** Or, ‘listen carefully to my message,’ which he then interprets for them.

8:18 **to him shall be given.** Similar to Matthew 13:12, Jesus’ ties this to the lamp comment in verse 16 by saying that if a person embraces light from God, he will get more. But if he rejects the light of the Lord, he will lose even what he had. How many have rejected the truth only to find their lives dark, painful, and lonely? See also Proverbs 9:9, which says wise men will be wiser and righteous men will add to their learning.

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### Jesus’ family seeks him – Luke 8:19-21 (Matt 12:46-50; Mark 3:31-35)

See Matthew.

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### Calming the storm – Luke 8:22-25 (Matt 8:23-27; Mark 4:35-41)

See Matthew. This and the next several sections Luke took from Mark with few changes (Matthew also took much of it from Mark, so we’ve already covered most of it). Luke uses this miracle of calming the storm to launch a new section about Jesus’ power and authority; he calmed the storm, cast out demons, raised the dead, and healed a woman by a touch alone, then finally fed the 5,000 men. This series of miraculous actions concludes with two testimonies of Jesus’ identity: Peter’s (9:18-21) and the Father’s (9:28-36).

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### Casting evil spirits into the swine – Luke 8:26-39 (Matt 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20)

There are several examples of exorcism in ancient literature, several from Jesus’ time. In every case, they relied on some form of magic to make it happen—potions, incantations, magic rings, or other objects. The words spoken were important—secret words said just right, especially powerful if the demon’s name was known. Jesus’ example here is vastly different and completely unique—he simply commanded the forces of Satan by his own authority and they immediately submitted: “Jesus, the powerful Son of God, enters and overwhelms the dominion of evil.”<sup>40</sup> They confirmed his eternal power and were signs of his Messianic position.

8:26 **the country of the Gadarenes.** Some manuscripts have instead Gergasenes and one Gerasenes; the precise location is thus unknown, though Brown argues for Gergesa (or Hippos) because of geography—the only places where there is a cliff leading to the deep sea.<sup>41</sup>

8:27 **a certain man.** Luke and Mark only mention one man, while Matthew portrays this as two men. The JST harmonizes Matthew to be one man only and match the other two accounts.

8:27 **and ware no clothes.** The Talmud cites several behaviors as evidence of someone possessed: he goes out alone at night; he sleeps in a graveyard; he rips his clothes; and he loses what is given to him.

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<sup>39</sup> NIV Cultural Backgrounds, 1761.

<sup>40</sup> Arnold, *Zondervan*, 1:395.

<sup>41</sup> Brown, *The Testimony of Luke*, 419-420; Arnold, *Zondervan*, 1:396.

8:27 **abode . . . in the tombs**. Living in the caves used for tombs made him unclean. It brings to mind Isaiah 65:4 where apostate Israel sits among graves and eats pig's meat.

8:28 **What have I to do with thee**. More precisely, 'What is there between us and you?' The less between them, the greater the chance of hostilities, while the greater the distance, the greater the chance of peace.<sup>42</sup> The demons are saying that Jesus is too close for their comfort.

8:28 **torment me not**. Note from v. 29 that this came from the demons after Jesus had already commanded them to leave.

8:30 **Legion**. A Roman legion was about 6,000 soldiers; as Luke notes, the name used by the demons was simply meant to imply a large number.

8:31 **the deep**. In Greek, 'the abyss' or the dwelling place of evil spirits and fallen angels, a pit with no bottom. Revelation 20:1-3 has Satan sealed up in the abyss for 1,000 years.

8:32 **an herd of many swine**. Archaeologists can distinguish between predominantly Jewish towns and Gentile ones by several factors, but one of the most prominent is pig bones. Jews did not eat pork nor would they raise pork (Deuteronomy 14:8), so this is another clue (besides the location, in the Decapolis) that this is a Gentile town and region.

8:33 **into the lake, and were choked**. We don't know why the pigs ran into the lake after being possessed, but it is interesting that Jesus had just shown his power and authority over the lake by calming the storm (Luke 8:22-25), and now the pigs drowned themselves in the same lake. It could be that their stampede off the cliff and into the water is presented to contrast with the peaceful state of the man who was possessed (v. 35).<sup>43</sup> Jewish tradition also held that the way to destroy a demon was to put it under water.<sup>44</sup>

8:35 **sitting at the feet of Jesus**. This signifies that he had become a disciple and was learning from Jesus after having the demons cast out.

8:36 **They also which saw it**. Besides the man listening to Jesus, others who had witnessed the casting out of the demons told those who came inquiring exactly what happened—they were witnesses.

8:36 **was healed**. Greek *sōzō*, meaning also to be saved.

8:37 **besought him to depart from them**. Why didn't they ask Jesus to perform miracles in their behalf, like people in other cities? They were not Jews and probably had no sense of a Messiah or prophet. Rather, they deduced that his actions had caused them to lose their herd of pigs, which had great economic impact. They wanted no more of him, if he was going to continue to hurt them in that way.

8:38 **besought him that he might be with him**. The healed man requested to stay with Jesus and be his disciple. But Jesus sent him away and told him to tell everyone of what God had done for him. Luke reports that is exactly what he did (v. 39), which may well have prepared the way for the Seventy later (10:17-18).

[Jairus' daughter raised; woman healed by touch – Luke 8:40-56 \(Matt 9:18-26; Mark 5:21-43\)](#)

See Mark.

[Instructions to the Twelve before they are sent out – Luke 9:1-6 \(Matt 10:1-42; Mark 6:7-13\)](#)

See Matthew.

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<sup>42</sup> NIV Cultural Backgrounds, 1762.

<sup>43</sup> Brown, *The Testimony of Luke*, 423.

<sup>44</sup> NIV Cultural Backgrounds, 1762-1763.

Herod hears of Jesus; John in prison – Luke 9:7-9 (Matt 14:1-5; **Mark 6:14-20**; [Luke 3:19-20])

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See Mark.

Feeding the five thousand – Luke 9:10-17 (Matt 14:14-21; **Mark 6:34-44**; John 6:3-14)

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See Mark.

9:13 **JST**

<b>Luke 9:13 KJV</b>	<b>JST</b>
But he said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have <del>no more</del> but five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy meat for all this <del>people</del> .	But he said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have but five loaves and two fishes; <b>and</b> except we should go and buy meat, <b>we can provide no more food</b> for all this <b>multitude</b> .

This change doesn't impact the meaning of the verse significantly but it does give insight into the thinking of the disciples when asked to feed the multitude of thousands. They say that unless they go buy some food, they can "provide" no more than the few fishes and loaves they have. But Jesus was about to provide for the crowd, even when they could not.

Peter testifies of Jesus – Luke 9:18-21 (**Matt 16:13-20**; Mark 8:27-30)

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See Matthew.

Jesus foretells his death and resurrection – Luke 9:22-27 (**Matt 16:21-28**; Mark 8:31-9:1)

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See Matthew.

9:24 **JST**

<b>Luke 9:24 KJV</b>	<b>JST</b>
For whosoever will save his life <del>shall</del> lose it: <del>but</del> whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.	For whosoever will save his life <b>must be willing to</b> lose it <b>for my sake: and</b> whosoever will <b>be willing to</b> lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.

The dramatic shift is in a single word: "willing." The paradoxical statement in the KJV (which is nearly identical in Matthew, Mark, and Luke) is softened by that word but also sharpened and brought into focus: we must be willing to lose everything for Jesus' sake in order to save our eternal lives.

9:25 **JST**

<b>Luke 9:25 KJV</b>	<b>JST</b>
For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, <del>or</del> be cast away?	For what <b>doth if profit</b> a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and <b>yet he receive him not whom God hath ordained, and he</b> lose <b>his own soul, and he</b> himself be <b>a</b> cast away?

JST Luke defines what it means to 'lose yourself': to receive him whom God has ordained. This had applicability to Jesus' audience—both reflecting John the Baptist, who was mentioned twice previously in this chapter—and Jesus himself. It was also very relevant to JS who was one that God had ordained, along with others in this dispensation.

The transfiguration – Luke 9:28-36 (**Matt 17:1-13**; Mark 9:2-13)

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See Matthew.

Heals a demonic boy – Luke 9:37-43a (Matt 17:14-21; **Mark 9:14-29**)

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See Mark.

[His death and resurrection again foretold – Luke 9:43b-45 \(Matt 17:22-23; Mark 9:30-32\)](#)

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See Mark.

[Become as a child – Luke 9:46-48 \(Matt 18:1-5; Mark 9:33b-37\)](#)

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See Mark.

[One casting out devils – Luke 9:49-50 \(Matt 18:6; Mark 9:38-42\)](#)

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See Mark.

## Bibliography

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### Abbreviations:

- AT – Author’s translation
- BYU – BYU New Rendition
- CJB – Complete Jewish Bible
- ESV – English Standard Version
- JST – Joseph Smith Translation
- KJV – King James Version
- LXX – Septuagint (Greek Old Testament)
- NASB – New American Standard Bible
- NIV – New International Version
- NJB – New Jerusalem Bible
- NLT – New Living Translation
- NRSV – New Revised Standard Version

Images from lds.org and the BYU Virtual New Testament app.

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