

e.g. Elijah went to the widow of Zarephath, a Sidonian town in the 9th century **1 Kgs 17:7-16**
Elisha healed Naaman, the leper: **2 Kgs ch 5**. These prophets were rejected also!

NB This man and woman were non-Jews... Gentiles, hated by Jews but God's prophets did not despise them. Jesus' salvation will go to the Gentiles after the final rejection by the Jews, also.

The stones will cry out! Acts 13:44-14:17 shows that this happened to the Church later...

NB The reaction of the people of Nazareth was not friendly.

- they tried to kill Jesus at the very beginning of his Ministry! Cf. Herod and the Leaders Matt 2:13-21
- the hostility of Israel is declared from the beginning.

What is the problem? The good, decent, upright people of Nazareth did not want to be told that they needed a Saviour... and that this Saviour was the young man down the road!!

- They enjoyed the gracious words from his lips, but were not open to be challenged to repent or change their ways.
- Their rejection turned to fury to an attempt on his life but 4:14 with the Power of God Jesus slipped away to continue the Father's affairs Lk 2:49-50... **an unrecognized miracle.**

NB This whole scene is a prophetic forecast of the entire Mission.

- (1) Jesus was favourably received at first.
- (2) The people listened... accepted the miracles, but refused to change their ways.
- (3) Gradually they turned against him as he refused to be a political Messiah.
- (4) The rejection of the leaders and Nation turned to fury and they killed him in the end.

- BUT just as here "HE slipped away" by the power of God and returned in the Resurrection...
- They did not intend to glorify him, but his Death was the instrument of his Glorification in Resurrection and Ascension and Crowning as King of the Universe... **Cosmocrator!**

Conclusion

The text Jesus used was a Summary of His Mission. From now on "the sword of division" will divide those who accept him from those who reject him... a cause of great suffering for Jesus' Mother as we will see. The reaction was a forecast of Israel's response!

Another Point to consider

Another aspect of the rejection of Jesus at Nazareth –

- The Nazarenes were mostly Essenes... and at odds with the Temple priests.
- The Synagogue was owned and run by the Jerusalem authorities.
 - this is the first run-in with those authorities. They would influence the people.

Why? Jesus spoke like an Essene! The Essenes used Isaiah to proclaim the Messiah.

- Jesus claimed to be that Messiah!!

JESUS AT CAPERNAUM: 4:31-37 cf. 4:14

Here Jesus also spoke in the synagogue on the Sabbath – just as Paul did in Acts 3:14 etc. As in Nazareth he got a favourable response, but this time "his teaching made a deep impression on them because he spoke with authority" Lk 4:32.

This, of course highlighted the identity problem: "Who is he?"

1. Jesus confronts the devil in his exorcisms and demonstrates his victory won in the wilderness.
 - (a) He taught with authority – He is The Word Incarnate
 - (b) He acted with Power and Authority – He is the Victor over Satan. His power and authority are seen in his peremptory command to the demon to leave... and the obedience he received: 4:36
- Satan recognised Jesus as “the Holy one of God”

NB • vs 35: Jesus refuses to accept confirmation of his identity from Satan

Simon's mother-in-law: 4:38-39

- a) This story is given **before** Simon (Peter) is introduced into the text of Luke's Gospel! Luke presumes that you know who **this** Simon is!
- b) Note that Jesus simply rebukes the fever just as he had rebuked the demons! It doesn't make a connection between fevers and demons! Jesus simply liberates us from whatever pulls us down!
- c) This unnamed woman was the first in the Gospel to serve Jesus. Others will follow later: Lk 8:2-3, and they, too, will have had infirmities removed by Jesus.
- d) Here we have the first sign of discipleship: The Lord Himself came from Heaven to serve us: We, in gratitude, serve Him, and serve others for him.

Cure of a Demonic: Lk 4: 33-37

The lavishness of God's Love is revealed to everyone present

- a) In this first series of activities Jesus proclaims the Good News with authority: 4:32
- b) His teaching stirs up not just those in the human realm – but also in the demonic realm
- c) Before Jesus' coming, people were infested by various evils, sickness, sin, and the infestation of evil spirits.
- d) Satan may be the strong man, but Jesus is **the Stronger Man**, who has come to unseat the strong man from his abode on the earth: Lk 11:21
- e) Because of his victory over Satan in the wilderness (4:13), the lesser demons are terrified of Jesus, knowing that he will defeat them “at the appointed time”: 4:13; 22:3, 53.
- f) Jesus doesn't tolerate the evil spirits – even when they proclaim who he is! There is implacable opposition between the Spirit of God present in Jesus and the demonic entities who have infested human beings with their rebellion against God.
- g) Jesus has come to set the human captives free, so **The Liberator** loses no time when he meets the oppressed...

People's Response: They are amazed by two things they have not seen in their leaders before

- a) Teaching with authority (Exousia)
- b) Deliverance with power (Dunamis)

Note: that Jesus taught in the Synagogues at first. This was the normal place of gathering among the Jews, but once they rejected him He went out into the open spaces, or gathered in people's homes... as the Church did in the Acts of the Apostles: Acts 13:44-14:7

General Healing: 4:40-41

- 1) Luke describes an extraordinary event, after sunset, where crowds gathered around the house where Jesus stayed. This was the house of Simon's mother-in-law... and Jesus ministered to them individually "laying his hands on each one" no matter what was wrong.
- 2) He just wanted to liberate them.... God's loving mercy was flowing like rivers. This was in preparation for Calvary where he would pay for all those liberations!
- 3) vs 42 indicates that this went on all night! Then Jesus needed to recover, so "he made his way to a lonely place" where he could recover in quiet contemplation in the Bosom of the Father.
- 4) Their extraordinary joy is reflected in Isaiah 35:1-10.
- 5) Yet the deep-seated selfishness of human nature comes out in their wanting to have him just for themselves: 4:42. This mirrors the problem of Nazareth, and indeed the whole of Israel – who wanted God all to themselves... they do not like him sharing with those awful Gentiles..!
- 6) Like all other people they have to learn that Jesus came to save everyone, so Jesus announces his departure because he "must be about His Father's affairs" (2:49-50). So, he moves on to do the Father's Will in all the other towns of Israel...
- 7) Not only that, but **Jesus has a global Mission**: the Word of God has to be spread to other nations... in other centuries ... until God's Will is accomplished on the earth... until the Kingdom of God is triumphant and God reigns on earth as He does in heaven! cf. Acts 8:14 etc.

Note: **Judea:** this was the Roman designation for the entire country. It did not represent just one area of it. Luke was a foreigner to the Promised Land, so would use the Roman name, whereas a Jew would be very sensitive on this issue!

Examples: Pilate was Governor of Judea – the whole land. In Luke's work – Luke / acts – he emphasises that it was from 'Judea' that the Gospel would journey to the ends of the earth.

By situating Jesus' preaching "in the synagogues of Judea" Luke says that the universal Gospel Mission was grounded in Israel's vocation.
Its universal mission, proclaimed by Isaiah was being fulfilled by Christianity.

STAGE 3 of THE COMING

Chapter 5

THE NEW WAY to GOD: 5:1-39

a) Jesus and the authorities: 5:1-26

- 1) In the fishing-boat: 5:1-11
Peter convicted of sin... called to be a 'fisher of men'!
- 2) The untouchable leper: 5:12-16
Jesus touched the leper – leper sent as a testimony to the priests.
- 3) The Paralytic: 5:17-26
Leaders and people present for the revelation of Forgiveness of sin
- Paralytic is the testimony to the theologians.

b) Jesus' principles of spiritual discipline: 5:27-39

- 1) Jesus' approach to sinfully rich/socially ostracized tax-collectors.
- He converts Levi (Matthew) 5:27-28
- 2) Jesus' approach to mixing socially with sinners 5:29-32
- His reason is that he is doctor among the sick.
- 3) Jesus' approach to fasting and spiritual exercises: 5:33-35
- depends on the presence or absence of the Bridegroom!
- 4) Jesus explains the NEWNESS of things: 5:36-39
 - a) old vs new garments
 - b) old vs new wineskins
 - c) old vs new wine

Chapter 6

a) Jesus and the Authorities: 6:1-19

- 1) Incident in cornfield on Sabbath Day: 6:1-5
Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath
- 2) Man with withered hand: 6:6-11
Jesus, the powerful Word of God
- 3) Healing the multitudes: 6:12-19
"The Sun has risen with healing in its wings".
[Mal 4:2
Luke 1:78]

b) Jesus' principles of morality: 6:20-49

- 1) Jesus' approach to poverty, hunger, sorrow and social ostracism: 6:20-23...
Beatitudes: Blessed are....
- 2) Jesus's approach to riches, society, laughter and social acceptance: 6:24-26
Woe to you...
- 3) Jesus's approach to enemies and would-be borrowers 6:27-38...
the behaviour of the Sons of God must be like their Father in Heaven.
- 4) A 3-fold parable: 6:39-49
 - a) good and bad eyesight
 - b) good and bad fruit trees
 - c) good and bad building

Notice the structure of Ch 5 and 6 are similar in layout...

FRIEND OF SINNERS: Chapters 5 and 6

A. In these chapters Jesus teaches the Way to Heaven to anyone who wants the New Way (Ch 6)

- The stories of this section show—
 - Jesus awakens the consciousness of **sin in Peter**: 5:1-11,
 - cleansing **a leper** (symbol of sin) 5:12-14
 - revealing to the paralytic that Forgiveness of sin was **central** to his recovery: 5:17-26
 - calling Levi away from a sinful lifestyle: 5:27...
 - having fellowship with sinners in order to call them to New Life: 5:29-32

Finally, in 6:6-11 Jesus challenges the Scribes and Pharisees as to whether it was **LAWFUL** on the **Sabbath** to do good or evil, give life or destroy it!

The section begins with 3 miracles beginning with “Now...” or “it came to pass...”

- a) Peter is sent as a fisher of men to the world after he acknowledges his sin: (5:1-8)
 - a) Once cleansed of leprosy, the man is sent **AS A TESTIMONY** to the priests (5:12-16)
 - b) A man is forgiven and cured of paralysis **AS AN OBJECT LESSON** to the teachers of the Law

b) Section B deals with spiritual discipline and the disciples of Jesus.

- Levi is called from his sinful lifestyle into the **NEW LIFE**:
- Levi's dinner party: Jesus proclaims Himself a doctor among the sick.
- Jesus reveals the Messianic Wedding and Bridegroom are here. It's not the time for fasting... – that will come later after the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus.
- Threefold parable: (36-39)
 - 1) old and new garments
 - 2) old and new wineskins
 - 3) old and new wine

c) This section begins with 3 stories

- (1) The cornfield (6:1-5)
 - Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath
 - Jesus defends his disciples' actions
- (2) Man with withered hand (6:6-11)
 - Jesus uses the healing to teach the Scribes and Pharisees
- (3) Healing of multitudes (6:12-19)

- In the middle of this Luke places the choice of the 12 through whom Jesus will take his message to the ends of the Earth

Nota Bene: Since Jesus is the Word Incarnate, the Son of God, the Presence of God on Earth, it follows that **HF is CHRISTIANITY!**

- He is also the criterion and touchstone of what is right and wrong in God's Kingdom.
- He is our Model, our Law.

- (1) Peter must act on **Jesus' Word** if he is to be a fisher of men.
- Compare this with 6:46 which shows the hypocrisy of **calling** Jesus "Lord" while dis-obeying his Word and Way of Life.
- (2) It is **because** Jesus is Word / Son / Son of Man that he **HAS** the authority to forgive sin **ON EARTH** (5:21)
- (3) Because Jesus is Lord and Master of the Sabbath that the disciples will obey **his** instructions regarding work / Law, etc. (6:5)
- (4) It is because of who Jesus **is** that persecution for his sake is a privilege countless millions have accepted through 2 millennia.

The Problem for Israel:

Jesus did not preach to a morally backward Nation. No!

The Mosaic Law was very sophisticated and highly developed in Theology and Morality.

It had Schools of Scholarship and differing interpretations of the Law depending on whether you were of the Conservative School of Shammai or the more Liberal School of Hillel, the Elder.

- All the scholars accepted the Old Testament as the Word of God and based all their moral and spiritual teaching on its authority.
- Jesus went into battle with the scholars – not about **the authority** of the Word of God, which they accepted – but about **their interpretation** of the Word of God. Jesus set about **restoring** the Law to its pristine beauty, by cutting out "human laws and regulations": Mt 15:9
- Luke wants us to see that the system of Judaism was good in its day – but that day is over now. Jesus has come **FROM GOD** to give us something completely new and of a much higher order.

Section A: Begins with 3 miracles

5:1-11: From the beginning of his public ministry Jesus concentrated on Preaching the Word of God. Cf. 4:14-15, 16, 31-37, 43, 44; 5:1

Situation of the miracle:

- It took place on the shores of the Lake of Gennesaret – called the Garden Lake – because it teemed with life.
- It was **the living lake** compared to the Dead Sea which supported no life, so the two lakes became a parable on life itself.
- The sea of Galilee had an inlet and an outlet so that it could sustain life. The Dead Sea had an inlet but no outlet so the waters stagnated...
- Galilee was in the area called "the land of Zebulon and Naphtali" in ancient times.