



**Sunday School Lesson**  
**Luke 4:38-44**  
 by Lorin L. Cranford  
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**Ministry to Homefolks**



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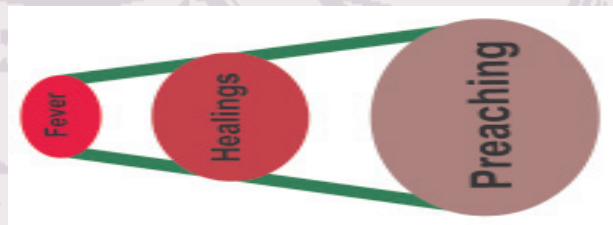
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In this second lesson on “the church on mission” in the Smyth-Helwys Formation series, the focus shifts to the Gospel of Luke. The title in the SS quarterly is “Your Judea” in spite of the fact that the scripture text describes an event that took place in Galilee, not Judea. To be sure, in the lesson series “Judea” is a symbol for homefolks based on Acts 1:8.

Our passage, 4:38-44, stands as a combination of three types of material found in the synoptic gospels especially. This will provide us an opportunity to explore how some of these kinds of materials helped the gospel writers to tell the story of Jesus in early Christianity. The expanding scope of these three segments can be illustrated by the following diagram:



Thus the literary cohesiveness of these verses becomes clearer. The specific instance of the healing of Peter’s mother-in-law in Capernaum leads to the healing of the masses of various diseases, especially the excising of demons, and that leads to the more general ministry of preaching the kingdom in various towns and cities of Galilee. The launchpad for this is Jesus’ teaching in the synagogue there and the healing of an individual on the sabbath (Lk. 4:31-37) at the beginning of his public ministry. Luke’s literary strategy is clear at this point. Jesus is engaged in an expanding ministry of preaching and healing. It begins in the Jewish synagogue on the sabbath in Capernaum. Then it moves to Peter’s house in Capernaum. Peter’s mother-in-law is the initial object of healing. This leads to large numbers seeking healing at Peter’s house. Jesus seeks some solitude but the crowds want him to stay there and continue to heal them. Jesus, however, is driven by the divine will to include other towns and cities in Galilee in this ministry.

**I. Context**

Some attention to both the historical and literary settings of this passage is necessary before digging into the scripture text itself. Since we have previously studied passages from the gospel of Luke, I will draw relevant material from the [Luke 10:25-37](#) lesson.

**a. Historical**

Regarding the **external history** of the Gospel of Luke, let me summarize [again](#) a lot of Lukan scholarship by the following. William Beard in the *Interpreter’s One Volume Commentary on the Bible*

(iPreach online) summarizes the basic issue this way:

“According to tradition this gospel was written by Luke, ‘the beloved physician’ and travel companion of Paul (Col. 4:14; Philemon 1:24; 2 Tim. 4:11). Actually the tradition is not very old. It appears first in the writings of Irenaeus, who was a theologian living in Gaul during the latter part of the 2nd cent. The Muratorian fragment (ca. A.D. 200), a document which presents an official list of Christian scriptures, supports the same conclusion.”

With the acceptance of this early church tradition -- although not all do and since the gospel itself makes no effort internally to identify its author -- then the issue becomes trying to locate a setting for the writing of this gospel. Again Bill Beard summarizes quite effectively these questions:

“The exact date and place of the writing of this gospel cannot be ascertained. Since the author uses Mark as a source and since he seems to have accurate knowledge of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans (19:41-44; 21:20-24; see pp. 1029-31) he evidently wrote after A.D. 70. He must have written before 140, when his gospel was included in the canon of the heretic Marcion. Since the situation of the church reflected in the gospel fits well the political situation of the reign of the Emperor Domitian (81-96), a date from about 85 to 95 is most likely.

According to one tradition Luke wrote his histories in Rome. Another locates his writing in Greece. Since there is a correlative tradition that the evangelist died in one of the Greek provinces, this latter tradition has better support. Any of these locations assumes the traditional authorship and bears the same burdens. Perhaps all we can say is that the gospel was written from some locale where Greek was the primary language and where cultured readers like Theophilus (1:3) would be at home.”

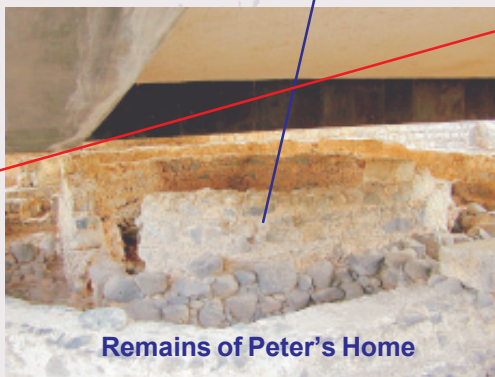
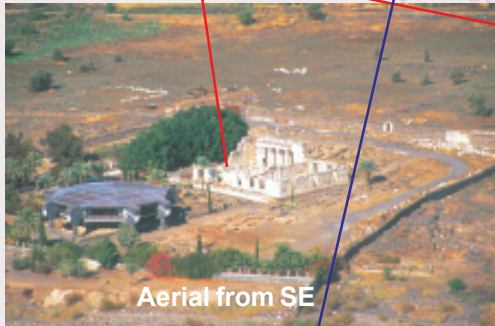
According to [Luke 1:1-4](#), this gospel -- and subsequently the book of Acts (cf. Acts 1:1) -- were dedicated to a Theophilus who as a patron supported the cost of producing these documents as well as the making of copies of them for distribution to various Christian communities in the late first century world. Evidently [Theophilus](#) was a wealthy Roman who had become a Christian and wanted to contribute to the spread of Christianity by supporting Luke’s writing of these two documents. The gospel preface ([Lk 1:4](#)) suggests the purpose of the document was “so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed.”

The Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts together stand as a two volume testimony of the beginning of the Christian religion with its founder, Jesus Christ, and the first three decades of the beginning of this movement in its spread from Jerusalem to Rome from AD 30 to AD 61. The author was closely associated with the apostle Paul. For the gospel account, Luke made use of a variety of sources, as he indicated in [Lk 1:1-3](#), since he was not personally present with Jesus during his earthly ministry. Modern scholarship generally concludes that among these sources are the gospels of Mark and perhaps also Matthew, although more likely the material in Luke, that is also found in Matthew, may very well be drawn from a common, unknown source. That is generally called the Q document from the German word Quelle meaning source. Thus with at least Mark and Q in front of him, along with notes from interviews with various people around the earthly Jesus, Luke set out to tell his story of Jesus in a way that would enhance understanding of the enormous significance of this Jewish carpenter from the little village of Nazareth in the northern Palestinian province of Galilee. As best as we can determine,



this happened sometime in the 70s or perhaps early 80s of the first Christian century, possibly while Luke was living in Rome.

The **internal history** of our passage focuses upon the Galilean town of Capernaum and Peter's home located in the town.



Galilee, in the northern sector of ancient Palestine, was the most populous of the three Roman provinces west of the Jordan River and east of the Mediterranean Sea.

The information that we know about Capernaum is rather limited, most of it coming from the references in the gospels. J. F. Strange ("Capernaum," *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, iPreach) has some helpful updates about the village:

Recent archaeological research has greatly added to our understanding of the city and its extant remains.

**1. The city.** Archaeological survey indicates that in the first century A.D. the unwalled town stretched at least 500 yards E to W along the lake shore, while northward it extended only 250 yards. This translates to a population of one thousand at most.

**2. The houses.** In the first century B.C. extensive building occurred. Blocks of one-storied apartments or insulae were built in squares about 80 x 80 feet, separated from one another by streets. Within each insula the individual dwelling has rooms opening onto a central unroofed courtyard, which is provided with grinding stones, outdoor ovens, and stairways leading to the flat roofs. Fishhooks found beneath the floors in insula I suggest that this was indeed a small fishing village. See FISHERMEN[S].

**3. The synagogue.** After the first half of the fourth century A.D. the synagogue was built, entirely covering one block of houses. Thus, its platform was as high as the roofs, so that the structure itself loomed above the insulae.

The worshiping congregation faced S toward Jerusalem. New evidence suggests that two aediculae, or small shrines, perhaps one for the ark and one for the seven-branched candlestick or MENORAH, flanked the central entrance, as in the Sardis synagogue.

Beneath the floor of the synagogue and occasionally embedded in the mortar of the pavement were several thousand bronze coins. These date to the middle of the fifth century at the latest.

**4. The octagon.** It is now known that this is a church also finished by the mid-fifth century A.D. Its apse (with



baptistry) is on the E side. It was probably built as a memorial church dedicated to the apostle PETER.

5. The "house church" and the "house of St. Peter." Beneath the octagon is a rectangular structure identified as a Christian "house church" or *domus ecclesia*. The excavators propose that it was built in the mid-fourth century A.D. to preserve the house of Peter, which had itself been in use as a house church since the first century. An enclosure wall forming a rectangle some 90 x 90 feet was erected above an insula first built in the first century B.C. A single dwelling of the insula (Peter's house) was isolated in the center of the rectangle and remodeled to form the house church. The interior plaster was painted, and graffiti in the plaster are in Greek, Aramaic, Syriac, and Latin, attesting to the importance of the city to Christian pilgrims in the fourth century.

The village served as the headquarters of much of Jesus' ministry in Galilee, as is summarized in "Capernaum" in the *Baker's Encyclopedia of the Bible*:

It was an important settlement, with a Roman garrison, adopted by Jesus as "his own city" after his rejection by Nazareth (Mt 9:1). Here he was "at home" (Mk 2:1) and performed many miracles (Mk 1:34): the healing of the centurion's servant (Mt 8:5); the healing of Peter's mother-in-law (Mk 1:31); and the exorcism of the unclean spirit (Mk 1:23; Lk 4:33). Thus highly favored by the ministry of Jesus, there was also a heavy curse imposed on the city because of its unrepentance: "And you Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You shall be brought down to Hades" (Mt 11:23; Lk 10:15).

As point 5. in the above article indicates the house of Peter lies below the remains of a fourth century Christian church, now called the [Octagonal Church](#).

The house had evidently been used as a house church since sometime in the first Christian century. The picture on the right provides a better view of the shape of both the church and the



house. The [Franciscan web site](#), which explains this in much greater detail, gives some of the reasoning behind this unusual design. For a recreated drawing of both the church and the earlier house of Peter go to [this web site](#).

Actually the planning of a church of octagonal shape was dictated by a twofold preoccupation; it was meant to preserve the fourth century enclosure wall, and especially to indicate the exact location of St. Peter's house. As a matter of fact, the foundations of the central octagon were set exactly upon the walls of that special square room (room n. 1) attributed to the house of St. Peter. It is true that pilgrims were no longer able to see that venerated house buried under the central octagon. Yet the tradition about the house of St. Peter was not lost. A pilgrim from Piacenza who visited Capharnaum around 570 A.D. wrote: "Item venimus in Capharnaum in domo beati Petri, quae est modo basilica", i. e.: "We came to Capharnaum in St. Peter's house, which at present is a basilica".

With these two aspects on Capernaum and Peter's house we are in a better position to understand the events described in our text. Jesus, in the beginning stages of his long Galilean ministry, creates quite a confrontation by performing a miracle on the Jewish sabbath in the synagogue. At the close of the sabbath service, Peter invites the Lord to go to his home where his mother-in-law is sick with a high fever -- something that would endanger a person's life in that time. Jesus heals her and this in turn leads to others

bringing their sick friends to Peter's house seeking a miracle from Jesus. Then the situation begins to become overwhelming so that the Lord needed some time alone with his Heavenly Father.

**b. Literary**

The **literary context** of our passage is important, since it will play a role in understanding the deeper significance of what Jesus said and did. Of [the 169 pericopes](#) in Luke's gospel our passage stands as number 24, indicating how early in Jesus' ministry these events took place. Since most of our Lucan passage has parallels in both Matthew (8:14-17) and Mark (1:29-44), we can learn from comparing the sequential occurrence in these two gospels. In [Matthew](#) this event is number 50 in 179 pericopes. In [Mark](#) it is number 7 in 104 pericopes. This is easier to see in the charting out of the [Life of Christ outline](#) at Cranfordville.com:

	<b>Matthew:</b>	<b>Mark:</b>	<b>Luke:</b>	<b>John:</b>
I. <b>Background and preparation for ministry</b>				
II. <b>Beginning of public ministry</b>				
III. <b>Galilean ministry</b>				
	<b>4:12-18:35</b> (51%)	<b>1:14-9:50</b> (53%)	<b>4:14-9:56</b> (24%)	<b>4:46-7:9</b> (15%)
A. <i>Phase One: To the Choosing of the Twelve</i>	<b>4:12-12:21</b>	<b>1:15-3:19a</b>	<b>4:14-7:50</b>	<b>4:46-5:47</b>
B. <i>Phase Two: To the Withdrawals from Galilee</i>	<b>12:22-14:12</b>	<b>3:19b-6:29</b>	<b>8:1-9:9</b>	-
C. <i>Phase Three: To the Departure to Jerusalem</i>	<b>14:13-18:35</b>	<b>6:30-9:50</b>	<b>9:10-56</b>	<b>6:1-7:9</b>

All three gospels place this event in the beginning phase of Jesus' ministry in Galilee, but Luke follows the sequential listing of Mark more closely than does Matthew. Also important to understand is how Luke sews these segments together in contrast to Matthew, assuming that both Matthew and Luke had a copy of Mark before them when composing their gospel accounts. Kurt Aland's *Synopsis of the Four Gospels* throws some light on this part:

	<b>Matthew:</b>	<b>Mark:</b>	<b>Luke:</b>
Teaching in Synagogue	-----	1:21-22	4:31-32
Synagogue Healing	-----	1:23-28	4:33-37
<i>Peter's Mother-in-Law</i>	8:14-15	1:29-31	<b>4:38-39</b>
<i>Sick Healed at Evening</i>	8:16-17	1:32-34	<b>4:40-41</b>
<i>Jesus leaves Capernaum</i>	-----	1:35-38	<b>4:42-43</b>
<i>First Preaching Tour</i>	4:23	1:39	<b>4:44</b>

As is often the case, Luke makes greater use of his Marcan source in the sequential order of events, although Matthew will frequently follow the wording of the contents of the Marcan texts more closely when using them for his gospel. As we go through the Lucan material we will examine the details of the content of all three gospels where they overlap one another. A lot of the basis for the sequential ordering of Luke's description close to that of Mark's is that both gospels emphasize early on the series of events that are usually labeled the Sabbath Controversies. Mark and Luke place these events early in Jesus ministry in Galilee in order to highlight the tension that develops quickly between Jesus and the Jewish leaders. Matthew will describe most of these, but place them somewhat latter because he has other things he considers more important to stress at the beginning of Jesus' Galilean ministry. The main conclusion to be drawn from this is that our passage is cast in the midst of the sabbath controversy segment and is intended to show the religious distance between Jesus and the Jewish leaders. Something that would grow until it reached a crescendo in the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus in Jerusalem three plus years later.

The **literary forms** (genre) of the various segments of our passage range from a healing miracle (vv. 38-39) to exorcisms (vv. 40-41) embedded in a summary of healings to a summary narrative (vv. 42-44). This kind of mixing together of different genres is not uncommon in the synoptic gospels. Each form has its



own distinctive elements, which we will examine as we study each segment of the passage.

## II. Message

The internal structure of the passage naturally falls into the three subdivisions largely based on the three distinctive literary forms, and also the rhetorical structure of the Greek text highlights this, as is illustrated in the [Block Diagram](#), the [Semantic Diagram](#), and the [Exegetical Outline](#) of the text in the larger internet version of the passage.

### a. Healing a Fever, vv. 38-39

#### GNT

4:38 Ἀναστὰς δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς συναγωγῆς εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν Σίμωνος. πενθερὰ δὲ τοῦ Σίμωνος ἦν συνεχόμενη πυρετῶ μέγਾਲω καὶ ἠρώτησαν αὐτὸν περὶ αὐτῆς. 4:39 καὶ ἐπιστὰς ἐπάνω αὐτῆς ἐπετίμησεν τῷ πυρετῶ καὶ ἀφῆκεν αὐτήν· παραχρῆμα δὲ ἀναστᾶσα διηκόνει αὐτοῖς.

#### NASB

38 Then He got up and left the synagogue, and entered Simon's home. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Him to help her. 39 And standing over her, He rebuked the fever, and it left her; and she immediately got up and waited on them.

#### NRSV

38 After leaving the synagogue he entered Simon's house. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked him about her. 39 Then he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. Immediately she got up and began to serve them.

#### NLT

38 After leaving the synagogue that day, Jesus went to Simon's home, where he found Simon's mother-in-law very sick with a high fever. "Please heal her," everyone begged. 39 Standing at her bedside, he spoke to the fever, rebuking it, and immediately her temperature returned to normal. She got up at once and prepared a meal for them.

#### Notes:

This passage describes a healing miracle of Jesus. Some 35 specific [miracles of Jesus](#) are described in the four gospels, along with 6 summary descriptions of miracles without naming specific situations. This is one of the 35 miracles of specific situations and is described in all three of the synoptic gospels. [These miracles](#) typically stress Jesus' power over disease, demons, and the natural world. This healing miracle of Peter's mother-in-law comes immediately after an exorcism of demons from a man in the synagogue (4:33-37) in Capernaum. The healing is the second miracle of 19 in Luke's gospel. Characteristically, ancient miracle narratives begin with a description of the situation calling for the miracle, then proceed to the working of the miracle itself, and conclude with the effect of the miracle on its target and sometimes on the impact of the bystanders witnessing the miracle. That pattern is followed here in Luke: need (v. 38), miracle (v. 39a) and impact (v. 39b).

It is helpful to compare this miracle account with the parallels in Matthew and Mark.:

#### Matthew 8:14-15

14 When Jesus arrived at Peter's house, Peter's mother-in-law was in bed with a high fever. 15 But when Jesus touched her hand, the fever left her. Then she got up and prepared a meal for him.

#### Mark 1:29-31

29 After Jesus and his disciples left the synagogue, they went over to Simon and Andrew's home, and James and John were with them. 30 Simon's mother-in-law was sick in bed with a high fever. They told Jesus about her right away. 31 He went to her bedside, and as he took her by the hand and helped her to sit up, the fever suddenly left, and she got up and prepared a meal for them.

#### Luke 4:38-39

38 After leaving the synagogue that day, Jesus went to Simon's home, where he found Simon's mother-in-law very sick with a high fever. "Please heal her," everyone begged. 39 Standing at her bedside, he spoke to the fever, rebuking it, and immediately her temperature returned to normal. She got up at once and prepared a meal for them.

Mark has the most detailed account, while Matthew has the shortest description. In the **Need** segment we learn that the home belonged to Andrew as well as Peter (Mk. 1:29). Also that James and John went with Jesus to the house (Mk. 1:29). Additionally the mother-in-law was in bed with the high fever (Mt. 1:14 and Mk. 1:30). The description of the woman's sickness differs slightly but with the same essential meaning.

Matthew and Mark use the participle πυρέσσοισα(ν) from the verb πυρέσσω (to be sick with fever), while Luke uses the expression συνεχομένη πυρετῶ μεγάλῳ (to be enveloped and pressed hard by a high fever). Luke's expression stresses the healing as a deliverance from being taken captive by something harmful (cf. v. 39, it "left her"). Although some of Jesus' miracles have somewhat similar parallels in ancient Greco-Roman literature, no healing miracle from a fever exists in the known literature. None of the miracles in the Old Testament parallel this miracle either.

The danger that a high fever could pose in that world was much greater than in our world with a multitude of medicines designed to relieve one of this problem rapidly. Medical remedies in Jewish medical practice were very limited and moved along the lines of folk medicine. In most ancient cultures medical treatment was very expensive with the result that non-wealthy people including most Jews resorted mostly to prayer to their deities as the main cure. This is especially reflected in the Old Testament and particularly in many of the psalms which were designed to seek God's healing from various diseases. This pattern is reflected in the urgent request to Jesus for healing of the woman. The intensity of this request is stressed in both Mark's and Luke's account. Both writers do not identify precisely who was making the request, but presumably it was the members of the household.

After the description of the need for a healing, all three gospel writers describe the actual **miracle** itself. Mt. 8:15 says simply "he touched her hand and the fever left her..." This is close to Mark's description (1:31), "and he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her..." Luke has a slightly different emphasis (4:39): "and he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her..." Mark and Matthew stress that the miraculous power flowed from Jesus to the woman through Jesus touching her hand. Luke characterizes the healing more in terms of Jesus commanding the fever to leave the woman in a verbal rebuke to the fever as though the fever was a demon. Luke, more than Mark and Matthew, highlights Jesus' authority over illnesses such as high fever.

It is interesting to note these two ways of effecting a miraculous action by Jesus: by verbal command and by physical contact. Most all of the 35 miracles in the four gospels will depict Jesus performing a miracle in one of these two ways, or in a combination of both. In a society where physical contact with other people could pose great danger to one's ritual purity before God, Jesus' touching of sick individuals reflects his disregard for most of these holiness code regulations set forth in the Old Testament. Additionally, his touching represented an enormous affirmation of the worth and value of the sick individual -- something many Jews in that day would not dare to do, especially when sickness was so often viewed as the consequence of sinful action and thus was the punishment of God.

The **effect** of the miracle is portrayed essentially the same in all three gospel accounts: the woman got up from her sickbed and began food preparation for the guests in her son-in-law's home. In other words, she resumed the typical actions of a woman in her day. It is important to note that Peter was married and that this was his wife's mother who was living in his home -- most likely as a widow. On another occasion ([1 Cor. 9:5](#)) Peter's (=Cephas) wife is mentioned: "Do we not have the right to be accompanied by a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?" Here Paul indicates that Peter's wife traveled with him in gospel ministry, as did many other wives of spiritual leaders in those beginning days.

What lessons can we learn from this miracle? For one thing, we serve a Lord who has authority over disease and illness. We can pray to him for deliverance and he has the ability to grant deliverance. Does this then justify the so-called faith-healers and faith-healing services that some promote? I seriously doubt that it does. For one thing, modern patterns tend to cast the issue in a faith-healing versus medical treatment alternative. No where is this justified in scripture. Instead, a "both-and" approach is a lot closer to biblical views. James 5 especially advocates this with the use of prayer and olive oil. Also, healing from illness is first a matter of seeking God's help and will. It is also seeking the best available medical treatment possible. One must never forget that God's authority over illness is also authority over our life. We are in His hands. Thus, we can never force God into a box as though we somehow have control over Him and can force Him to heal at our will. Such borders on blasphemy!

Secondly, we sense the compassion of Jesus to take care of ordinary folks in time of need. The consistent pattern of Jesus' healing miracles is that he reached out to regular kinds of folks, along with some very wealthy and powerful individuals. But all were treated alike. Additionally, unlike the "divine men"

of that day, he never charged a dime for helping people! He was driven by genuine desire to minister to others.

Thirdly, Jesus' miracle of healing the woman enabled her to return to doing what she had done for many years before becoming ill: serving people to make their lives better. It is no surprise that the word for "serving" here that refers to food preparation and delivery is the same word used for religious service many times elsewhere in the New Testament. The verb is *διακόνει* (*diakonei*), from which the noun *διάκονος* (*diakonos* =deacon, minister, servant). The preparation and delivery of physical nourishment became a natural symbol for doing the same with spiritual nourishment.

### b. Healing Ministry, vv. 40-41

#### GNT

4:40 Δύνοντας δὲ τοῦ ἡλίου ἅπαντες ὅσοι εἶχον ἀσθενοῦντας νόσοις ποικίλαις ἤγαγον αὐτοὺς πρὸς αὐτόν· ὁ δὲ ἐνὶ ἐκάστῳ αὐτῶν τὰς χεῖρας ἐπιτιθεὶς ἐθεράπευεν αὐτούς. 4:41 ἐξήρχετο δὲ καὶ δαιμόνια ἀπὸ πολλῶν κρ[ανγ]άζοντα καὶ λέγοντα ὅτι Σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ. καὶ ἐπιτιμῶν οὐκ εἶα αὐτὰ λαλεῖν, ὅτι ᾔδεισαν τὸν Χριστὸν αὐτὸν εἶναι.

#### NASB

40 While the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and laying His hands on each one of them, He was healing them. 41 Demons also were coming out of many, shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But rebuking them, He would not allow them to speak, because they knew Him to be the Christ.

#### NRSV

40 As the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various kinds of diseases brought them to him; and he laid his hands on each of them and cured them. 41 Demons also came out of many, shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Messiah.

#### NLT

40 As the sun went down that evening, people throughout the village brought sick family members to Jesus. No matter what their diseases were, the touch of his hand healed every one. 41 Some were possessed by demons; and the demons came out at his command, shouting, "You are the Son of God." But because they knew he was the Messiah, he stopped them and told them to be silent.

#### Notes:

This second segment moves from describing one specific miracle (vv. 38-39) to a summarizing statement indicating the occurrence of many miracles but without description of the details of any of them. This is not uncommon in the gospel accounts of Jesus' miracles. Some six such summaries surface in the gospel accounts. Luke contains three such statements: the one here with parallels in Mark and Matthew; a second one in 6:17-19 (// Mk 3:17; Mt. 12:15-21); and a third one in 7:21, found only in Luke. These summarizing statements allowed the gospel writers to indicate a much wider range of miraculous action by Jesus than would be assumed from reading about 35 specific instances over a three year ministry. Thus the assertion of Jesus' authority and compassion for people is highlighted as well.

It can be helpful to note Luke's pattern by comparing his three summaries:

#### Luke 4:40-41

40 As the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various kinds of diseases brought them to him; and he laid his hands on each of them and cured them. 41 Demons also came out of many, shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Messiah.

#### Luke 6:17-19

17 He came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon. 18 They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. 19 And all in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them.

#### Luke 7:21

21 Jesus had just then cured many people of diseases, plagues, and evil spirits, and had given sight to many who were blind.

A quick glance at these three summaries reveals similarities as well as some distinctives. A wide variety of illnesses is included in all three, thus indicating that Jesus' power was not limited to certain kinds of illnesses. The close association of illness with the presence of demons stands out, especially in the first two



summaries. Also, a desire to listen to what Jesus had to say, as well as to be healed, is a part of the second summary, along with the desire to touch Jesus in order to connect to divine healing power.

In comparing the three gospel accounts of this event at Peter's house, several things can be noted. First, the gospel writers focus upon the time of the event: Mark -- "that evening, at sundown" ; Matthew -- "that evening"; Luke -- "when the sun was setting." Several factors play into this. The reports about the healing of the demon possessed man in the synagogue on Friday evening began to spread, as Luke recounted in 4:37 -- "[And a report about him began to reach every place in the region.](#)" Add to that the healing of Peter's mother-in-law, which reinforced that reputation. Additionally, on Saturday evening at sundown, the Jewish sabbath came to an end, which made it possible for people to move about more easily.

Secondly, Mark's account places emphasis upon the healing of people with diseases along with those possessed by demons. Matthew in his account picks up on the demon possession and emphasizes this more than those with diseases. He sees all of this as a fulfillment of the Isaiah 53:4 prophecy about the Suffering Servant. Luke maintains the more even Marcan balance between the healing of the sick and the casting out of demons. Mark is the one who identifies most of those being brought to Jesus as coming from Capernaum itself. Luke places the greatest emphasis upon Jesus' individualized action of healing each individual who was brought to Peter's house. Also, Luke stresses that these healings came about through Jesus laying hands on each one. Once again Luke reminds us of the personal care of Jesus for individuals, rather than a single, impersonal healing action of a group of people. Unlike modern "faith-healers" Jesus didn't carefully screen out potential candidates for healing before the worship service on TV began.

Thirdly, all three accounts place a lot of emphasis upon Jesus casting out demons. Each gospel writer has his own distinctive way of presenting this. Luke takes the Marcan "[he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him](#)" and recasts it as "[Demons also came out of many, shouting, 'You are the Son of God! But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Messiah.'](#)" This general characterization of exorcisms is typical to the [exorcism narratives](#) throughout the gospels. Only the demonic recognized Jesus right off the bat as the promised Son of God sent to save. Humans both as recipients of Jesus' healing as well as those who witnessed this did not recognize the true identity of Jesus. That includes even the disciples. Sometimes that's hard for us today to accept. When we read the gospel texts, it seems so easy to understand. Why then could the people around Jesus not see what we see so clearly? The basic answer to that lies in literary criticism. Each gospel writer places us as readers outside the narrative looking down on the events. Thus we see a perspective completely unavailable to the individuals who were inside the story.

Also, in exorcism narratives this demonic recognition of Jesus often carries with it a threat by the demon(s) to expose Jesus' identity to the humans present at the event. What does this signify? Not until one studies miracles and magic in the ancient world does this become more clear. The practice of miracles and magic -- the line of separation between these is very thin -- in the ancient world almost always involved the knowledge of some secret words or name identities which gave power to those knowing it. Thus the demons are attempting to thwart Jesus' power over them by their "secret" knowledge of his identity. But here as well as in most all the exorcism narrative in the gospels, Jesus' power is absolute and he refuses to be intimidated. This message is highlighted by the gospel writers. There was no real contest between Jesus and the demonic world in the exorcisms. For individuals living in a world who felt that demons were lurking everywhere just waiting to pounce on you in destructive ways, such a message took on a powerful tone. A second aspect seems to be going on here as well. Early on in Jesus' ministry he made certain that his true identity as Messiah was concealed, evidently to control the situation in order for him to stay on God's timetable in ministry and sacrificial death. Also, another indication of Jesus' ability to control the situation in order to be obedient to the Heavenly Father's plan.

What can we learn here? Beyond seeing the range and scope of Jesus' healing ministry, we come face to face with the presence of supernatural evil. In previous decades Bible students tended to write off the demonic as an ancient way of describing what modern medicine calls mental or psychological sickness. With the increasing horrors of evil actions in our world today, we are coming more and more to recognize that some kind of evil presence is influencing humans to do unimaginable things to one another. Especially

are we seeing this in the emergence of terrorism in our day. In the biblical world the presence of supernatural evil was defined clearly as Satan standing at the top of the hierarchy and the demonic as assistants of the devil in carrying out that evil against God's creation and humans in particular. Paul will declare in [Eph. 2:2](#) "in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient." At minimal, this emphasis upon demons reminds us of the evil possibilities lurking inside human beings. Any religious perspective that doesn't seriously take this into account has no possibility of dealing legitimately with the possibility of good and the necessity of God's redeeming, transforming grace as critical for making this dramatic change. With the denial of evil comes the denial of sinfulness and then the denial of the redeeming death of Jesus on Calvary. Thus, everything set forth in the New Testament begins to collapse. Additionally, this assertion of the demonic reminds us of the superiority of supernatural evil to our human ability. We depraved humans are up against a spiritual power vastly greater than anything we possess. It is "hell bent" on destroying us both now and in eternity. Our ONLY hope both now and for eternity is to plug into the vastly superior power of God over evil. And this can come about only through relationship with Christ as our Savior. This stands as one of the messages the gospel writers were attempting to make with their exorcism narratives and summarizing statements like our passage.

#### GNT

4:42 Γενομένης δὲ ἡμέρας ἐξελθὼν ἐπορεύθη εἰς ἔρημον τόπον· καὶ οἱ ὄχλοι ἐπεζήτουν αὐτόν καὶ ἦλθον ἕως αὐτοῦ καὶ κατεῖχον αὐτὸν τοῦ μὴ πορεύεσθαι ἀπ' αὐτῶν.  
4:43 ὁ δὲ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτοὺς ὅτι Καὶ ταῖς ἐτέραις πόλεσιν εὐαγγελίσασθαί με δεῖ τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ, ὅτι ἐπὶ τοῦτο ἀπεστάλην.  
4:44 καὶ ἦν κηρύσσων εἰς τὰς συναγωγὰς τῆς Ἰουδαίας.

#### NASB

42 When day came, Jesus left and went to a secluded place; and the crowds were searching for Him, and came to Him and tried to keep Him from going away from them. 43 But He said to them, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose." 44 So He kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

#### NRSV

42 At daybreak he departed and went into a deserted place. And the crowds were looking for him; and when they reached him, they wanted to prevent him from leaving them. 43 But he said to them, "I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities also; for I was sent for this purpose." 44 So he continued proclaiming the message in the synagogues of Judea.

#### NLT

42 Early the next morning Jesus went out into the wilderness. The crowds searched everywhere for him, and when they finally found him, they begged him not to leave them. 43 But he replied, "I must preach the Good News of the Kingdom of God in other places, too, because that is why I was sent." 44 So he continued to travel around, preaching in synagogues throughout Judea.

### c. Preaching the Kingdom, vv. 42-44

#### Notes:

In this third segment of our passage, the events of the following day -- Sunday -- and subsequently are depicted. This passage -- at least v. 44 -- is usually labelled "Jesus' Preaching Tour of Galilee." This will set the stage later on for the Twelve to be sent out on a similar mission in Galilee (Lk. 9:1-6; Mk. 6:7-13; Mt. 11:1). Luke's summarizing description here is paralleled by Mk. 1:35-39 and Mt. 4:23, which picks up only the last segment of Mark (v. 39).

By the beginning of the next day, Jesus felt the need to get away from the demands of the crowd. Thus he left alone to go to an isolated place to pray. Mark's narrative ([1:35-38](#)) provides some helpful background to see how Luke shaped his Marcan source: "35 In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. 36 And Simon and his companions hunted for him. 37 When they found him, they said to him, 'Everyone is searching for you.' 38 He answered, 'Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do.'" Mark stressed that Peter and the other disciples tracked Jesus down with the plea to come back to Capernaum to help the people. But Luke emphasized that it was the crowds of people who found Jesus with a determination to keep him in Caper-

naum. In both accounts Jesus response was to reject the pleas on the basis that the Father's will was that Jesus spread his message of God's Kingdom to as many as possible. Thus he could not be limited to staying in Capernaum for this would cause many others to miss out on his ministry.

The climatic declaration of both Mark and Luke is then picked up by Matthew, asserting that Jesus did

**Matthew 4:23**

23 Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

**Mark 1:39**

39 And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.

**Luke 4:44**

44 So he continued proclaiming the message in the synagogues of Judea.

travel to the various villages and towns of Galilee preaching his message.

At first Luke's reference to Judea seems to contradict Mark and Matthew's designation of Galilee. But John Nolland (Luke, vol. 35a in the *Word Biblical Commentary*) provides helpful insight:

The Galilean ministry, exemplified by the incidents in Nazareth and Capernaum, is not restricted to Galilee but repeated on equal terms in the cities of the whole of Judea (used in the wide sense for the whole of Jewish Palestine as at 1:5; 6:17; 7:17; 23:5; and in Acts; contra Grundmann, 126).

Thus Jesus traveled over much of Palestine carrying his message of salvation from God through God's rule in his kingdom. This was accompanied by his healing ministry as well. In all three gospels, much of what follows is the unfolding of this summarizing statement.

Is there anything we can learn from these verses? More than anything else it seems to me is that we can never pin Jesus down into a box of our own making. We don't possess Him; He possesses us. And He belongs to others as well. In limited ways I have been reminded of this through my experiences of living in Germany and France back down the way. To worship in either a Germany speaking or a French speaking congregation is to have vivid reminder that Jesus belongs to all who name Him as Lord and Savior.

Also, the text gives us a background for better understanding of the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. Jesus departure to Heaven set up the coming of the Holy Spirit who makes the presence of the resurrected Christ available to all everywhere at any given moment. For that we can praise God.



### GNT

4:38 Ἀναστὰς δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς συναγωγῆς εἰσηλθεν εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν Σίμωνος. πενθερὰ δὲ τοῦ Σίμωνος ἦν συνεχομένη πυρετῷ μεγάλῳ καὶ ἠρώτησαν αὐτὸν περὶ αὐτῆς. 4:39 καὶ ἐπιστὰς ἐπάνω αὐτῆς ἐπετίμησεν τῷ πυρετῷ καὶ ἀφῆκεν αὐτήν· παραχρῆμα δὲ ἀναστᾶσα διηκόνει αὐτοῖς. 4:40 Δύνοντας δὲ τοῦ ἡλίου ἅπαντες ὅσοι εἶχον ἀσθενοῦντας νόσοις ποικίλαις ἤγαγον αὐτοὺς πρὸς αὐτόν· ὁ δὲ ἐνὶ ἐκάστῳ αὐτῶν τὰς χεῖρας ἐπιτιθεὶς ἐθεράπευεν αὐτούς. 4:41 ἐξήρχετο δὲ καὶ δαιμόνια ἀπὸ πολλῶν κρ[αυγ]άζοντα καὶ λέγοντα ὅτι Σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ. καὶ ἐπιτιμῶν οὐκ εἶα αὐτὰ λαλεῖν, ὅτι ᾔδεισαν τὸν Χριστὸν αὐτὸν εἶναι.

4:42 Γενομένης δὲ ἡμέρας ἐξεληθὼν ἐπορεύθη εἰς ἔρημον τόπον· καὶ οἱ ὄχλοι ἐπεζήτουν αὐτόν καὶ ἤλθον ἕως αὐτοῦ καὶ κατεῖχον αὐτὸν τοῦ μὴ πορεύεσθαι ἀπ' αὐτῶν. 4:43 ὁ δὲ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτούς ὅτι Καὶ ταῖς ἐτέραις πόλεσιν εὐαγγελίσασθαί με δεῖ τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ, ὅτι ἐπὶ τοῦτο ἀπεστάλην. 4:44 καὶ ἦν κηρύσσων εἰς τὰς συναγωγὰς τῆς Ἰουδαίας.

### NASB

38 Then He got up and left the synagogue, and entered Simon's home. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Him to help her. 39 And standing over her, He rebuked the fever, and it left her; and she immediately got up and waited on them. 40 While the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and laying His hands on each one of them, He was healing them. 41 Demons also were coming out of many, shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But rebuking them, He would not allow them to speak, because they knew Him to be the Christ. 42 When day came, Jesus left and went to a secluded place; and the crowds were searching for Him, and came to Him and tried to keep Him from going away from them. 43 But He said to them, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose." 44 So He kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

### NRSV

38 After leaving the synagogue he entered Simon's house. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked him about her. 39 Then he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. Immediately she got up and began to serve them. 40 As the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various kinds of diseases brought them to him; and he laid his hands on each of them and cured them. 41 Demons also came out of many, shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Messiah. 42 At daybreak he departed and went into a deserted place. And the crowds were looking for him; and when they reached him, they wanted to prevent him from leaving them. 43 But he said to them, "I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities also; for I was sent for this purpose." 44 So he continued proclaiming the message in the synagogues of Judea.

### NLT

38 After leaving the synagogue that day, Jesus went to Simon's home, where he found Simon's mother-in-law very sick with a high fever. "Please heal her," everyone begged. 39 Standing at her bedside, he spoke to the fever, rebuking it, and immediately her temperature returned to normal. She got up at once and prepared a meal for them. 40 As the sun went down that evening, people throughout the village brought sick family members to Jesus. No matter what their diseases were, the touch of his hand healed every one. 41 Some were possessed by demons; and the demons came out at his command, shouting, "You are the Son of God." But because they knew he was the Messiah, he stopped them and told them to be silent. 42 Early the next morning Jesus went out into the wilderness. The crowds searched everywhere for him, and when they finally found him, they begged him not to leave them. 43 But he replied, "I must preach the Good News of the Kingdom of God in other places, too, because that is why I was sent." 44 So he continued to travel around, preaching in synagogues throughout Judea.



## GNT Block Diagram

4:38

δὲ

Ἀναστάς ἀπὸ τῆς συναγωγῆς

1

**εἰσῆλθεν**

εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν Σίμωνος.

δὲ

2

**πενθερὰ τοῦ Σίμωνος ἦν συνεχομένη**

πυρετῷ μεγάλῳ

καὶ

3

**ἠρώτησαν αὐτὸν**

περὶ αὐτῆς.

4:39

καὶ

ἐπιστὰς ἐπάνω αὐτῆς

4

**ἐπετίμησεν τῷ πυρετῷ**

καὶ

5

**ἀφῆκεν αὐτήν·**

δὲ

παραχρῆμα ἀναστᾶσα

6

**διηκόνει αὐτοῖς.**

4:40

δὲ

ἅπαντες ὅσοι εἶχον ἀσθενούντας

νόσοις ποικίλαις

7

**ἤγαγον αὐτούς**

πρὸς αὐτόν·

δὲ

ἐνὶ ἐκάστῳ αὐτῶν

ὁ...τὰς χεῖρας ἐπιτιθεὶς

8

**ἐθεράπευεν αὐτούς.**

4:41

δὲ

**ἐξήρχετο καὶ δαιμόνια**

ἀπὸ πολλῶν

**κραυγάζοντα**

καὶ

**λέγοντα**

α

ὅτι **Σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ.**

καὶ

**ἐπιτιμῶν**

10

**οὐκ εἶα αὐτὰ λαλεῖν,**

ὅτι ἤδεισαν

τὸν Χριστὸν αὐτὸν εἶναι.

4:42

δὲ

Γενομένης ἡμέρας

**ἐξελθὼν**

11

**ἐπορεύθη**

εἰς ἔρημον τόπον·

καὶ



12 οἱ ὄχλοι ἐπεζήτησαν αὐτόν

καὶ

13 ----- ἦλθον

ἕως αὐτοῦ

καὶ

14 ----- κατεῖχον αὐτόν

τοῦ μὴ πορεύεσθαι  
ἀπ' αὐτῶν.

4:43

δὲ

15 ὁ εἶπεν

πρὸς αὐτοὺς

β

Καὶ ταῖς ἑτέραις πόλεσιν  
ὅτι...εὐαγγελίσασθαι με δεῖ τὴν βασιλείαν  
τοῦ θεοῦ,  
ἐπὶ τοῦτο  
ὅτι...ἀπεστάλην.

4:44

καὶ

16 ἦν κηρύσσων

εἰς τὰς συναγωγὰς τῆς Ἰουδαίας.

Color Coding:

**Blue** = core expression

**Red** = core speaking expression

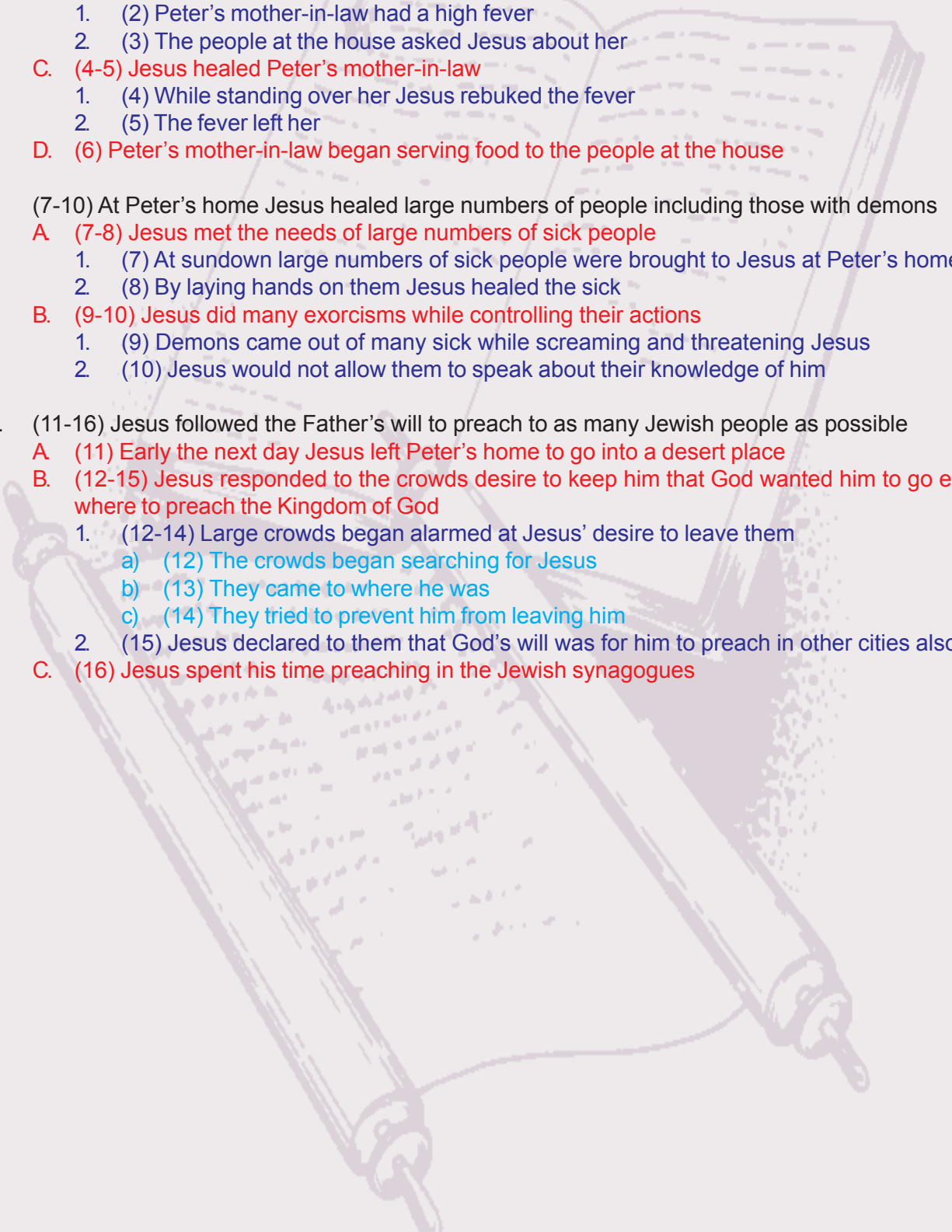
**Magenta** = verbs of movement from point A to point B

**Cyan** = verbs of speaking

## Semantic Diagram

I.	A.	-----	1	δε	Dec	Aor	Ind	3	S	('Ιησοῦς)
				δε	Dec	Impf	Ind	3	S	πενθερά
	B.	-----	2	καὶ	Dec	Impf	Ind	3	P	(αὐτοί)
				καὶ	Dec	Aor	Ind	3	S	('Ιησοῦς)
II.	C.	-----	4	καὶ	Dec	Aor	Ind	3	S	(πυρετός)
				δε	Dec	Impf	Ind	3	S	(πενθερά)
	D.	-----	6	δε	Dec	Aor	Ind	3	P	(αὐτοί)
				δε	Dec	Impf	Ind	3	S	('Ιησοῦς)
III.	A.	-----	7	δε	Dec	Impf	Ind	3	P	δαίμονια
				καὶ	Dec	Impf	Ind	3	S	('Ιησοῦς)
	B.	-----	9	δε	Dec	Aor	Ind	3	S	('Ιησοῦς)
				καὶ	Dec	Impf	Ind	3	P	οἱ ὄχλοι
			a)	καὶ	Dec	Aor	Ind	3	P	(οἱ ὄχλοι)
			b)	καὶ	Dec	Impf	Ind	3	P	(οἱ ὄχλοι)
	C.	-----	13	δε	Dec	Aor	Ind	3	S	('Ιησοῦς)
				καὶ	Dec	Impf	Ind	3	S	('Ιησοῦς)
		c)	δε	Dec	Aor	Ind	3	S	('Ιησοῦς)	
		2.	καὶ	Dec	Impf	Ind	3	S	('Ιησοῦς)	
			16	δε	Dec	Impf	Ind	3	S	('Ιησοῦς)

## Exegetical Outline

- 
- I. (1-6) At Peter's home Jesus healed the woman with a high fever
    - A. (1) After leaving the synagogue Jesus went to Peter's home
    - B. (2-3) Jesus was informed about the mother-in-law's fever
      - 1. (2) Peter's mother-in-law had a high fever
      - 2. (3) The people at the house asked Jesus about her
    - C. (4-5) Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law
      - 1. (4) While standing over her Jesus rebuked the fever
      - 2. (5) The fever left her
    - D. (6) Peter's mother-in-law began serving food to the people at the house
  
  - II. (7-10) At Peter's home Jesus healed large numbers of people including those with demons
    - A. (7-8) Jesus met the needs of large numbers of sick people
      - 1. (7) At sundown large numbers of sick people were brought to Jesus at Peter's home
      - 2. (8) By laying hands on them Jesus healed the sick
    - B. (9-10) Jesus did many exorcisms while controlling their actions
      - 1. (9) Demons came out of many sick while screaming and threatening Jesus
      - 2. (10) Jesus would not allow them to speak about their knowledge of him
  
  - III. (11-16) Jesus followed the Father's will to preach to as many Jewish people as possible
    - A. (11) Early the next day Jesus left Peter's home to go into a desert place
    - B. (12-15) Jesus responded to the crowds desire to keep him that God wanted him to go elsewhere to preach the Kingdom of God
      - 1. (12-14) Large crowds began alarmed at Jesus' desire to leave them
        - a) (12) The crowds began searching for Jesus
        - b) (13) They came to where he was
        - c) (14) They tried to prevent him from leaving him
      - 2. (15) Jesus declared to them that God's will was for him to preach in other cities also
    - C. (16) Jesus spent his time preaching in the Jewish synagogues