



MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

## Examining the text & our hearts:

*Bible Reading: Luke 5:12 - 26*

•**Bible Reading:** Luke 5:12-26 NET

•“While Jesus was in one of the towns, a man came to him who was covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he bowed

down with his face to the ground & begged him, “Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.”

13So he stretched out his hand & touched him, saying, “I am willing. Be clean!” And immediately the leprosy left him.

14Then he ordered the man to tell no one, but commanded him, “Go & show yourself to a priest, & bring the offering for your cleansing, as Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.”

15But the news about him spread even more, & large crowds were gathering together to hear him & to be healed of their illnesses.

16Yet Jesus himself frequently withdrew to the wilderness and prayed.” (Luke 5:12-16 NET)

“Now on one of those days, while he was teaching, there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting nearby (who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem), and the power of the Lord was with him to heal.

18Just then some men showed up, carrying a paralyzed man on a stretcher. They were trying to bring him in and place him before Jesus.

19But since they found no way to carry him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down on

the stretcher through the roof tiles right in front of Jesus.

20When Jesus saw their faith he said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven.”

21Then the experts in the law and the Pharisees began to think to themselves, “Who is this man who is uttering

blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

22When Jesus perceived their hostile thoughts, he said to them, “Why are you raising objections within yourselves?

23Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Stand up and walk’?

24But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he said to the paralyzed man—“I tell you, stand up, take your stretcher and go home.”

25Immediately he stood up before them, picked up the stretcher he had been lying on, and went home, glorifying God.

26Then astonishment seized them all, and they glorified God. They were filled with awe, saying, “We have seen incredible things today.” (Luke 5:17-26 NET)

### •SUMMARY:

•One of the surest facts about Jesus’ ministry is that He worked real miracles. Jesus unleashed God’s power wherever He went—the sick were restored, demons fled, lives were transformed.

Each Gospel records numerous healings and exorcisms. Even His opponents admitted Jesus’ power, though they wrongly blamed it on Satan. Every miracle declared

the long-promised Messiah had arrived and God’s kingdom was breaking into a broken world. His exorcisms shattered the

grip of darkness and His healings restored broken people to wholeness.

•Skeptics claim Jesus cured no actual diseases, insisting these were mere misdiagnoses or psychosomatic recoveries. But

Luke’s accounts of the leper cleansed and the paralytic walking expose the poverty of such claims.

Scripture presents a far

more compelling reality: Jesus truly heals. Jesus truly delivers. And that same risen, reigning Lord still pours out His saving

and restoring power on His people today.

### I. Jesus the Miracle-Worker

•“The [NT] Gospels present Jesus’ miracle-working as essential to his identity & mission as prophet & Messiah; the miracles are

not an optional extra...but a vital part of each Gospel’s...presentation.”—Mark Harris

A. Jesus’ Parables are Accepted; His Miracles Rejected

•Jesus’ “parables...reflect the authentic voice of the historical Jesus...[But,]the gospel miracle stories have...suffered more criticism & ridicule than any other form of gospel.”

[Craig Blomberg “Miracles as Parables,” Gospel Perspectives, p. 327]

B. Miracles –a Working Definition

•A miracle as “a divine action that transcends the ordinary course of nature & so generates awe”—Craig Keener

•It is “a.) An unusual, startling or extraordinary event, that is in principle, perceivable by any interested & fair-minded observer, b.) an event that finds no reasonable explanation in human abilities or in known forces that operate in our world of time & space, & c.) an event that is the result of a special act of God, doing what no human power could do.” [John P. Meier, Marginal Jew, Vol II, p. 541]

C. Scholars Agree the Historical Jesus was a Miracle-Worker

•“Jesus’ miracle-working...loom[s] large in the historically

-reliable data so...[we] conclude miracle

-working dominated the activity of Jesus before Easter.”—Graham Twelftree,

•Multiple attestations, from within and outside the NT, point to the high probability that the historical Jesus performed feats that were considered miracles.”

—Graham Twelftree

•“Virtually everyone in the field today acknowledges that Jesus was considered by his contemporaries to be an exorcist & a worker of miracles.”—Paul Eddy, JK. Beilby

•“What are some of the historical bed-rock [facts] pertaining to Jesus? That Jesus performed feats that both he & his followers interpreted as miracles & exorcisms is a fact strongly evidenced & supported by the majority of scholars.”—Michael Licona

•“It’s an irrefutable historical fact, with evidence provided throughout...the Gospels & other sources that the historical person, Jesus of Nazareth, did indeed perform miracles.” —Armand Puig i Tarrech

•“For Jesus, we have a plethora of miracle accounts, written within a generation after his death, & this element of his ministry is almost unanimously held to be authentic... Healings & exorcisms stand alongside Jesus’ teachings as his most important activities... They were signs of God’s favor, [they] meant reintegration into the community of God’s people, & held implications for the forgiveness of sins.” —Greg Rhodea

•“Just as the kingdom of God stands at the center of Jesus’ preaching, so healings & exorcisms for the center of his activities.” — Gerd Theissen & Annette Merz

### **D.First-Century Critics Concede Jesus was a Miracle-Worker & Exorcist**

•“Among non-Christian sources, the rabbis & Celsus are clear that Jesus performed miracles, although both sources are hostile to these miracles (many...attribute the miraculous works to sorcery).” [C. Keener, Op. cit., p ]

•Celsus (~180 AD) “Christians get the power they seem to possess by pronouncing the names of... daemons & incantations...It’s by magic that [Jesus] was able to do the miracles which he appears to have done.” [Gregory Monette, Wrong Jesus, p. 137]

•“Rabbinic texts & Celsus...say that Jesus owed his healing power to sorcery, a hostile interpretation...[They] make no attempt, however, to deny that Jesus really performed wonders.” — Karl Olav Sandnes

•“Jesus’ critics...alleged that he was...demon possessed...[They] were seeking to explain the apparently undeniable reports of his impressive exorcisms & healings.” — NT. Wright

•“The hostile interpretations of Jesus’ miracles, particularly...exorcisms...offer a measure of support for [their] authenticity...for the miracles are not denied, only criticized. For these reasons...several scholars argue for the essential authenticity of the miracle tradition.” —Craig Evans

•“Jesus’ exorcisms are among the best-attested deeds of the Gospel traditions.” —Bart Ehrman (skeptical scholar)

•“Pharisees...said, ‘This man [Jesus] drives out demons only by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons.’” (Mt. 12:24)

•Jesus’ Response: “You say I drive out demons by Beelzebul. 19 ...If I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons drive them out? ...They will be your judges. 20 If I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. 21 When a strong man, fully armed, guards his estate, his possessions are secure. 22 But when one stronger ...attacks & overpowers him, he takes from him all his weapons he trusted in, & divides up his plunder...” (Lk. 11:18-23 CSB)

### **E.Jesus’ Miracles in Luke’s Gospel**

“21 miracles [are] performed by Jesus in...Luke. These miracles may be assigned to four basic categories:

- 1.Exorcisms [casting out demons/unclean spirits],
  - 2.Healings,
  - 3.Resuscitations [of the dead, e.g. Jairus’ daughter (Lk. 8)],
  - 4.Nature parables [e.g., Peter’s great catch of fish (Lk. 5)]
- ...The most common miracle...is healing.” [Craig A. Evans, Luke, p. xxix]

### **F.The Meaning of Jesus’ Miracles?**

•“Jesus’ miracles were not merely random acts of kindness or magic tricks to prove his power...His miracles showed that his mission was to reverse the curse...” —J. D. Greear

## **G. God Wills Human Wholeness in Restored Relationship**

- “The fundamental meaning of Jesus’ mighty deeds of healing & exorcism is this: God wills human wholeness –in its physical, psychological, & social dimensions — & in Jesus’ ministry God’s will is accomplished in concrete terms, for the sovereign rule of heaven is exerting itself.” [John T. Carroll, “Sickness & Healing in NT Gospels,” Interpretation (1995) p. 137]
- “God’s intent in bringing wholeness through... works of healing, casting out demons, & miracles was to bring a transformative change of heart (metanoia) towards a wholehearted commitment to submit to the rule of God... Jesus clearly implied this when he addressed Chorazin & Bethsaida (Lk. 10:13-15): “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were done in you had been done in Tyre & Sidon, they would’ve repented (metanoia) long ago, sitting in sackcloth & ashes.” (Lk. 10:13) ... The acts of miracles... healings, & deliverance from demons, are not stand-alone acts of God’s goodness, but are an integrated part of God’s call to a commitment to trusting and obeying His will. This is the intended result of all the acts of God’s healing ... Healing is a good start for the process of transformation, but there must be a commitment to live life according to the will of God after healing has taken place.” [JLS. Chang, Importance of Inner Healing & Deliverance..., p.]
- “The sheer number of healings that pepper Luke’s Gospel is remarkable, & it is striking how many different types of people experience healing.” [Joshua W. Jipp, Reading the Gospels as Scripture, p.]
- “The two significant points at which Jesus stands out from the healer-magicians is that [1.] he chose to conduct so many of them & then [2.] makes the unique claim that his particular miracles had [end-time] significance.” [Graham H. Twelftree, “Message of Jesus: Miracles,” SE. Porter (ed.) Handbook... of Historical Jesus, p. 2533]

## **II. Skeptical Scholars Discount Jesus’ Miraculous Healings**

### **A. It’s All in the Mind – ‘Psychosomatic’**

- “Most of the healings & exorcisms found in the [Jesus-] tradition can be construed as psychosomatic” –D. Aune
- “Jesus was considered a healer. From today’s perspective Jesus’ cures are related to psychosomatic maladies.” [Robert Funk & the Jesus Seminar (1998) pp. 530-1]
- Skeptical scholars contend “that Jesus did not cure disease: he healed illness [symptoms of sickness]; or that the sufferers had psychosomatic disorders, were misdiagnosed, or recovered as a result of a placebo effect. Others... have viewed the healings as a cultural phenomenon [which is] no longer significant.” — Dominic Walker
- Prevailing NT scholarship “attempts to explain away the wondrous in these stories, that which is said to have caused the amazement of the spectators.” [Jan-Olav Henriksen, Karl Olav Sandnes. Jesus as Healer, p. 63]

### **B. Pushing back against the Skeptics**

- JJ. Pilch (2000) contends that Jesus did not cure disease, he only healed illness symptoms; all Jesus’ healings “restored meaning to life & the sufferer is returned to purposeful living.” [John J. Pilch, Healing in the NT, p. 14]
- But, [JJ.] “Pilch seems unwilling to engage with the...[fact that] Jesus was not thought by his contemporaries solely to provide resolutions to the social & personal problems of meaning created by illness (the social experience of sickness). He was also thought to cure disease (the physical experience of a sickness). Pilch is quite wrong to ignore this...Jesus’ healings were regarded by his contemporaries as unexpectedly efficacious with tangible consequences: the blind, it is claimed, received their sight, the lame walked, people with leprosy were cleansed, & the deaf heard. These results look to the modern reader...suspiciously like [reported] cures.” [Justin Meggitt, Op. cit., p. 30]

### **C. Physical Symptoms are scarce; Psychological profiles totally absent**

- “We do not know with any certainty what kind of disorders were suffered by those whom Jesus healed...The Gospels are notoriously short on detailed clinical description & medical terminology... Given that it is difficult ...to have any idea of the nature of the [physical] symptoms...It seems... unreasonable to posit a psychological cause for a particular ailment...” [Justin Meggitt, Op. cit., p. 23]

### III. Jesus' Miracles: Signs of the Inaugurated Kingdom of God

#### A. Jesus' Miracles: Signs of the Kingdom's Arrival

•“If I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has already overtaken you.” (Lk. 11:20 NET)

•“The Synoptic Gospels bear witness to three ways that Jesus inaugurated the kingdom:

1. “Preaching the kingdom

2. Teaching the kingdom in parables

3. Performing acts of healing and exorcisms that demonstrate the powerful impact of the kingdom.

Jesus... claim[ed]... these acts were evidence of the kingdom of God in their midst... Luke twice declares that the kingdom is the gospel message... God in Jesus has broken into history to redeem all of life & inaugurate a new order.” [SW Green, S. Thompson, “Jesus &... Kingdom,” in JR. Krabill (ed.) Jesus Matters, p. ]

•“Jesus performed physical healings... an important attestation of the kingdom's inauguration and of Jesus' identity...” [Craig Blomberg, Jesus & the Gospels, p. ]

#### B. Signs that God's Promised Future Arrived (Is. 35:4-6; Lk. 7:22)

1. God's Promised Future (Is. 35:4-6)

•“Behold, your God will come... He will come & save you... 5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, & the ears of the deaf unstopped; 6 then shall the lame man leap like a deer, & the tongue of the mute sing for joy...” (Is. 35:4-6 ESV) Note: “The prophet [Isaiah] points to the promised future, inaugurated in the first coming of Christ (Lk. 4:16-21; 7:18-23) & fully consummated at his second coming... ‘eyes of the blind... opened’: The salvation that God will provide includes both spiritual wellbeing & physical healing & wholeness, as was demonstrated repeatedly in Jesus' own ministry.” [ESV]

2. Jesus' Response to John the Baptist (Lk. 7:20-22)

•John the Baptist asked Jesus: “Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?” 21 At that very time Jesus cured many people of diseases, sicknesses, & evil spirits, & granted sight to many who were blind. 22 So he answered... “Go tell John what you've seen & heard: The blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news proclaimed to them...” (Lk. 7:20-22 NET)

•“Jesus' response to [John] the Baptist's query... indicates how important Jesus regarded the healings [as] a major part of his ministry... It is clear that Jesus' reputation as a healer went well beyond his success as an exorcist.” –James DG. Dunn

•“The narrative movement of Luke's Gospel indicates the focus of this story... The [‘Jubilee’] Jesus announces in his inaugural speech (4:18), becomes a reality in the healings and exorcisms that follow... When John the Baptist ...ask[s] if Jesus is ‘the one who is to come,’ Jesus points to the signs of the kingdom in his ministry, ‘The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed... & the poor have good news brought to them’ (7:22) ... He [says] ‘If... by the finger of God I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you’ (11:20) ... In the battle with evil powers, Jesus foreshadows his ultimate triumph over evil...” [David L Barlett, Feasting on the Word, Yr., C, Vol. 3, pp. 167-9]

3. God's Kingdom has Already Arrived, but Not Yet Fully

•“The inauguration of the kingdom is manifested by signs, wonders, & healings. Jesus' miracles are not just the promise of the kingdom; they are themselves the actualization... in part, of the kingdom... In the Synoptic Gospels, the proclamation of the Gospel is accompanied by physical healing & the exorcism of demons (e.g. Lk. 9:11; 10:9, 17; 11:20) Jesus' exorcisms instantiate his victory over Satan & demons, indicating... the kingdom is now present &... Jesus has triumphed over the reign of evil... [In] Is. 35... healings... indicat[e] the presence of the kingdom... already exerting its power in this present evil age... It's clear that the Gospel writers believed that the miracles truly occurred... The miracles... testify to the already-not yet character of the kingdom.” [Thomas R. Schreiner, Magnifying God in Christ, p. 25]

•“The in-breaking of God’s dominion [kingdom] in Jesus’ miracles is not, however, the kingdom’s final realization. The miracles signify an inaugurated kingdom, not a completed one. This setting of Jesus’ miracles within the context of...an ‘inaugurated eschatology’ [already/not yet] means that the miracles point to the working of God, rather than to the status of Christ. God’s kingdom, not Jesus’ rule, is inaugurated. Jesus refuses to use miracles as signs to validate himself (Mk. 8:11-12)... Jesus... declining to elicit support by the performance of miracles or spectacular feats (Luke 4:1-13). The healings bear witness to the kingdom’s appearance; God’s extraordinary presence is consistently and continually proclaimed in Jesus’ message.” [RA. Spivey, *Anatomy of the NT*, p. 322]

### **C. Jesus’ Teaching & Miracles of Equal Importance**

•Luke’s “two sections of first teaching (4:16-30) & then stories of healing (4:31-44) are introduced similarly... Readers [are] expected to conclude that each [teaching & healing] equally arises out of Jesus being motivated by the Spirit of the Lord... Luke [is] balancing the teaching and miracles of Jesus [so] that they are of equal importance... This balancing of importance also extends to exorcism in relation to other forms of healing.” [G. Twelftree, *Jesus...Miracle-Worker*, p. 145]

•Luke “attempts to balance Jesus’ miraculous activity and his teaching in such a way as to give them equal weight ... This balancing can be seen in the fact that Jesus’ first [Nazareth] sermon (4:23-27) has as its contents a justification of Jesus’ activity as miracle-worker (Lk. 4:23-27) as well... as [a] proclaimer (Lk. 4:18-22).” [Paul Achtemeier, *Jesus & the Miracle Tradition*, p. 15]

•Compared to Mark, “Luke...change[s] the emphasis in a story...In Lk. 4:31-37 (cf. Mk. 1:21-28) where Jesus; mighty act [miracles] and his teaching are paralleled [in Luke], rather than having the miracle subordinated to Jesus’ ‘new teaching’ as in Mark’s form of the story!” [Paul Achtemeier, *Op. cit.*, p. 13]

•“Luke has bracketed his long teaching-session of Jesus [his ‘Sermon on the Plain’] (Lk. 6:20-49) with Jesus’ activity as a miracle-worker (6:17b-19; 7:1-17) being unwilling, apparently, to emphasize the one at the expense of the other.” [Paul Achtemeier, *Op. cit.*, p. 16]

### **D. Jesus’ Miracles and Message (teaching) are Mutually Reinforcing**

•Paul “Achtemeier proposes that the miracles of Jesus in Luke (as compared to Mark) perform three functions:

1. miracles serve as a balance to the teachings of Jesus;
2. miracles focus on Jesus & are used to validate Jesus & his ministry;
3. miracles evoke faith & can contribute to one’s becoming a disciple of Jesus...In Luke, more than Mark & Matthew, miracle stories can be a catalyst for faith in Jesus, for a calling to be a disciple of Jesus, and to legitimate Jesus.” [James R. McConnell, *Topos of Divine Testimony in Luke-Acts*, p. 13]

•“In Luke the miracles of Jesus are not just illustrative of...the Gospel. Rather, Jesus’ miracles are constitutive of the Gospel. Also...Jesus’ miracles are indeed evidence that Jesus is the Messiah; in this regard, Jesus’ miracles & words are equal. Overall, miracles in Luke...are more significant than in Matthew & Mark, & serve as a basis for belief & discipleship.” [James R. McConnell, *Op. cit.*, p. 14]

•Jesus’ “healings & exorcisms were an intrinsic part of his proclamation of the kingdom of God. The mighty deeds and...proclamation must go together; neither can be understood without the other.” — Craig Evans

### **E. Jesus’ miracles validate Jesus’ claims about himself**

•“In Luke’s treatment...Jesus’ miracles...have the capacity to validate Jesus. ...Jesus is asked to validate himself [via] the question [of]...John the Baptist (Lk. 7:18-23) ...In Luke...the immediate context is two miracle-stories (7:1-17), indicating that ‘all the things’ John heard about were miracles. Thus, the question...is posed, in Luke, by miracles. Luke...understands that [miracles] will answer [John’s] question... of who Jesus is, & hence they have the power of validating his claims about himself.” [Paul Achtemeier, *Op. cit.*, 18]

### **F. Jesus’ miracles authenticate Him as Messiah, the ‘Son of David/God,’ the King (Lk. 3:31, 38)**

➤ Jesus: fulfills the ‘type’ of Solomon, King David’s son, an exorcist (in Jewish tradition)

•The figure from Israelite history most associated with exorcism...is Solomon, whose unrivaled wisdom...extended through time to embrace the treatment of...demon possession.” [Ian G. Wallis,

Galilean Wonder-Worker, p. ]

•During the time of Jesus, at the popular level, the title ‘Son of David’ referred to Solomon... Something conveyed by ‘the Son of David’...looked back to...Solomon...Donahue says...in the Gospels ‘exorcism distinguished a person as possessor of royal power in David’s line.’ K. Berger... proposes that...Solomon’s power over demons stands behind...the title ‘Son of David’ in the NT’... Jesus’ exorcism demonstrates that the kingdom of God has come.” [James Brady, “Role of Miracle-Working as Authentication of Jesus as ‘The Son of God’,” Churchman, p. 35]

•“Jesus was seen as the ‘Son of David’ because he was bringing about...’shalom’ which even Solomon...did not. He healed the sick, cast out demons, raised the dead, & calmed the storm...Jesus brought order out of chaos, He brought about soundness, health & well-being...He brought peace [‘shalom’]...[By his miracles,] Jesus showed Himself to be God’s anointed [King, Messiah], God’s representative, & God’s Son in His conquering the forces of evil... Jesus’ miracles are essentially victories over death & the Devil.” [James Brady, Op. cit., pp. 36-37]

#### **G. Due to Jesus’ miracles people ascribe glory to God**

•“Miracles can be the basis of belief in God...in Luke’s treatment of the miracles of Jesus...There are regular references to the praise of God by those who witness the miracles...or by the benefi[ciaries] ...[They] see God behind the activity of Jesus, acknowledging [him as] the one...God...chosen to do his work.” –Paul Achtemeier

#### **IV. Jesus Heals & Cleanses the Leper of his Leprosy (Lk. 5:12-15)**

•“12 While Jesus was in one of the towns, a man came to him who was covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he bowed down with his face to the ground & begged him, “Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.” 13 So he stretched out his hand & touched him, saying, “I am willing. Be clean!” And immediately the leprosy left him. 14 Then he ordered the man to tell no one, but commanded him, “Go & show yourself to a priest, & bring the offering for your cleansing, as Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.” 15 But the news about him spread even more, & large crowds were gathering together to hear him & to be healed of their illnesses. 16 Yet Jesus himself frequently withdrew to the wilderness & prayed.” (5:12-16)

#### **A. ‘Leprosy’ (Gk. lepra)—a chronic skin disease**

•Leviticus 13 “deals with uncleanness brought about by ‘leprosy.’ The ESV adopts... ‘leprosy’ for the Hebrew tsara’at, but its exact modern equivalent is unclear... [since] it manifests itself not only in humans but also in clothes & articles (Lev. 13:47-59), & even in the walls of houses (14:34-53). The term used in Leviticus is...generic: it could include many skin ailments, such as psoriasis, urticaria (hives), favus (which produces honeycomb-shaped crusts), & leukoderma (which produces white patches on the skin). What today is called ‘leprosy’ (Hansen’s disease) was unknown in the Near East at the time of Leviticus. Clear references to [‘leprosy’ (Hansen’s disease)] do not occur until the late first millennium BC.” [ESV]

•“In the NT, the term lepra...occurs...13 times, all in the Synoptic Gospels. Jesus healed several [people] afflicted with ‘leprosy’; usually the word used for the healing is ‘cleansed’ [implying] the afflicted were both healed & [made] ritually pure. When a Samaritan recovered from ‘leprosy’...the text used ‘healed,’ for ritual purity at the [Jerusalem] Temple was not an issue for him (Lk. 17:12-19).” [John Hartley, Leviticus, Vol. 4, pp. 188-9]

•“Heroditus, the Roman historian...wrote that it was a custom in Persia & throughout the Mediterranean region, to isolate leprous persons & exclude them from contact with others.” [Phillip Eichman, History...of Leprosy, p.]

•The OT provided specific guidelines for skin diseases, generally called ‘leprosy,’ many of which were highly contagious (Lev. 13-14). This term (Gk. lepra) included a variety of serious skin diseases & was not limited to what is today called ‘leprosy’ (Hansen’s disease) ... ‘make me clean.’ Not only was ‘leprosy’ a disease, it made the leper ...[&] anyone who touched him ceremonially unclean (Lev. 13:45-46). But when Jesus touched him, he was healed, & Jesus did not become unclean. [ESV]

•“Recent genomic studies of worldwide [leprosy] strains...traced it along global human dispersions during the past ~100,000 years...Leprosy [is] the oldest human-specific infection.” [XY Han, “Age of

Leprosy,” PLOS 2014]

- Plus there’s evidence of double infections of both TB & Leprosy in skeletal remains.
- Modern research “cast[s] doubt on the [OT] Hebrews having been acquainted with [what’s called ‘leprosy’ today (Hansen’s disease)]...By the time of Christ it is highly probable that it had reached Palestine, leaving open the possibility that some NT cases could have included this disease. Unfortunately, the NT accounts of...lepra [leprosy] provide no detailed description of any...symptoms [allowing] identification of the disease involved.” [John Hartley, Leviticus, Vol. 4, p. 188]
- However, the “evidence now seems less than conclusive. Numerous scholars in recent decades have drawn the opposite conclusion, that terms for ancient skin diseases including [OT ‘leprosy’] were used in reference to Hansen’s disease among other conditions...” [Yitzhaq Feder, Purity and Pollution (2022) pp. 63-64]

### **B. “If you are willing you can...” (Lk. 5:12)**

- “The description, [Gk. ‘full of leprosy’], reveals the last stage of the disease, when the whole skin is affected. The leper comes to Jesus as a last resort & his actions, [‘he bowed down...his face to the ground’] reveal a desperate need of healing. His plea, [“Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.”] shows a lack of assurance posed by the conditional tone ‘if you wish...’ [‘The leper makes no presumptions about whether Jesus will heal him or not’ (NET)] His coming to Jesus presumed that he believed that God worked through Jesus. His lack of assurance could reveal that [he] consider[ed] the disease as punishment from God. The leper...entrusts his case to God’s mercy acting in Jesus.” [Elena Butova, Four Prohibitions..., p. 238]

### **C. Jesus’ Compassion & Capability**

- “Particularly in the story of the man ‘covered with leprosy’ (Lk. 5:12-15) ...Jesus expresses the mercy of God to outsiders who have been excluded by their sickness.” [Graham H. Twelftree, Op. cit. pp. 173-4]
- “While the man has no doubts regarding Jesus’ power to render him clean through healing (...re-enfranchising him in the...broader society), he is uncertain as to whether Jesus...wishes to do so.” [N. Perrin, Luke, p. 99]
- “The leper knows Jesus’ capability, but he is uncertain of the extent of his compassion. The extent of Jesus’ compassion is revealed here. In the modern world [it is perhaps the reverse. Today’s person on the street doesn’t doubt Jesus’ compassion, but does question his capability. Accounts like this demonstrate that Jesus opened himself to all.” [D. Bock, Luke, p. 102]

### **D. Jesus’ Healing Hand**

- “Luke...injected the idea that Jesus laid his hands on the sick [4:40] ...He does not say he laid his hands on those who had demons...Luke has separated...the sick being brought to [Jesus] (4:40) from...demons coming out of many (4:41).” [Graham H. Twelftree, Jesus the Miracle-Worker, p. 148]
- “In the instance in which sickness is present without the mention of an evil or unclean spirit, hands-on contact seems to be the best mode to bring healing—‘Reaching out his hand, Jesus touched him, saying, ‘I am willing; be made clean,’ & immediately the leprosy left him.’ (Lk. 5:13)” [Archie T. Wright, Op. cit., p. 318]
- “Jesus stretches his hand, & touches the leper, [‘touched’] with the meaning ‘to make close contact, cling to’... Jesus [could have] healed by the power of his word, not by touch... [But,] a combination of Jesus’ actions & words [‘touched him, saying, ‘I’m willing. Be clean!’] suggests that he desperately wants to assure the man of God’s compassion towards him. ...The leper has no healthy spot on his skin, [yet] Jesus...commands [‘Be clean!’]... Apart from Jesus perhaps acquiring the disease ...he immediately shared [the man’s] ritual uncleanness. Yet, Jesus not only remained unaffected by the contagion...of leprosy or its uncleanness, but was still able to heal & cleanse.” [Elena Butova, Four Prohibitions..., p. 238]

### **E. Immediate Cure – “immediately the leprosy left him” (5:14)**

- As with other healings by Jesus, “healing happens immediately; the sick in these stories do not enter a process through which healing will eventually happen.” [Jan-Olav Henriksen, Karl Olav Sandnes, Op. cit., p. 20]

## **F. Jesus' Holistic Healing**

•“Jesus’ healings reflect his compassionate concern for holistic...restoration of humans to full-capacity health, well-being & social functioning. Jesus’ cleaning of a man with skin disease [‘leprosy’] overturns & reverses his place in society (5:12-14). The healing restores him from a place of banishment on the margins of society, unable to participate in the religious, communal life of Israel (Lev. 13:44-46) into a place of full communion within the people of God, which is why Jesus orders him to show himself to the priests & make an offering as a testimony to them (5:14).” [Joshua W. Jipp, Op. cit., p. ]

## **V. The Role of Ritual Cleansing –“Go, show yourself to a priest...” (Lk. 5:14)**

### **A. The Process**

•“After Jesus says, [‘Be clean!’], the leprosy immediately disappears. Now the man was physically healed & cleansed. Yet, he still needed the official pronouncement about his cleaning... This could be made by a priest & accompanied by the cleansing ritual, which required...offerings in the Temple. Healing & cleansing were given to the man freely by the mercy of God, but the confirmation...required a few more actions... The man had to go to Jerusalem... & give sacrifices at his own expense. The ceremony itself lasted a minimum of eight days.” [Elena Butova, Op. cit., p. 239]

### **B. Official Confirmation**

•“The role of the ritual law...is to provide an official confirmation of the reversal [of uncleanness] which has already taken place in the [healed] person’s body. Thus, purification from uncleanness caused by leprosy was possible only after one had recovered. The sacrifices appointed for ritual cleansing were brought by the recovered one to enable them to participate in temple [worship]... The ritual law... played a secondary role to the healing hand of God, who alone made that reversal possible.” [Elena Butova, Op. cit., pp. 237-8]

### **C. Unnecessary?**

•“All these actions could be viewed as unnecessary, if...the healing was complete & the uncleanness was due to a common Jewish submission to the Temple [rules]... In 5:14 it is clearly stated that the purification rite is viewed by Jesus [with the]... subordinate purpose... [‘as a testimony to them’ (5:14b) i.e.,] ‘in testimony to those, whom the news reaches.’” [Elena Butova, Op. cit., pp. 239-40]

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### **E. Restored to Community**

•“It would provide final, conclusive evidence the leper had been made whole: Jesus submits the result [of his healing] to those who can legally declare the man fit to return to normal life.” [John Reumann, “...Problems in Pericope Reform,” in ERW. Schultz (ed.) Vita Laudanda, p. ]

•“Jesus offers healing to persons who, because of their social status...and their sickness (demon-possession, leprosy) are estranged from human community. Illness & healing...affect the web of social relationships... Through his healing acts, Jesus announces that God wills to restore to the human family & to the fellowship [the marginalized...] ...which anticipates the [end-time] reign of God.” [John T. Carroll, Op. cit., p. 138]

## **F. Jesus' Order: “Go, show yourself to a priest...offer...as a testimony to them.” (Lk. 5:14)**

1. It could mean ‘Go, show yourself...offer’ as “evidence for priests & people that the leper is cured, the common interpretation... Cranfield prefers [this] sense as most likely for Mark. But it may be that the phrase took on differing meanings [reflected in other Gospels].” [John Reumann, Op. cit., pp. ]

2. Or, it could mean, Go, show yourself...offer’ as “evidence to the priests & the people...that a

miracle has been wrought; the significance lies in the one who performed it [i.e., Jesus]. The healing is a sign of God's power, and hence of the age to come, at work, in Jesus of Nazareth. In this case, the miracle has Messianic...import ... For Luke [this] sense...is attractive, evidence of the significance of Jesus who has healed the leper cf. Lk. 5:15 & 7:16-17." [Reumann, Op. cit., p. ]

### **G. Testimony to Jesus as Messiah, Challenging Judaism's Leaders**

• "Jesus admonished the cleansed leper to show himself to the priest 'for a testimony to them' [Lk. 5:14]. The word 'them' is probably a reference to the Jewish leaders. These [Jewish leaders] are the ones primarily responsible for recognizing the Messiah and designating him as such. Only then would the people be unified in their recognition of & submission to Him [the Messiah]." [James Brady, "Role of Miracle-Working as Authentication of Jesus as 'The Son of God'," Churchman/ Evangelical Review of Theology (1989) p. 33]

### **H. Resistance from Judaism's 'Gate-keepers'**

• In Luke 5, "the conflict between Jesus and his [Pharisaic] opponents comes to the forefront, beginning with the healing of the man with leprosy. As impressive as the [leper's] healing may be, the leaders' determination to protect their role as Israel's gatekeepers [clashes with Jesus' Jubilee mission] ... Having experienced...[both] active & passive resistance from the Galilean religious leaders, Jesus intends the cleansed man to serve as 'Evidence A' ['as a witness against them' (Lk. 5:14b)]." [Nicholas Perrin, Luke, pp. 98, 100]

### **I. Repercussions**

• "News...spread even more, & large crowds...came together to hear him & to be healed of their sicknesses." (5:15)

• With the healing of the leper (Lk. 5:12-16), Luke "concludes...by noting that the great crowds who came to Jesus as a result...of that healing, came to hear & to be healed of their diseases (5:15) ... Both [teaching & healing] characterize the activity of Jesus." [Paul Achtemeier, Op. cit., p. 16]

### **VI. The Sceptics' Jesus —A Healer Who Did Not Cure Diseases!**

• Funk & his notoriously sceptical colleagues...identify six specific healings...that they believe are evidence of [underlying psychosomatic conditions including] ...the man with leprosy (Lk. 5:12-16); the paralysed man (Lk. 5:17-26) ..." [Justin Meggitt, "Historical Jesus & Healing," in F. Watts (ed.) Spiritual Healing, p. 26]

• John Dominic Crossan says "I presume that Jesus, who did not & could not cure the disease ['leprosy'] or any other one, healed the poor man's illness [symptoms, isolation?] by refusing to accept the disease's ritual uncleanness & social ostracization...By healing the illness without curing the disease, Jesus acted as an alternative boundary-keeper." [John Dominic Crossan, Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography, (1994) p. 82]

• JD. Crossan views this case as "the healing of a social illness rather than the curing of a physical skin disease ['leprosy']. By touching the leper Jesus reached out to someone who, according to the dominant purity system, was to be isolated. Jesus, by his...actual touching, negated the social stigma attached to such a person and reintegrated him' into a community of the marginalized. [He didn't cure the man's disease.]" [Johan Strijdom, "Unconventionality' of Jesus," NEOTESTAMENTICA, V. 29(2) (1995) p. 317]

• "Biblical leprosy...does not, according to [JJ.] Pilch, correspond to Hansen's disease, as modern medicine now knows it. [In Pilch's view, 'leprosy'] is a reality constructed by the patient & the community; hence it is about pollution ['uncleanness'], not contagion. There's nothing biological involved in Leviticus 13-14 nor in Jesus' healing of those who were leproi ['lepers'] according to NT texts. Jesus' actions toward these people provided them with a new and meaningful life, making them acceptable & welcome within the community. He made them 'clean.' Hence, the way Jesus healed leproi ['lepers'] can be compared to his associating with tax collectors & prostitutes." [Jan-Olav Henriksen, Karl Olav Sandnes, Op. cit., p. 28]

• JJ. Pilch wrongly "asserts that 'in the Bible there is no interest at all in disease, since this concept requires awareness of such things as microscopic viruses & bacteria.'" [John J. Pilch, Healing in the

NT, p. 76]

•JJ. Pilch is mistaken in “claiming that 1st century Mediterranean people only experienced illnesses although diseases were around, [because they lacked the] biomedical knowledge & microscopes...to identify ‘diseases’.” [Pieter F. Craffert, *Medical Anthropology...in Jesus Research*, p. 11]

•But, “even if sickness is experienced as an illness, this does not mean that someone is not suffering from an identifiable disease.” [Pieter F. Craffert, *Medical Anthropology...in Jesus Research*, p. 6]

•Moreover, “Having ‘meaning restored to life’...does not justify the often dramatic & sudden changes implied for [those healed] in the healing stories [of the NT].” [J-O Henriksen, *KO Sandnes, Op. cit.*, p. 31]

➤“Healing is a gift to be prayed for, &...to be thankful for when it occurs; it is not a right to be demanded...Healing is a gift, it can never become a given.” — Karl Olav Sandnes

### **VII. Jesus Heals a Paralytic —Breaking through Barriers (Luke 5:17-25)**

•“Now on one of those days, while he was teaching, there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting nearby (who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem), and the power of the Lord was with him to heal. 18 Just then some men showed up, carrying a paralyzed man on a stretcher. They were trying to bring him in and place him before Jesus. 19 But since they found no way to carry him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down on the stretcher through the roof tiles right in front of Jesus. 20 When Jesus saw their faith he said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven.” 21 Then the experts in the law and the Pharisees began to think to themselves, “Who is this man who is uttering blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?” 22 When Jesus perceived their hostile thoughts, he said to them, “Why are you raising objections within yourselves? 23 Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Stand up and walk’? 24 But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he said to the paralyzed man— “I tell you, stand up, take your stretcher and go home.” 25 Immediately he stood up before them, picked up the stretcher he had been lying on, and went home, glorifying God. 26 Then astonishment seized them all, and they glorified God. They were filled with awe, saying, “We have seen incredible things today.” (Luke 5:17-26 NET)

•Notes: 5:17 “He was teaching” 5:17-20 “The Gospels portray Jesus in a number of roles, including healer, itinerant preacher, exorcist, miracle worker, and rabbinic antagonist. His most distinctive role, however, was teaching, though often, as in Lk. 5:17, we are not told what he taught.” [James R. Edwards, *Luke*, p. 19]

•5:17 “the power of the Lord was with [Jesus] to heal” “The power of the LORD [God is] with Jesus... This power is said to be for healing.” —Graham Twelftree

•5:19 “They went up on the roof...” A 1st century Palestine house had a flat roof with stairs/ladder going up.

•5:20 ‘their faith’ The plural pronoun their makes it clear that Jesus was responding to the faith of the entire group, not just the paralyzed man. [NET]

•5:23: ‘Which is easier’ is a reflective kind of question. On the one hand to declare sins are forgiven is easier, since one does not need to see it, unlike telling a paralyzed person to walk. On the other hand, it is harder, because for it to be true one must possess the authority to forgive the sin.” [NET]

### **A. An Allegorical Interpretation:**

#### 1. The Paralytic:

•“The healing of the paralytic invites us to see analogies between this one historical [episode] and Christ’s redemption of humanity...In the Gospel miracle stories, anyone receiving healing or deliverance from demons can be seen as a type of the sinner in need of the gospel, but this typology is even clearer in the case of the paralytic since Jesus explicitly forgives his sins.” [Barry L. Blackburn Sr., “Jesus’ Healing of a Paralyzed Man (Mk. 2.1-12) [Lk. 5:17-26],” *Leaven*, Vol. 1, Issue 1, Article 12 (2011) p. ]

#### 2. The 4 Friends:

•“It’s easy to see a typology between the paralytic’s 4 friends who brought him to the Savior & the 4

Gospels [Matt. to John], whose contents brought us, too, to the Lord..."

- "The paralytic's 4 friends...so loved the lame man that they took extreme measures to get him into the presence of the Savior." [Barry L. Blackburn Sr., Op. cit., p. ]

- Their endeavors: "In...the story Luke adds to [Mark's account] that those carrying the paralysed man 'were trying to bring him in & lay him before Jesus' (5:18), which emphasizes the keenness of people to gain access to Jesus & his healing ministry." [Graham Twelftree, Jesus the Miracle-Worker, p. 151]

3. The Obstacles –the Crowd & the Roof:

- "The obstacles faced by the paralytic & his friends enable them to demonstrate the reality & strength of their trust in the healing power of Jesus. They face two impediments: the crowd & the roof. In the same way, there were obstacles...things that interpose themselves between us & intimacy with the Lord." [Barry L. Blackburn Sr., Op. cit., p. ]

- "Those sick or those carrying their sick to Jesus faced obstacles on their way to find help from him. The friends who brought the paralytic to Jesus had to climb [to] the roof & make a way to lower the sick man down to get Jesus' attention... The stories about Jesus' healing call for similar faith today." [Jan-Olav Henriksen, Op. cit., p. 116]

4. Extreme Measures Needed:

- "Just as [people] crowded...around...Jesus...so that the paralytic's friends had to resort to extreme measures, so Christians today should make every effort to avail themselves of the message of Christ." [Barry L. Blackburn, Op. cit., p]

- "It must have been both difficult & embarrassing...for the 4 friends to get the paralytic up on the roof & then down through a hole...but love for their friend drove them to it...[If] that same love inhabits us...we'll take our friends to the Savior." [Barry L. Blackburn Sr., Op. cit., p. ]

5. Faith, Forgiveness, & Healing

- "Jesus recognizes the faith of the group...[who] demonstrated a persistent faith that overcomes obstacles. The friends believe that God, working through Jesus, can heal their paralytic companion. Their aggressive confidence compels them to tear off a roof to place their friend in the presence of Jesus." [Rod Womer, "God's Forgiveness as Expressed in the Gospels," LMU/LLS (2020) p. 39]

- "Jesus provided not only spiritual salvation, but also physical & emotional healing...For example, when he met the paralyzed man he not only forgave the man's sin but also healed him." [Samuel W. Kunhiyop, African Christian Theology, p 104-5]

6. "Your sins are forgiven" (Lk. 5:20) Who's Doing the Forgiving? God or Jesus?

- "Luke adds that God 'alone' can forgive sins (5:21), which has the effect of enhancing the divine act of Jesus in forgiving the man...Luke sees faith as important in healing (5:20)." [Graham Twelftree, Op. cit., p. 151]

- "In Jesus' declaration of forgiveness, its somewhat unclear...who is doing the forgiving... The passive voice ('your sins are being forgiven') has been interpreted as a 'divine passive,' indicating that its God who has removed the paralytic's sins...If this is the case Jesus...[is] a spokesperson for God declaring His forgiveness ...This is not, however, how the scribes understand Jesus' words. [They] understand Jesus to be more than a spokesperson for God –declaring God's forgiveness of the paralytic...Jesus was himself authorizing divine forgiveness...God's forgiveness is Jesus' forgiveness. Jesus' forgiveness is God's forgiveness." [Cedric EW. Vine, "Forgiveness of Sins in... Luke," Journal of Family Research & Practice, Vol. 1, #1 (2021) pp. 62-62]

7. "Get up" "When Jesus commanded the paralytic to rise, the man 'gets up.' This phrase is...the Greek word egerthe, a word used in the NT to describe our resurrection in baptism...This...[is] what happens to us all when Christ forgives our sins and bestows on us the Holy Spirit." [Barry L. Blackburn Sr., Op. cit., p. ]

8. Demonstration:

- Jesus told the paralytic, "Stand up, take your stretcher & go home." The amazement of the bystanders is caused by the lame man walking away...The activity of walking served as a demonstration here...[It] does not work if [Jesus' healing] simply means being 'restored to a meaningful life' [in an abstract, nebulous sense]." [J-O. Henriksen, Op. cit., p. 38]

### 9. Demonstrates Jesus' Identity & Power to forgive sins:

•“Jesus healed the paralytic & also forgave his sins. Jesus has the authority to do both. The authority of Jesus is the issue [here]. He has power over sickness, sin, ... & demons, all demonstrated through a series of stories... The healings are... demonstrations of Jesus' identity. The healing of the paralytic, however... [also] visually demonstrates Jesus' power to forgive sins.” [Jan-Olav Henriksen, Op. cit., p. 122]

## VIII. Jesus' Exorcisms: Signs of God's Inaugurated Kingdom

### A. Importance of Jesus' Exorcisms

•“We know of no other miracle worker in antiquity who conducted so many exorcisms & for whom exorcism was as important as it was for Jesus.” — Graham Twelftree

•“Although... exorcism was only part of Jesus' activity, exorcism dominated his public ministry.” —G. Twelftree

•“Jesus claimed that his particular exorcisms... were... the actual coming... of the kingdom of God.” — G. Twelftree

•“Jesus is the first one to make a specific connection between... exorcism & the defeat of Satan, between exorcism & eschatology.” —Graham Twelftree

### B. Characteristics of demons/unclean spirits:

1. The number of evil spirits is indefinitely large

2. Special reference is made to groups of seven evil spirits (Luke 8:2; 11:24-26)

3. Demons are destined for a preliminary place of imprisonment & a fiery place of final punishment (Mt. 8:29)

4. Demon-possessed people [can have] superhuman strength (Lk 8:29) [E. Langton, Essentials of Demonology (1949) pp.; E. Ferguson, Demonology of the Early Christian World (1984) p. ]

### C. 'Demons/Unclean Spirits' always 'Evil' in the NT

•“In the Gospels 'demons' always refer to evil or unclean spirits... [There's] a consistent presentation of 'demons' as evil powers... In the Gospel narratives the expressions 'demon' & 'unclean spirit' are used interchangeably... To be impure is to have a demon & to have a demon was to be impure.” [Loren T. Stuckenbruck, Myth of Rebellious Angels, pp. 172-3]

### D. No 'Neutral demons/spirits or 'Good demons/spirits' in the NT

•“In the ancient world outside of Judaism & Christianity, the term ['demon'] was, on the whole, a neutral expression... beings capable of having beneficial as well as harmful effects on humans. However, in the Gospels —indeed, in the NT as a whole —the related term ['demons'] acquires a categorically negative meaning.” [Loren T. Stuckenbruck, Op. cit., p. 173]

•“Contrary to the Greek concept... all demons in the NT work 'evil' in the person's life; there are no 'good' demons in the NT; the function of all of them is to afflict humanity whether by testing or physical affliction... According to the NT demonic [episodes], the issues of deafness, dumbness, & epilepsy are [often] physical ailments brought on by 'evil, spirits' in the NT.” [Archie T. Wright, “Demons in the NT,” BR. Grafius (ed.) Oxford Handbook of Biblical Monsters, p. 308]

### E. Demon Possession vs. Demonic Attack ('Oppression')

•“In the ancient world... demon possession was often believed to be different from illness produced by [demonic] attack... The distinction... is important. Invasion by evil spirits resulted in the body's captivity... 'possession' (as opposed to 'oppression'... the infliction of harm by outside agents, including by demons) ['Possession'] was considered... Satan's reign in the individual, whereas oppression did not. [Jesus' exorcisms deal with demon-possession].” [Audrey A. Dawson, Perspectives on Healing in the NT, University of Aberdeen (2005) pp. 14-15]

•“Sometimes a person is actually 'possessed' by an evil spirit... his own personality is suppressed by the personality of the evil spirit who is 'ruling' that person's mind & body (Mk. 5:15-16). But many times the person is not completely 'ruled', but only 'attacked' or 'oppressed'... by the evil spirit. All Christians know that believers cannot be possessed completely by an evil spirit, since believers are ruled & owned by God Himself (1 Cor. 6:19-20) ... [Some] Christians think that believers can be

‘oppressed’ or ‘attacked’ by evil spirits ...They point to Paul’s ‘messenger of Satan’ that tormented his flesh (2 Cor. 12:7).” [Tom Hale, Applied NT Commentary, p. 95]

### **F.Exorcisms Dominated Jesus’ Public Ministry**

•Jesus’ “exorcisms...formed a part neither of the regular OT predictions, nor of 1st-century Jewish expectations, concerning healing & deliverance associated with the coming of [God’s] kingdom... They therefore stand out...as being part of the battle in which Jesus alone was engaged.” [NT. Wright, Jesus & the Victory of God, p. 195]

•“Jesus did not pray for [evil] spirits to be expelled, or invoke a name, as was common practice. Instead, he addressed the spirits directly on his own authority. By doing so Jesus made the claim that he was in conflict with evil powers on his own behalf...[Yet,] Jesus’ exorcisms [are] ...not individual acts of kindness, or even individual acts of power [but]...part of the [end-time] drama that’s already underway & that God is about to bring to a conclusion’ (JP. Meier).” [Richard Cooke, New Testament: SCM Core Text, p. 424]

### **G.Jesus’ Exorcisms vs. Others’**

•“The link between exorcisms & God’s [end-time] rule...go[es] back to Jesus...The notion of God’s reign beginning to vanquish Satan’s rule is [not] found...in other Jewish literature.” –Loren Stuckenbruck

•“The distinguishing character of [Jesus’] healings & exorcisms was that they were signs of the in-breaking of God’s kingdom. Other exorcists...did not attach the same revelatory significance to their exorcisms.” –Ben Pugh

•“Jesus achieved his success by the Spirit/finger of God...distinguished Jesus’ exorcistic success from [that] of his Jewish contemporaries: he laid claim to a...power which...other exorcists did not experience.” –James Dunn

### **H.Jesus’ Exorcisms: Signs of God’s Inaugurated Kingdom (Lk. 11:20)**

•“Jesus’ exorcisms are associated with the beginning of God’s rule [His kingdom].” — Loren Stuckenbruck

•“Many scholars are convinced that Jesus regarded his expulsions of demons [unclean spirits], along with the healing miracles, as demonstrations of God’s rule [kingdom] breaking into this world. The exorcisms ...illustrated how through Jesus’ activity God was already dispossessing the forces of evil from the foothold they were believed to have on the present age. Not one of the exorcism stories [themselves], however draws an explicit connection between what Jesus is doing...and God’s kingship or rule. Here the sayings [of Jesus] become especially important...In Luke 11:20 ...Jesus claimed, “If I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.’ The vacuum [within the person dispossessed] that arises from demonic expulsion by Jesus is claimed to have been filled with God’s royal [protective] power. For those affected, Jesus’ ministry marks the beginning of salvation [the deliverance process] ...The link between exorcisms & God’s [end-time] rule...go[es] back to Jesus...The notion of God’s reign beginning to vanquish Satan’s rule is [not] found...in other Jewish literature.” [LT. Stuckenbruck, “Jesus’ Apocalyptic...,” Charlesworth (ed.) Pseudepigrapha, p. 73]

### **I.Overpowering the ‘Strong man’ (Satan) & ‘Plundering his possessions’ (Lk. 11:21-22)**

•“The proclamation of the Kingdom of God was central to Jesus’ preaching & teaching. Jesus himself...linked his mighty works to the kingdom’s appearance: ‘If I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.’ (Lk. 11:20). At the same time, his work is a manifestation of his having overcome the power of Satan, or evil: ‘When a strong man, fully armed, guards his estate, his possessions are secure. But when one stronger than he attacks & overpowers him, he takes from him all his weapons he trusted in, & divides up his plunder.’ (Lk. 11:21-22). When asked on John the Baptist’s behalf whether he was ‘the coming one’ –i.e., the Messiah...who would inaugurate God’s rule –Jesus replies: “Go & report to John what you have seen & heard: The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, & the poor are told the good news’ (Lk. 7:22). He instructs his disciples that in healing the sick they

should say: 'The kingdom of God has come near you.' (Lk. 10:9). In Jesus' own view, then, his miracles are signs of the breaking in of the [end-time] kingdom." [RA. Spivey, Op. cit., p. 321]

### **J.Exorcisms: Demonic Power is Defeated by Jesus & his Disciples (Lk. 10:17-20)**

- "The 72 [disciples] returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name!" 18 So he said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. 19 Look, I have given you authority to tread...on the full force of the enemy, & nothing will hurt you. 20 Nevertheless rejoice that your names stand written in heaven'." (Lk. 10:17-20)

- "Successful exorcisms in the Synoptic Gospels are not...attributed to Jesus alone...Exorcisms [are] performed by Jesus' disciples, they are also...practiced by those who are not among Jesus' immediate followers... the... 'strange' exorcist in Lk. 9:49-50) ...Jesus' encounters with the demonic world are located by the Synoptic Gospels within a religious climate in which exorcisms were considered legitimate... According to the Gospels, Jesus...participated in a worldview in which exorcism made sense...A wide number of contemporaries believed that Jesus engaged in open conflict with demonic beings." [Loren T. Stuckenbruck, Op. cit., p. 170]

- "Jesus' declaration upon the return of the 70 [or 72] disciples in Lk. 10:18 that he 'saw Satan fall... like lightning' is offered as an explanation of why the disciples [are] successful exorcists. Exorcisms result from a power struggle in which demonic power is...overcome." [Loren T. Stuckenbruck, Op. cit., p. 172]

### **K.An Appointed Time for Demons' Judgment/Punishment**

- The demon says "What do you have to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us?" (Lk. 4:34)

- In the present age "evil spirits...can operate under restriction, knowing their time to wreak havoc on humanity is limited {'Have you come here to torment us before the time? (Mt. 8:29); 'I beg you, don't torment me!'" ['The request...that Jesus not bother them implies. There was an appointed time in which demons would face their judgment' NET]}' [Loren T. Stuckenbruck, Op. cit., p. 183]