

The Gospel of Luke

Chapter 5

(Luke 5:1-39)

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The incidents recorded next in **Chapter 5** and beyond, took place not only in Capernaum but in other cities of Israel, as well.

We now turn to **Chapter 5**. In this chapter, we are continuing the study of Jesus presenting Himself as the King-Messiah to the people of Israel. We are seeing His ministry as the Son of Man presented to mankind. In that, we have four sections to note:

3. **Demonstrating His authority over the Disciples**, by selecting four of them along with the miracle of catching much fish, **Luke 5:1-11.**
4. **Demonstrating His authority over Defilement**, by healing a leper, **Luke 5:12-16.**
5. **Demonstrating His authority over Defectiveness**, by healing a paralytic and discussing the forgiveness of sin, **Luke 5:17-26.**
6. **Demonstrating His authority over the Despised**, in the call of Matthew, dining with sinners, and the parables about old vs. new, **Luke 5:27-39.**

We begin with:

3. **“Demonstrating His authority over the Disciples**, by selecting four of them along with the miracle of catching much fish, **Luke 5:1-11.”**

As we have noted, Luke does not go into detail regarding the selection of the 12 disciples, as do the other gospels. He notes it in passing, because he is focusing on telling the story of Jesus. But, in **vs. 1-11**, we see the first 4 disciples called by Jesus, Simon-Peter, his brother Andrew, and another pair of brothers James and John. The other gospels speak about this episode in Luke in **Mat 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20; John 1:40-42.**

In **vs. 1**, the **“Sea of Gennesaret”** is LIMNE, λίμνη meaning, “lake or pool,” and GENNESARE, Γεννησαρέτ. Cf. **Mar 14:34; Mark 6:53-54.** It is another name for the Sea of Galilee and the Sea of Tiberius in **John 21:1.** The OT uses Chinnereth, KINAROTH, **Num 34:11.**



It is called “Galilee,” because the region by that name lies along its western shore; “Chinnereth,” meaning “harp,” because it is shaped like that instrument; “Lake of Gennesaret,” because the plain bearing that name touches it on the northwest as does a town; and “Sea of Tiberias,” because the city of that name, named after the Roman Emperor Tiberius Julius Caesar Augustus, is on its southwestern shore.

The lake is approximately 14 miles long by 9 miles wide and lies in a depression that is 686 feet below sea level. The lake ranges from 80 to 160 feet in depth. The Jordan River enters the north end in a steep descent from a distance of 25 miles away and exits the south end towards its journey to the Dead Sea. It has an almost tropical climate. Today its shores are mostly deserted, except for Tiberias, which is a major tourist site. In Jesus’ day, 9 towns surrounded it, none with less than 15,000 people. Many of these towns were occupied with agriculture, boat building, and fishing as major industries.

After Jesus had taught the crowd and preached the Kingdom of God from just off the shore line in Peter’s boat, He instructed Peter to cast the net down once more. Peter in his bewilderment, agreed to cast the nets once again even though he had been fishing all night.

Principle:

- You never know what time of day or night, or even place you will be able to witness and evangelize. It is not always on the set time or date. Therefore, always be prepared.

Jesus once again, this time post resurrection, instructed them to cast their nets when prior they had been unsuccessful, **John 21:6**.

In **vs. 5**, when Peter replies to Jesus, he calls Him “**Master**” EPISTATES, ἐπιστάτης that means, “master, overseer, superintendent, or administrator.” Only Luke uses this term in the NT, here and in **Luke 8:24** twice; **8:45; 9:33, 46; 17:13**. It means one in authority of any kind which produces an attitude of obedience. It is a translation from the Aramaic for “Rabbi,” cf. **Luke 9:33** with **Mark 9:5**.

Peter used this term because he had known Jesus for about a year, and trusted Him and His teaching. Luke uses it to make the relationship concept clearer to his Hellenistic audience. The Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary notes, “*The usage lends itself well to the situation portrayed in the Gospels, i.e., of a fellowship marked by a close personal relationship, yet filled with deep respect.*”

The other term usually employed, meaning “master or teacher,” is DIDASKALOS that is not used here.

When Peter says, “**we worked hard**,” Luke uses the Verb KOPIAO, κοπιῶ that means, “become weary, fatigued, work hard, or labor.” It denotes both physical and mental effort. It does not necessarily signify the work itself as much as it describes the effect of the work.

This is the word Jesus used to invite those who are tired, those who are laboring, to come to Him for rest, **Mat 11:28**. Christians are called, “to work in the mission to proclaim God’s kingdom.” Thus, KOPIAO often appears in contexts of “gospel labor,” e.g., **2 Cor 11:23, 27; 1 Tim 4:10; 5:17; cf. 1 Cor 16:16; Phil 2:16**.

So, the dual meaning is apropos to Peter and us. When we do our own work, from our flesh, we become tired and weary. Jesus invites those who are weary of the flesh to enter into His rest. Yet, the Christian life calls for our hard work, through Divine Good Production, to deliver the gospel message.

Notice that when they worked from their flesh, (i.e., human good), they produced nothing from their own labor, but when they obeyed Jesus, (i.e., Divine good), the catch was bountiful. This was a clear message to all of Israel, given their history, and to us as well.

Peter's faith and positive volition in Jesus is demonstrated by his words in saying, **"I will do as you say,"** and by his actions, **"letting down the nets."** Peter was the fisherman; Jesus was a carpenter. Jesus' suggestion seemed unreasonable, but Peter showed his faith, love, and respect for Christ by not letting his better judgment, (that fishing in the day time is not the best time), hinder his obedience.

Principle:

- A faithful life is one where your words and actions complement each other, not contradict each other.

Many times, God asks us to do what to us does not make sense or seems foolish, but in faith and obedience to God, we are to do as He instructs.

In **vs 6-7**, as a result of their faithfulness, they had a great catch. So, great they needed others to assist. Sometimes you cannot go it alone. In order to win many souls, we need to work together.

The great number of fish was another demonstration of Christ's lordship over creation. Even the creatures of the sea obey His will.

"Note that the miracle did not occur apart from human agency. Peter and Andrew had to row out into the sea to the deep water and cast their net overboard. And the fish did not jump into the boat, the men had to haul them in. They even needed more help from their partners. They did the work; Jesus performed the miracle." (Complete Biblical Library Commentary)

In **vs. 8**, all of Peter's experience told Peter it was humanly impossible to catch fish successfully in this lake during the late morning hours. He even protested that the time for catching fish was past, **vs. 5**. But when Peter saw the miracle, he fell down, utterly astonished at what had happened.

Saying he was a **"sinful man"** is his confession that He had some doubt, even though He obeyed Jesus' command. Saying, **"depart from Me,"** does not mean, "get out of here, leave!" But it means, "I am not worthy to be in your presence."

Notice that Peter does not call Him Rabbi here, but **"Lord"** KURIOS, a title for YHWH. We see a change in Peter's attitude towards the Christ. He was seeing Him as the God-Man who came to take away the sins of the world. He no longer just saw Him as a great human teacher, but also as God incarnate.

In **vs. 9**, the cause of Peter's and his companions' **"amazement"** THAMBOS, as we noted in **Luke 4:36**, was the fear which enveloped them. A literal translation is: "Astonishment seized him and all the ones with him." They had never seen anything like this.

In **vs. 10**, Jesus calmed their anxiety with His oft repeated refrain, **"fear not"** ME PHOBOS. He tells them to have faith in Him and if they do, they will be very successful in witnessing and evangelizing in their new occupation as "professional Christians."

Mat 4:19; Mark 1:17, have the more famous line that Jesus said, **"Follow me and I will make you (become) fishers of men."**

Interestingly, rather than fishing for fish that brings the living to death, they would be fishing for men, bringing them from death to life.

James is mentioned here, whose name in Hebrew is IAKOBOS which also means, "Jacob."

Finally, in **vs. 11**, once they hit land, that was enough for the pair of brothers, who were in partnership of a fishing business. They dropped everything and left everything to follow Jesus, cf. **Mat 4:20-22; 19:29; Mark 1:18-20;**

Luke 5:28.

Mat 19:29, “And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name’s sake, will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life.”

Jesus was now adding to His numbers so that His catch would be greater than if He just went it alone. In this way many more people would be “caught” for their souls’ sake.

You can learn more about Peter, Andrew, James, John, and the other disciples in our Doctrine of the Apostles.

Click on the bulleted icon on the left of the linked page to find: (12 Apostles)

<https://webweaverprogracefellowship.s3.amazonaws.com/People+in+the+Bible.pdf>

4. Over defilement (a leper healed), Luke 5:12-16. Jesus now demonstrates His authority over defilement by healing a leper. This scene is also noted in **Mat 8:2-4; Mark 1:40-44.**

Vs. 12

Luke 5:12, “While He was in one of the cities, behold, there was a man covered with leprosy; and when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and implored Him, saying, ‘Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean’.”

“**Leprosy**” is the Noun LEPRO that also literally means, “scaliness.” This Noun is only used in **Mat 8:3; Mark 4:42; Luke 5:12-13**, in regard to this scene and Jesus’ healing. In the OT, it is the Hebrew word ISARA’ATH, **Lev 13f; 14f; Exo 4:6; Num 12:10**. The Adjective LEPROS is used also in the synoptic Gospels for calling someone with the disease a “**leper**.” We briefly noted lepers in **Luke 4:27**, when Jesus was using Elisha’s healing of a Gentile man named Naaman as a warning to the people of Nazareth of their rejection of the King-Messiah.

“Herodotus and medical authors used LEPRO to describe a skin disease that gave a scaly or bumpy texture to the skin. It was associated with LEUKE, a whitish affliction of the skin. In fact, the Bible uses it for a number of skin disorders. In Leprosy, the skin had an absence of pigment resulting in an irregularly pale color or white patches, apparently caused by a microorganism. The disease caused the formation of ulcers or lesions in the skin followed by loss of sensation of feeling. In some cases, this condition could lead to the loss of the extremities due to the absence of the sense of feeling.” (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary)

In the NT, it is used for the disease of leprosy. It was actually thought of in NT times as a “scourge,” as the word LEPRO indicates in its Hebrew background. Because of the fear associated with contracting this disease, lepers were required to keep a distance of at least 6 feet away from people, or if the wind came from their direction, at least 100 feet.

“He fell on his face and implored Him.” Despite prohibitions against contacting a healthy person, **Lev 13:1-46**, the leper fell at Jesus’ feet to beg for help. **“Implored Him,”** uses the Verb DEOMAI δέομαι for **“implored”** that means “beg, beseech, request, or pray.” In the LXX, it is used in a variety of ways, but 20 times it is used for, “to plead for mercy or grace.” It is a request, and generally is the language of prayer and petition to God, **Deut 3:23; Dan 9:18, 20**. It suggests humility and dependence upon the Lord, **Deut 9:18, 25**.

Deut 9:18, “I fell down before the LORD, as at the first, forty days and nights; I neither ate bread nor drank water, because of all your sin which you had committed in doing what was evil in the sight of the LORD to provoke Him to anger.”

DEOMAI is used 22 times in the NT. Luke uses 15 times in Luke and Acts. Luke followed the pattern established by the Septuagint, i.e., that it concerns either a request for Divine intervention or a simple human request, cf. **Luke 10:2; Acts 8:34; 21:39**. When referring to requests of God, it falls in the category of “prayer, petition, request, or entreaty.” It was used of “requests” made to Jesus in our verse for healing mercy, and later it implied submission to a higher authority or power, cf. **Luke 8:28; 9:38**. The Lord God is the one who hears such petitions, for it is only He who can grant them, **Acts 8:22, 24; cf. Rom 1:10; 1 Thes 3:10**.

Acts 8:22, “Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray the Lord that, if possible, the intention of your heart may be forgiven you.”

The gentleman covered with leprosy then made the request of Jesus by calling Him, “**Lord**” (KURIOS). By addressing Him as Lord, he showed respect and understanding that He was YHWH, the God of Israel.

“**If You are willing.**” In humility He recognized the “will” THELO of God to heal Him. He knew that it was God’s sovereign choice to perform this healing. Jesus responds positively to the man’s petition in the next verse.

“**You can make me clean**” uses the Verbs DUNAMAI, “to be able, have the power to, etc.,” and KATHARIZO, καθαρίζω that means, “cleanse, make clean, or purify.”

KATHARIZO is used in both a moral and ethical sense. It is used to describe cleansing from the defilement of sin and to free from the guilt of sin, **Acts 15:9; 2 Cor 7:1; Eph 5:26; Titus 2:14; Heb 9:14; James 4:8; 1 John 1:7, 9;** and in the LXX in **Exo 29:37; Psa 51:7.** So, it can be used to “cleanse” in the sense of purification, legal or ceremonial, **Heb 9:22, 23;** cf. **Acts 10:15; 11:9.** It is used in the LXX this way in **Lev 13:6, 23, 28, 34.** As such, it is also related to “sanctification.”

Interestingly, in the NT, the removal of leprosy is called cleansing, **Mat 8:3; 10:8; 11:5; Mark 1:42; Luke 4:27; 5:12-13; 7:22; 17:17,** while the removal of other diseases is spoken of as healing, THERAPEUO and IAOMAI, “to heal.” Whenever someone was healed of the disease of leprosy, the person is always, (with one exception, **Luke 17:15**), referred to as having been “cleansed” rather than “healed.” This was most likely due to the idea prevalent among the Hebrew people that sin was a major cause of leprosy, and therefore one was not healed as in the case of other diseases, but rather was cleansed as by the removal of sin from the life. This is why Jesus came!

Vs. 13.

Luke 5:13, “And He stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, ‘I am willing (THELO); be cleansed, (KATHARIZO).’ And immediately the leprosy (LEPRA) left him.”

In **Mark 1:41** it says, “**Moved with compassion, Jesus....**” It uses the Verb SPLANCHNIZOMAI σπλαγχνίζομαι that means, “have compassion, feel sympathy, have mercy.” From the root word that means “inner parts” in Greek literature it meant the source of emotions such as pity, mercy, or compassion. This verb is only used in the Synoptic Gospels and for the “showing of compassion” of Jesus Christ as His typical response to crowds or individuals who were in need. As a result, He extended His mercy to them.

The compassionate character of our Lord is most clearly illustrated in **John 3:16.** God in Christ is moved with compassion and pity to act on behalf of a lost and dying world. At the heart of this compassion is His great love for all mankind. This is what Jesus was demonstrating throughout all of the healings and exorcism He performed.

Notice, Jesus “**stretched out His hand to touch**” the gentlemen with leprosy, whereas most of the people were stretching out their hands to touch Jesus for healing. To touch even a garment or other object the leper had touched rendered a person unclean, but Jesus was different from all other men. As deity, He was greater than Deity’s laws.

This action shows that our Lord was willing to take upon Himself the man’s sin, as He was willing to take upon Himself the sins of the entire world by having His hands stretched out upon the Cross. The touch of Jesus’ hand communicated a sense of love to the man, and love for all of mankind as He cleanses all from their sin. We also see that in the cleansing of our sin, Jesus came to us; we did not go to Him!!

“**I am willing**” THELO, Jesus Christ was willing to save and able to save, “**be cleansed**” KATHARIZO. Through His work upon the Cross and our non-meritorious faith in Him, He cleanses His bride of her sins for all of eternity; thereby, sanctifying her positionally, cf. **Eph 5:26.**

Vs. 14

Luke 5:14, “And He ordered him to tell no one, “But go and show yourself to the priest and make an offering for your cleansing, (KATHARISMOS) just as Moses commanded, as a testimony (MARTURION, witness, proof, evidence), to them.”

“**And He ordered him to tell no one.**” Once again, we see a command to be silent from our Lord, as with the exorcised demons, and for similar reasoning, especially to prevent an impulsive uprising of the people against the

established authorities in order to make Jesus King.

“Go and show yourself to the priest.” The Law prescribed a ritual for purification and cleansing of leprosy, as we will note below. The purpose of this was to show both Christ’s observance of the Law and to provide evidence for this miraculous healing. Jesus wanted the Pharisees to see His cleansing work as proof of His Messiahship. He wanted the message to be given to the Pharisees directly, a firsthand account, so that the information could not be tainted by others. This healed leper was a direct witness as to who Jesus Christ was. Later in **Luke 17:11-19**, He would heal ten other lepers. In addition, without the sanction of the priest, this man would not have been accepted back into society for fear of communal contamination. This speaks to our acceptance into the “family of God,” as a result of being cleansed of our sins for salvation.

Most importantly, as we have noted, leprosy represents sin and the ritual inscribed in **Lev 14**, represents what our Lord Jesus Christ did for us and accomplished upon the Cross. In fact, the healing of such an incurable disease identified Jesus as the Messiah, **Luke 7:22**; cf., **Luke 4:18**. As such, we see this cleansing ritual of leprosy as analogous to the cleansing the unbeliever receives for Positional Sanctification at the moment of belief in the work of Jesus Christ upon the Cross.

In **Lev 13**, there was a lengthy test to determine if one had leprosy. If he was found to have it, **Chapter 14** speaks of the cleansing process he was to go through once he was healed of the disease. Since Jesus healed this man of his leprosy, He instructed him to go to the priest and perform the ritual as prescribed by the Law.

A final note is that Jesus’ statement sanctioned the ascription of the human authorship of Leviticus to Moses, who was God’s instrument in the writing of the Law.

Doctrine of Cleansing the Leper, Lev 14

We last taught this doctrine in the summer of 2017, when we were studying **Eph 5:26-27**.

This chapter explains the ritual for the ceremonial cleansing of lepers so that they might enter society again. The ritual found in **Leviticus 14** speaks of cleansing or purification of one who acquired leprosy. And as we have noted, having leprosy represented having sin upon the soul. As such, we see this cleansing ritual of leprosy as analogous to the cleansing the unbeliever receives for Salvation / Positional Sanctification at the moment of belief in the work of Jesus Christ upon the Cross. As you review these passages and principles, think, in your mind’s eye, how our Lord performed this ritual on you at the moment of your salvation, to purify and cleanse you of your sin, and thus entering you into eternal fellowship with God, based on your Positional Sanctification.

1. The priest goes to the leper, vs. 3.

Of course, the leper was barred from coming into the camp, so the priest had to go “outside the camp” to him. What a picture of Christ who came to us and died “outside the camp,” that we might be saved, **Heb 13:10-13**.

Heb 13:12, “Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate.”

We did not seek Him; He came to seek and to save the lost, **Luke 19:10**.

Luke 19:10, “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

2. The priest offers the sacrifices, vs. 4-7.

This ceremony is a beautiful picture of the work of Jesus Christ. The priest took one of the birds and placed it in an earthen vessel, (clay jar), and then he killed it. Of course, the birds were not created to live in jars, but to fly in the heavens. Christ willingly left heaven and took upon Himself a body, put Himself, as it were, in an earthen vessel, that He might die for us.

Note, that the bird was killed over running water, a picture of the Word of God as given by the Holy Spirit, as we see in the analogy of **Eph 5:26b**.

The priest then took the living bird, dipped it in the blood of the dead bird, and set it free. Here is a vivid illustration

of Christ's resurrection. Christ died for our sins and was raised again, and He took the blood, (spiritually speaking) back to heaven that we might be cleansed from sin.

The priest finally sprinkled some of the blood on the leper, for **“all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness,” Heb 9:22.**

3. The leper washes, shaves, and waits, vs. 8-9.

The priest had already pronounced him clean, so he was acceptable as far as the Lord was concerned, but he had to wash, shave, and wait. The work of the sacrifice having been complete and applied, we now see the leper having to accept the sacrifice through washing, (i.e., the baptism of the Holy Spirit), shaving himself, (representing the new man, the new creation), and then waiting 7 days, (the number of spiritual perfection), and then on the eighth day gain fellowship, (the number of satisfying, satiating, new beginnings, superabundance, regeneration, and resurrection). So, it speaks of all three in regard to the new believer in Jesus Christ.

4. The leper offers the sacrifices, vs. 10-13.

He was now back in the camp at the door of the Tabernacle. He offered a trespass offering, a sin offering, and a burnt offering.

The trespass and sin offerings took care of his defilements, his unknown and known sins, (i.e., wrinkle or spot). The burnt offering represents the judgment of our sins by God the Father in the person of Jesus Christ that propitiated the Father.

In regard to Experiential Sanctification, this also speaks to the application of **1 John 1:9.**

5. The priest applies the blood and oil, vs. 14-20.

This is a touching part of the ritual; pun intended. The priest took the blood and applied it to the right ear, the right thumb, and the right big toe of the man, symbolizing that his whole body had now been purchased and belonged to God, (i.e., hear the Word, work in the Word, walk by the Word).

A leper had blood placed on his ear, **vs. 14**, to indicate the importance of hearing Bible doctrine for salvation; i.e., the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Putting blood on the ear, thumb, and big toe, also indicates that post-salvation, he was to listen to God's Word, work for God's glory, and walk in God's ways.

Then the priest put the oil on the blood to symbolize in a different way, the Holy Spirit's work in our salvation and sanctification. The blood could not be put on the oil; the oil had to be put on the blood. The blood represents Jesus' sacrifice upon the Cross. The oil represents the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

You see in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the blood comes first, then the Holy Spirit through common and efficacious grace can apply the blood of Jesus for our salvation. This means that the Holy Spirit makes the Gospel of Jesus Christ understandable to the unbeliever. Then, for those who believe it, the Spirit makes their faith effective for salvation. For where the blood has been applied, the Spirit of God can work.

The rest of the oil was poured on the man's head by the Priest, and thus, he was anointed for his new spiritual life with the power of the Word and Spirit in His life.

If you read **Lev 8:22-24**, you will see that a similar ceremony was performed for the consecration of the priests. In other words, God treated the leper as he would a priest. And for the Church Age, all believers are Royal Priests, **1 Peter 2:9.**

Of course, all of this is accomplished today through faith in Jesus Christ. He went “outside the camp” to find us. He died and rose again to save us. When we trust Him, He applies the blood and oil to our lives and provides eternal fellowship with God.

1 John 5:8, “For there are three that bear witness, the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are

in agreement.”

1 Peter 1:2, “According to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in fullest measure.”
cf. **Heb 9:14**

In **Luke 5:12-14**, one day a leper said to Christ, **“If You are willing, You can make me clean.”** He replied, **“I am willing; be cleansed.”** See **Mark 1:40-45**. Christ is willing to save and able to save. And through His work upon the Cross and our non-meritorious faith in Him, He cleanses His bride for all of eternity, thereby, sanctifying her positionally.

Now back in **Luke 5 ...**

Vs. 15

Luke 5:15, “But the news (LOGOS) about Him was spreading even farther, and large crowds were gathering to hear Him and to be healed of their sicknesses.”

Even though Jesus told the demon and the leper not to say anything, the information about what He was doing got out to the surrounding areas. This is what God desired; to let Jesus’ actions speak for themselves. As a result, many came to first **“hear”** AKOUO, Him, (i.e., take in doctrine through the ear gate). They came to learn more of God’s Word, and receive the Gospel message. They also came to be **“healed from their sicknesses”** THERAPEUO ASTHENEIA. As previously mentioned, sometimes ASTHENEIA is associated with demon possession, **Luke 8:2**; and other times not, **Luke 13:11**.

Mark adds that the crowds generated by these healings and miracles made it impossible for Jesus to publicly preach in the cities, lest the authorities arrest Him and accuse Him of sedition, **Mark 1:45**. Therefore, Jesus had to stay outside the cities. Nevertheless, the people came to hear Him.

Vs. 16

Luke 5:16, “But Jesus Himself would often slip away (HUPOCHOREO, cf. Luke 9:10), to the wilderness and pray, (PROSEUCHOMAI).” cf. **Luke 4:42**.

Once again, we see Jesus finding solitude to enhance His spiritual relationship with the Father that gave Him rest both mentally and physically.

5. Over defectiveness, (a paralytic healed), Luke 5:17-26. Demonstrating His authority over defectiveness by healing a paralytic and discussing the forgiveness of sin, **Luke 5:17-26**.

This scene is also recorded in **Mat 9:2-9; Mark 2:2-13**, and took place in Capernaum.

In this healing, Jesus tells us plainly what has been in the underlining of all of His healings and exorcism, the forgiveness of sins. As we have noted, in Hebrew thought, illness, disease, and even demonic possession were caused by sin in a person’s life or in the life of close relatives. Therefore, when Jesus would heal an illness or disease, or perform an exorcism, He was really demonstrating His and God’s authority and power / ability to forgive our sins, which Jesus and God the Father would accomplish upon the Cross.

In this parable, we have a type of an “a fortiori” principle, that is, if God can do the greater, He certainly can do the lesser. In this scene, the principle is applied from a human perspective, in that it is easier for man to forgive someone of a wrong done than it is to give a paralyzed person the ability to walk again. Yet, for God, it is easier to make someone walk again than it was to forgive us of our sins. Therefore, from a human viewpoint, in the presence of these Pharisees and all the other by standards, Jesus utilized the “a fortiori” principle.

Vs. 17

Luke 5:17, “One day He was teaching; and there were some Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem; and the power of the Lord was present for Him to perform healing.”

“**Pharisees**” is the noun PHARISAIOS Φαρισαῖος; they were one of two dominate parties of Judaism at that time, the other being the Sadducees, the liberals of their day, who were more aligned to the political scene than the Pharisees. The Pharisees were a strict, legalistic, religious party that arose after Jewish exiles returned from Babylon. They were the “fundamentalists,” conservative in their views.

The word PHARISAIOS is likely derived from the Hebrew word PARASH that means, “to separate” or “to separate oneself.” A Pharisee then was a “separated one” or a “separatist.” The word is found in Josephus and also in the NT about 90 times. It is not found in classical Greek or the Septuagint.

“The Pharisees are traced back to the Hasidim, a religious group during the Second Century B.C., and were firmly established by 100 B.C. (Meyer, “Pharisaios,” Kittel, 9:16). The Hasidim strongly resisted the hellenization being forced on the Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes. In particular they were opposed to the priestly party that had submitted to Hellenistic influence (the predecessors of the Sadducees). The Hasidim, as well as the Pharisees, were more concerned with maintaining religious purity than with political matters.” (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary)

As is typical of a religion or religious group, they usually start out right but later are corrupted by Satan’s influence. Originally, the Pharisees looked upon themselves as the ones who were keeping alive the true worship of the Lord, while the rest of Israel was in apostate. They were known for their strict observances to the “letter of the Law,” for their austere life, and for their obsession with oral tradition. The oral tradition was designed to be a hedge around the Torah to prevent possible infringements. They held that the oral law was equally as inspired and authoritative as the written Torah. So, you can see where Satan had an avenue for corruption.

They also believed the oral law was given to Moses at Sinai and eventually the oral law was written down and is known as the Mishnah. The Sadducees accepted only the written law as binding. The Pharisees also believed in the resurrection of the dead, immortality of the soul, future judgment, and the existence of supernatural beings (angels, demons, Satan). All of these were rejected by the Sadducees.

“The Pharisees were very popular and highly respected among the masses during the time of Christ. Because of their popularity, the Sadducees usually had to submit to their decisions or else evoke the wrath of the people.” (Josephus Antiquities 18.1.4).

We now know who the Pharisees are, but here we also have “**teachers of the law**,” which is the Noun NOMODIDASKALOS, that is only used in NT Greek and only three times, here, **Acts 5:34; 1 Tim 1:7**. It is not an official office, but more of a title of responsibility by any that were part of the Jewish Sanhedrin. In fact, our passage later says in **vs. 22, “Pharisees and Scribes”** and in **Acts 5:34**; the Pharisee Gamaliel is called a “teacher of the law.” In **1 Tim 1:7**, Paul uses it as a description of false teachers.

A “**Scribe**” GRAMMATEUS γραμματεὺς, “secretary, clerk, or scribe,” was one who was a “legal expert” and custodians of the Book of the Law, cf. **2 Chron 34:13, 15, 18, 20**. They were considered the “Biblical Scholars” and “experts of the Law” in their day. Early on, the Levites were called to fulfill this position as a “SOPHER,” cf. **2 Chron 19:11; 34:13; Neh 8:7-8**. They were the “lawyers,” or “legal experts” for the Jewish religion and are synonymous with “teachers of the law.”

Scribes are frequently mentioned in the NT in conjunction with Pharisees, e.g., **Mat 5:20; 23:27; etc.** But, being an expert in the Law did not automatically mean that one was a Pharisee, or vice versa, e.g., **Acts 23:9**. Many Pharisees were not legal experts, although most of the leaders of the sect were. Scribes were also found in the party of the Sadducees, but their influence there was only minor. Also, some of the priests were Scribes, but this was not usual. Most had a civilian occupation. This was one aspect of the legal expert’s “wisdom.” Normally they were businessmen or craftsmen or farmers who earned their livelihood by means of their hands; their scribal duties were done without pay. Even though they were held in high regard in society, they were typically of the poorest class of people in Israel. The common people addressed them as “rabbi,” an address of respect meaning “master” or “my great teacher,” RABBONI.

Next, we see that these religious leaders came, “**from every village (KOME as small town or village) of Galilee**

and Judea and from Jerusalem.” In other words, they came from every “nook and cranny” of Israel. Three areas are given: “**Galilee**,” because that was the headquarters of the Sanhedrin council. “**Judea**,” meaning all of Israel during the time of the Maccabees, as noted above, and finally, “**Jerusalem**,” because that was the home of the Temple and another epi-center for the Sanhedrin. The linking of the three geographical areas shows that the entire country had developed a common interest in the ministry of Christ.

Interestingly, three is the number of Divine Perfection, and in the last part of this verse, we see that “**the power (DUNAMIS) of the Lord (KURIOS, the Greek equivalent to YHWH) was present for Him to perform healing.**” Perfect Divine Power was given to Jesus to heal.

“**Healing**” is the Verb IAOMAI, that means, “to heal, cure, or restore.” It is synonymous with THERAPEUO, and was used in the KJV translation of **Luke 4:18**, for the added portion of the quote for our Lord to “**heal the brokenhearted,**” the portion of **Isa 61:1**, that was not quoted by our Lord when reading, according to the earliest and most reliable texts. In the LXX, it translates the Hebrew word RAPHA, “to heal or cure.” It unanimously gives all healing powers to YHWH alone, cf. **Exo 15:26; Deut 32:39; Psa 41:4; 103:3; Isa 19:22; 30:26; Jer 3:22; Hosea 5:13; 6:1**, Also in the OT LXX, the concepts of forgiveness from sin and healing of body or situation are inseparable, cf. **Isa 53:5**. Therefore, the connections of sickness and sin, healing and forgiveness are continued in this narrative.

Ex 15:26, “...for I, the LORD, am your healer.”

Deut 32:39, “See now that I, I am He, And there is no god besides Me; It is I who put to death and give life. I have wounded and it is I who heal, and there is no one who can deliver from My hand.”

Psa 41:4, “As for me, I said, ‘O LORD, be gracious to me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against You’.”

Psa 103:3, “Who pardons all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases.”

But remember, Jesus rejected the idea that all sickness is a result of personal or familial sin, though all sickness is ultimately the result of our fallen state. Also, we are reminded that faith is expressed in connection with healing, **Mat 8:8-13; 15:28; Mark 5:29; Luke 5:17-20; 17:15**. Likewise, in Acts, Christ is proclaimed “Healer” by the apostles, **Acts 3:6; 9:34; 10:38**.

Vs. 18

Luke 5:18, “And some men were carrying on a bed a man who was paralyzed; and they were trying to bring him in and to set him down in front of Him.”

“**Paralyzed**” is the Verb PARALUO παραλύω, that means, “weaken, be palsied, be paralyzed.” Luke used the word 4 of the 5 times it is used in the NT, **Luke 5:18, 24; Acts 8:7; 9:33. Heb 12:12**, is the other. Being a physician, He always used the Perfect, Passive, Participle form, (the more technical term used by the classical medical writers). Matthew and Mark used the more common nonprofessional Adjective PARALUTIKOS in their parallel passages.

This scene of “**to bring him in and to set him down in front of Him**” here and in **vs. 19**, gives us the idea of laying our sins or sin offerings before the Lord for forgiveness, as the word “**bring**” is the Verb EISPHERO that is also used in **Mat 6:13** and **Luke 11:4**, for “**lead**” in the Lord’s prayer, “do not lead us into temptation,” or “do not bring us into sin temptation,” and in **Heb 13:11**, for bringing a sin offering.

Heb 13:11, “For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest as an offering for sin, are burned outside the camp.”

Vs. 19

Luke 5:19, “But not finding any way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down through the tiles with his stretcher, into the middle of the crowd, in front of Jesus.”

“**Tiles**” is the Greek word KERAMOS κέραμος. This is where we get our word “ceramic” from. It is only used here in the Bible and means, “clay, earthen vessel, or roof tile.” This reminds us of the lepers healing and cleansing according to the Law, where the first dove was placed in the earthen vessel and sacrificed, while the second was set

free. Here, Jesus is the first dove in the earthen vessel Who would be sacrificed for our sins, and the paralytic is the second dove who would go home healed / free of sin.

Two other words used in this passage, DOMA “**roof or housetop**,” and KATHIEMI “**let down**, send down or lower,” are also used in **Acts 10-11**, for Peter’s scene of foods that were considered unclean by the Law that are now considered clean to eat; as we are no longer under the Law, because of Christ’s sacrifice for our sins.

Next, they placed the man, “**in front of or before Jesus**,” like placing our sin offerings before God, **Mat 5:24**. This shows the faithfulness of this man’s friends; they knew and believed that Jesus could heal them, cf. **James 5:14-16**, “**...the effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.**”

Vs. 20

Luke 5:20, “**Seeing their faith, He said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven you.”**”

“**Their faith**” ATUOS PISTIS, may just mean the faith of the four friends or it could include the paralytic man too. The important part is the plural aspect of their faith; it was not just the faith of the paralytic.

“**Friend**” is actually ANTHROPOS that means, “human being, man, person, or mankind.” It should read, “**Man your sins are forgiven you.**” It is a play on words that carries the double emphasis of this one man and all of mankind. Matthew and Mark use “son” here. This man was a friend of the men dropping him through the roof we assume, but the Greek reads “man.”

“**Forgiven**” is the common Greek word APHIEMI, as is “**sins**” HAMARTIA.

Here, Jesus equates this man’s paralysis with sin. Jesus forgave His sins and the man was physically healed. Once again, we are reminded of His proclamation in **Luke 4:18** and **Isa 61:1**, that spoke of His great work upon the Cross as our Savior to forgive us of our sins and heal us from its corruption.

Vs. 21

Luke 5:21, “**The scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, ‘Who is this man who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?’**”

Now, we see the “Scribes and Pharisees” coming into play.

“**Reasoning**” is the verb DIALOGIZOMAI διαλογίζομαι that means, “consider, ponder thoroughly, reason, deliberate,” which we noted in **Luke 1:29** regarding Mary “pondering,” and then in **Luke 3:15** for the peoples “wondering” about who John was. Here, the Pharisees are wondering about what Jesus had just said, “your sins are forgiven,” HAMARTIA APHIEMI. They wondered “**who is able**” TIS DUNAMAI to do this?

To them this was a “**blasphemous**” thing to say. It is the Greek word BLASPHEMIA βλασφημία that means, “blasphemy, evil speaking, slander, or reviling.” In the NT, it has the general meaning of “evil, slanderous, or injurious speech.” This is the only time Luke uses this term. It is used in reference to injurious and impious speech directed towards God and the things of God. That means it is used of mortal men claiming Divine authority or personhood, as reflected by the Jews’ incorrect view of Jesus, cf. **Mat 26:65; Mark 2:7; 14:64; John 10:33**.

The Scribes and Pharisees thought that “**God alone**,” MONOS THEOS, could forgive sin, which is true. They correctly interpreted Jesus’ statement to mean Jesus was assigning to Himself a power that belonged only to God. But Jesus is God and He was claiming to be Deity. And, as a man, He came to take on the sins of the world, so that God could forgive man of his sins. This is what the Scribes and Pharisees failed to understand.

Hundreds of years before, Isaiah had quoted God as saying, “**I, even I, am He that blots out your transgressions for My own sake, and I will not remember your sins,**” **Isa 43:25**. Now, Jesus was presuming to possess this prerogative.

Therefore, what they were not willing to admit and did not know, was that although Jesus was a man, He was also God in the flesh.

Vs. 22

Luke 5:22, “But Jesus, aware of their reasonings, answered and said to them, “Why are you reasoning in your hearts?”

Jesus knew (EPIGINOSKO) of their objections, (“reasonings,” the noun DIALOGISMOS and verb DIALOGIZOMAI once again), and answered them (APOKRINO) saying, “why are you wondering about this.” We could even say, “Why are you doubting?”

This may have been another miracle of Jesus, knowing their thoughts. To the supreme God, thoughts are the same as words.

Vs. 23

Luke 5:23, “Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins have been forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’?”

In answering their question, Jesus asks them a question, “which is easier” that uses the comparative Adjective EUKOPOTEROS. It is only used for two object lessons in Matthew, Mark and Luke, plus a third only in **Luke 16:17**, where the Law is said to “never fail.” The two object lessons are this one and the one regarding a camel going through the eye of a needle, **Mat 19:24; Mark 10:25; Luke 18:25**. In that object lesson, the rich man does not accept God’s forgiveness of sin for salvation because he is too locked in to the things of this world.

In this object lesson, Jesus uses the a fortiori principle of what is easier to do. Interestingly, both are impossible for man to truly do. But for God, all things are possible!

Vs. 24

Luke 5:24, ““But, so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,’—He said to the paralytic—‘I say to you, get up, and pick up your stretcher and go home.’”

As we stated above, for man, it is easier to forgive someone of a wrong they have committed against you, than it is to heal a paralytic. So, Jesus heals the man to show that He, as God, can do the greater, therefore, He is able to do the lesser, “forgive sin,” from a human perspective.

Perhaps for the first time, Jesus openly asserted His messiahship. He had referred to it in the synagogue at Nazareth when quoting from **Isaiah 61**, but now He was making the claim before religious leaders. This act should have caused the Scribes and Pharisees to realize Jesus was the “**Son of Man**,” cf. **Dan 7:13**, which, as we noted previously in the Gospel of Luke, means that He is God incarnate, the King-Messiah. And, in addition, that He has God’s “**authority**” EXOUSIA, “authority, right, and power” to rule, which means He is God and is the King-Messiah.

Jesus’ claim to authority which belonged only to God was the act that caused the religious leaders to launch their organized opposition to Him from that time forward.

“**Get up**” is the Present, Active, Imperative of EGEIRO for a command to “raise, rise up, etc.” It is used as one of the words for “resurrection” or rise from the dead.

“**Pick up your stretcher and go home**” was Jesus’ command for the healed man to live for himself the unique spiritual life, the resurrection life, that was now given to him.

“**Go**” is the Verb POREUOMAI πορεύομαι that means, “to go, depart, travel, to order one’s life, or walk.” So, it speaks to our daily walk in Christ as well; living in our new citizenship of being a part of the Royal Family of God. So, it speaks to our positional sanctification that leads to living in our experiential sanctification.

“**Home**” OIKOS “house or dwelling” gives us the idea that when our sins are forgiven and we are healed from its corruption positionally; we have a new home, a heavenly home called our POLITEUMA, **Eph 2:19; Phil 3:20**; cf. **Col 3:1; Heb 12:22**.

Phil 3:20, “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Col 3:1, “Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.”

We also see that Jesus healed this man with His Word, unlike the leper whom Jesus touched.

Vs. 25

Luke 5:25, “Immediately he got up before them, and picked up what he had been lying on, and went home glorifying God.”

This man does not hesitate; he immediately, PARACHREMA, does as Jesus says, just as Peter’s mother-in-law did in **Luke 4:39**. It is a picture of faith in action. Then it says he, “**gets up**” ANISTEMI, that word which also speaks to Christ’s and our resurrection from the dead.

No one could see the healing / forgiveness of this man’s sin, but they could see the healing of his body, just as we cannot see or fully understand Jesus’ spiritual death for the forgiveness of our sins, but we can see and understand His physical death upon the Cross.

Next, he picks up the stretcher that he was lying on. This shows that he was taking responsibility for his own spiritual life. No longer would he be dependent on others for his life. Now, he would live his own unique spiritual life unto Christ, now that he was a new man, **2 Cor 5:7; Eph 2:15**, in Christ, with a new home called heaven.

And, while living this new life in Christ, he would “**glorify God**” DOXAZO THEOS, just as you and I do every time we are walking in fellowship with God.

Vs. 26

Luke 5:26, “They were all struck with astonishment and began glorifying God; and they were filled with fear, saying, ‘We have seen remarkable things today’.”

“**Astonishment**” is the Noun EKSTASIS ἔκστασις that means, “amazement, ecstasy, displacement of the mind.” We could say today that “they lost their minds.” In other words, they did not know what to think. Jesus had turned their evil deliberations into one of amazement and astonishment. He “blew their minds.”

This word is also used in **Acts 10:10; 11:15**, that we noted above, for the “**trance**” that Peter fell into on the roof top when God told him he could now eat those animals that previously, according to the Law, were unclean. All had been made clean because of Jesus’ sacrifice for our sins!

Because the Pharisees and Scribes believed that sickness was a result of sin, their own proof of this man’s sinfulness was destroyed by his physical healing. If he was no longer ill, then his sins must be forgiven. This conclusion left them “dumb founded” / speechless.

As a result, it says that they “**began glorifying God**,” the Imperfect, Active, Indicative of DOXAZO. I hope this includes the Scribes and Pharisees, as it says “**all**” HAPAS, “all whole, every, all together,” glorified God.

In addition, they were all “**filled with fear**,” the Aorist, Passive, Indicative of PLETHO and the Noun PHOBOS. That means, they were overwhelmed by what they heard and saw Jesus do and had respect for Him as a result. This emotion was shown by their words, “**We have seen remarkable things today**’.”

“**Remarkable things**” is the Adjective PARADOXOS παράδοξος that means, “magnificent, unusual, incredible, marvelous, or contrary to expectation.” It is only used here in the NT, a hapaxlegomena. This is where we get our word “paradox” from. It is used in a positive sense and means, “beyond what they thought or expected.” In the negative sense, it would be “beyond belief.” It denotes the unusual element in the works done by Jesus. This is beyond what they have seen, done, or imagined before.

It was a precursor to the “Life Beyond Dreams,” **Eph 3:20**. Notice the parallels to **Eph 3:17-21**, “**So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. ²⁰Now to Him who**

is able to do far more (*exceedingly*) abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, ²¹to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.”

6. Over the despised, (the call of Matthew and parables about old vs. new), **Luke 5:27-39**. Here Jesus is demonstrating His authority over the despised in three ways, **Luke 5:27-39**.

This scene is paralleled in **Mat 9:9-17; Mark 2:14-22**.

There are three parts to this section:

1. The first is the call of Matthew where he throws a large dinner party for Jesus, **vs. 27-32**.
2. The second is Jesus' rebuke of the grumblings of the Pharisees by the bridegroom analogy, **vs. 33-35**.
3. The third is Jesus' parables about old vs. new, using wine and wineskins in analogy, **vs. 36-39**.

Vs. 27

Luke 5:27, “After that He went out and noticed a tax collector named Levi sitting in the tax booth, and He said to him, “Follow Me’.”

“**Tax collector**” is the Noun TELONES τελώνης that also means, “revenue officer.” It had a negative sound in Jewish ears as we see throughout the Gospels. “*The Greeks would say about them: “All are TELONES, all are thieves”.*” (Xenophon; cf. Hillyer, “Tax,” Colin Brown, 3:755). We noted this group in **Luke 3:12-14**, in John the Baptist's preaching.

Since the time of the Greek city-state, people were hired to collect taxes and customs. These tax collectors guaranteed the city-state a certain amount of revenue; anything above the guaranteed revenue for the state went into the pockets of the tax collectors. The reason tax collectors were disliked was that their income was determined by their ability to exact money. Therefore, the more they took, the more profitable they were. And, they had the Roman army to back them. So, whatever they said would be.

In addition, the imposition of taxes and the right to collect them was auctioned off each year to the highest bidder. Rich citizens bought tax-collecting rights from the state. They then engaged agents or magistrates who in turn appointed local civil servants to collect the taxes from the people. This naturally increased the tax pressure upon the common people.

“In Judea, a Roman province under the jurisdiction of a Roman-appointed ruler, the tax was paid to the emperor (Mark 12:14). But Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee who had the authority to collect taxes in Galilee and Peraea, used a system of renting the collection of taxes to independent collectors.” (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary)

In addition, there was another form of taxation called “customs.” Customs were paid based on goods transported and traded throughout the region. Custom stations were set up along the extensive Roman roads, next to bridges, and in port cities. When goods came by, they were taxed.

The reason the Jews hated tax collectors, was because they were considered “unclean” based on their daily contact with Gentiles, because they violated the Sabbath commandment, and because many were unscrupulous in the tax gathering. Also, they represented the Roman government that reminded them that they were ruled by a foreign power.

As such, they were regarded as traitors and liars; the worst sinners, up there with prostitutes, thieves, adulterers, Gentiles, and the ungodly. Therefore, they were excluded from synagogue fellowship, cf. **Mat 18:17; 21:31; Luke 18:11**.

Luke 18:11, “The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector’.”

The tax collector in view here is named “**Levi**,” which is LEUIS Λευίς in the Greek from the Hebrew LEWI. It means, “joined or associated with him.” It is only used here and in **vs. 29**, and **Mark 2:14**. He is better known as the

apostle Matthew, as Matthew identifies himself in this scene as “Matthew” in **Mat 9:9**. You can see more detail about Levi / Matthew in our doctrine of the apostles on our web site, www.gracedoctrine.org.

Matthew probably knew Peter and John, as well as other fishermen at the Sea of Galilee, since it is quite likely he would have collected duty on their fish catches.

Jesus actually found Levi, while he was performing his job, just like He did with Peter, Andrews, James, and John. Levi was at the “**tax booth**” ΤΕΛΩΝΙΟΝ *TELONION* that also can mean, “tollhouse or tax office,” cf. **Mat 9:9; Mark 2:14**, all referring to this scene.

Jesus says to Levi, as He did with Simon-Peter, Andrew, James, John, and Philip in the other Gospel accounts, “**follow Me**” the Verb ΑΚΟΛΟΥΘΕΩ *AKOLOUTHEO* that means, “follow, accompany, or to cleave steadfastly to one,” with the Dative, 1st Person, Singular, Personal Pronoun of EGO; MOI “**Me**.”

None of the Gospel accounts give detail regarding the selection of Levi other than Mark that says he was the “son of Alphaeus.” We do not know on what occasion He ran into Him or why. We only see that He did.

“**Follow Me**” is used three times more by Luke in His Gospel in **Luke 9:23, 59; 18:22**. In the first, Jesus gives a stipulation, “deny self and take up your cross daily.” In the second and third, we see the details of life and the world getting in the way of people following Jesus; (e.g., burying the dead and getting rid of worldly possessions). For us to truly “follow Jesus,” we must place Him as top priority in our life.

Vs. 28

Luke 5:28, “And he left everything behind, and got up and began to follow Him.”

Here, we see Levi’s positive response to Jesus’ call by “**leaving everything behind**,” the Verb ΚΑΤΑΛΕΙΠΩ *KATALEIPO*, *καταλείπω* that means, “leave behind, abandon, forsake, or depart.” This meant his job, family, home, etc. This was the same reaction as Simon, Andrew, James, and John.

His “**getting up**” uses ΑΝΙΣΤΕΜΙ, which Luke has used throughout this narrative that also means, “rise from the dead or resurrection.” So, Levi’s getting up to go and follow Jesus signifies the new spiritual life, the resurrection life of the born-again believer that he was now beginning.

Interestingly, Matthew means “gift of God.” This is possibly the name Jesus gave him, as He did Simon who became known as Peter, to show the change in his new life in Christ.

“**Began to follow Him**” uses the Verb ΑΚΟΛΟΥΘΕΩ from **vs. 27** once again, this time in the Imperfect, Active, Indicative for ongoing, continuous action, to show Levi’s response to Jesus’ calling, i.e., “follow me.”

Vs. 29

Luke 5:29, “And Levi gave a big reception for Him in his house; and there was a great crowd of tax collectors and other people who were reclining at the table with them.”

“When a man finds acceptance with the Lord, he naturally wants to celebrate. A person who finds acceptance with God wants his friends to find in Jesus what he found. So, Levi throws a dinner party for “a large crowd of tax collectors and other”.” (Christ-Centered Exposition)

“**A big reception**,” is the Adjective ΜΕΓΑΣ with the Noun ΔΟΧΗ *DOCHE*, *δοχή* that means, “reception or feast.” It is used only here and in **Luke 14:13**, for the parable of the types of guests we should invite to our receptions, “**the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind.**” This list reminds us of **Luke 4:18; Isa 61:1**, the type of spiritually needy people Jesus came to heal / save. Therefore, as Jesus went out and invited these categories of spiritually deficient people to salvation, so too should we. And if we do, **Luke 14:14** says, “**you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.**”

Principle:

- We should not only invite the saved to our gatherings, but the unsaved as well, so that we might have the

opportunity to witness to them.

Notice, Levi did not just invite one or two of the lowly of society, but “**a great crowd**” POLUS, “many” OCHLOS, ὄχλος that means, “crowd, throng, multitude, mob, the common people, populace,” which we have noted several times prior in this Gospel. This also tells us that Levi must have been quite wealthy to throw such a feast.

Levi held the reception in honor of Jesus, and to introduce Him to his associates and friends who must have been astounded at Levi’s abrupt decision to leave his lucrative business to follow a poor carpenter. The occasion gave him the opportunity to introduce them to Jesus and to learn for themselves the kind of person Jesus was who could so dramatically work a change in Levi’s life.

The invited guest included “tax collectors,” the same as Levi above, and “**other people**,” the Pronominal use of the Adjective ALLOS, “another, different, additional, or the rest.”

Here, Luke does not mention the type of people the “others” where, as does Matthew and Mark, who call them “sinners” HAMARTOLOS, “sinful, sinner, or heathen.” Luke would wait until vs. 30, where the Pharisees brand them as “sinners.” Remember, Simon-Peters called himself a “sinner” in vs. 8.

These guests were “**reclining at the table with them**,” which Uses the Verb KATAKEIMAI κατάκειμαι that we noted in vs. 25, for the paralytic that means, “lie (down) or to recline.” It is used both ways in the NT, but predominately for those who are not well and are “lying down” sick or paralyzed, cf. **Mark 1:30; 2:4; John 5:3, 6; Acts 9:33; 28:8.**

Therefore, we see the link here with Jesus’ other miracles of the paralytic and Simon Peter’s mother-in-law, **Mark 1:30**, as to who these “others” are. They are not the physically sick, but the spiritually ill; those without salvation.

The other use of “**reclining at a table**” is in **Mark 14:3; Luke 7:37**, where at a dinner party held by Simon the leper, a woman anointed Jesus with costly perfume, symbolically preparing Him for His burial after His completed work for the payment of the penalty of our sins was completed on the Cross that purchased our sins and provided salvation to all, i.e., the poor, sick, lame, etc., sinners, spiritually.

Vs. 30

Luke 5:30, “The Pharisees and their scribes began grumbling at His disciples, saying, ‘Why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?’”

Notice that in this passage, the “**Scribes**” GRAMMATEUS are said to be “the Pharisees,” i.e., “**their**.” That means that the Pharisees brought their lawyers with them in order to trap or catch Jesus in some misstep, violation, or an inaccurate application of the Law. They were all lawyered up. So, we ask ourselves, who were the violators of the law in this scene?

Their “**grumbling**” is the Verb GONGUZO γογγύζω that means, “grumble or mutter.” It is used of speaking in a low voice under one’s breath, usually with a negative connotation of grumbling, muttering, murmuring, or complaining, **Mat 20:11; John 6:41, 43, 61.**

“**At His disciples**” uses MATHETES μαθητής for the first time in Luke’s Gospel to describe the disciples of Jesus. It means, “learner, pupil, or disciple.”

As mentioned above, the Pharisees and Scribes identify these people as “**sinners**” HAMARTOLOS in their eyes. How did they know they were “sinners?” Because of who they were, what they were doing, because they were Gentiles, or having prior knowledge of their sins? We do not know; maybe, just because they were at Levi’s / Matthew’s home, whom they considered as a “tax collector” to be a sinner. This is pure self-righteous arrogance, **Luke 18:11, “I am not like... this tax collector.”**

They accused Jesus of “**eating and drinking**” with them. Luke uses the common words ESTHIO and PINO. Eating and drinking in the ancient world, as today, had a special meaning. They are tokens of mutual affection and confidence and symbols of loyalty, sometimes even to death. Therefore, this shared activity implied Jesus’ and the disciples’ acceptances of such people as one’s “brothers and sisters,” cf. **Acts 11:3.**

In addition, the Pharisees objected to Jesus associating with these people, for they forbade people to eat with sinners, lest they should become ritually defiled or appear to condone their lifestyles. In their eyes, even as contact with lepers, **vs. 12–16**, brought ritual uncleanness, so too does contact with tax collectors and sinners bring moral (as well as ritual) uncleanness.

But, as we have noted many times in Luke’s Gospel, Jesus came to take on our “uncleanness” (i.e., our sins), so that we could be rendered clean, sanctified, purified, and holy before God.

This would not be the last time they murmured this way, as they had a similar complaint and criticism in **Luke 15:1-2**.

These self-righteous religious types hold an idea of holiness that requires total separation from sinners. They apparently think they themselves are not sinners! Yet they should, so that they too could take a place at the table with Christ. But, unfortunately, many of them remain(ed) blind to their own condition before God.

Vs. 31

Luke 5:31, “And Jesus answered and said to them, “It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick.”

Jesus reply to the self-righteous religious crowd was, *“profoundly simple but also simply profound.”* (Complete Biblical Library Commentary)

Luke, unlike Matthew and Mark, uses “**well**” HUGIAINO ὑγιαίνω that means, “be in good health, be sound, wholesome, or correct.” In its LXX use, it almost always is used for SHALOM “peace or well-being.” The idea includes not only a wish for good physical health; it also includes a wish for general well-being. In the NT, it is a curious mixture of literal and figurative. Luke was obviously using it in the literal sense within the metaphor, but in the figurative sense overall for what Jesus was conveying to the Scribes and Pharisees.

“**Physician**” is the Noun IATROS ἰατρός that also means, “healer,” who Luke is said to be a “beloved one,” in **Col 4:14**. Jesus, because of His healing miracles, is considered to be the great physician in reference to this passage and **Mat 9:12; Mark 2:17; Luke 4:23**.

Jesus says those that are well, in good physical condition; do not need a doctor, which is true in the literal and physical sense. But Jesus was using this as an analogy for those who are self-righteous and think that they are saved because of their goodness or good deeds. They think that by their good works they are saved and do not need a Savior, i.e., Jesus. *“Because they trust themselves, there is no room in their hearts to trust God’s Son.”* (Christ-Centered Exposition)

John Calvin rightly observed, *“Such is our innate pride, we always seem to ourselves just, and upright, and wise, and holy, until we are convinced, by clear evidence, of our injustice, vileness, folly, and impurity. Convinced, however, we are not, if we look to ourselves only, and not to the Lord also—He being the only standard by the application of which this conviction can be produced. For, since we are all naturally prone to hypocrisy, any empty semblance of righteousness is quite enough to satisfy us instead of righteousness itself.”* (Institutes, 37)

On the other hand, those who are “**sick**” do need a physician. “**Sick**” is the Adjective KAKOS κακῶς that means, “be sick, ill, or suffer severely,” also is used for those who “(speak) wrongly or badly,” i.e., verbal sins. Its cognate Adjective KAKOS κακός, (with a different letter “o” in the Greek), means, “bad, evil, wicked, etc.” In both the LXX and the NT, it is an idiom that means, “to be sick.” So, we see the analogy of the “sick” with the “sinner.”

Therefore, this is a contrast between self-righteous arrogance that believes salvation is by works and the humble who know they are a sinner and need a Savior.

Vs. 32

Luke 5:32, “I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.”

Now, Jesus tells them why He is there, and why He came to the earth.

First, He did not come / appear to “**call the righteous,**” which uses the Verb KALEO, that means, “call, name, summon, or invite,” with the Adjective DIKAIOS for “just, righteous, upright, etc.”

“**But**” is the contrasting Conjunction ALLA, “but, yet, or rather.”

“**Sinners**” HAMARTOLOS, using the Pharisees’ title for these people.

Jesus’ invitation to everyone is “**to repentance**” EIS METANOIA. METANOIA means, “repentance, turning about, or change of mind,” and harkens us back to John the Baptist’s ministry as he called and baptized to repentance, **Mat 3:8, 11; Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3, 8.**

He was saying that His message was for the humble of heart who would recognize they are a sinner and need a Savior. Yet, the Pharisees would never admit their need for inner cleansing. After all, they claimed to follow the letter of the Law. “*Jesus’ mission was to the lowly who were conscious of their sins, not to the spiritually haughty who deceived their own hearts.*” (Complete Biblical Library Commentary)

Jesus would later say in **Mat 5:20**, “**For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.**”

1 Tim 1:15, “**It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.**”

Luke 15:7, “**I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.**”

Acts 5:31, “**He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.**”

2 Peter 3:9, “**The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.**”

Interestingly, in **Mat 9:13**, there is an added quote from Jesus, “**But go and learn what this means: ‘I DESIRE COMPASSION, (ELEOS, mercy, compassion, pity), AND NOT SACRIFICE,’ ...**), which is a loose quote from **Hosea 6:6**. cf. **Mat 12:7**.

Hosea 6:6, “**For I delight in loyalty (CHESED, *grace, steadfast love*) rather than sacrifice, and in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.**”

Jesus was challenging these hypocrites to go learn from the Law what God truly desires, “good works and sacrifices,” or “love, grace, mercy, and compassion.” Man offers good works and sacrifices, God provides love, grace, mercy, compassion; the forgiveness of our sins. This is a challenge to them to learn the difference between human good works for salvation that does not earn or gain salvation, compare to God’s love and grace that provides salvation to all who believe.

Therefore, in this scene, Jesus is being a little sarcastic toward the Pharisees and Scribes who were judging the guests to be sinners compared to themselves. Jesus tells them the “self-righteous,” i.e., “those who are well,” do not need a Savior, (in their own minds), *even though they actually do*, will not receive the physician / Savior because they do not think they need Him. Yet, those who recognize they are “sick,” (i.e., a sinner who needs a Savior), will receive the care / physician (i.e., Savior), necessary to heal them, that is “save their souls from sin.”

“We cannot call people to repentance if we are never with them. We cannot reach sinners without going where sinners are. They are not likely to come where we are. They find our parties boring. They find our fun boring. That’s okay. We expect them to. They have tastes for this world, while we have tastes for heaven. Those differing tastes are not easily joined together, so it creates a burden for us to cross a bridge to reach them without adopting their tastes.” (Christ-Centered Exposition)

How can you know when and when not to attend a gathering with unbelievers, from the “Christ-Centered Exposition?”

1. Know your limits and temptations as you go into the world. If you are easily tempted with alcohol, you do not need to go with colleagues to the bar after work. You should avoid that setting. Give no room to the devil or make provision for the flesh. That means being honest about our temptations and the sins that so easily entangles us.
 2. Keep a redemptive purpose or goal in mind as you go into the world. We are not going into the world simply to hang out with the world. Sometimes Christians boast of their worldliness. That is immaturity and a bad example. We go not to boast of how liberal we are with the world but to seek their spiritual benefit and salvation.
 3. Remember that Christ is our holiness (**1 Cor 1:30**). **Colossians 2** tells us that multiplying rules is powerless to subdue the flesh. That kind of asceticism does not produce righteousness but produces hypocrites and Pharisees. Rather, we go into the world trying to fully embody life in Christ. We go declaring it is no longer we who live but Christ who lives in us (**Gal 2:20**). We go into those places and relationships with our hearts stocked with God's Word.
- 6. Over the despised,** (the call of Matthew and parables about old vs. new), **Luke 5:27-39**. Here Jesus is demonstrating His authority over the despised in three ways, **Luke 5:27-39**.

There are three parts to this section:

1. The first is the call of Matthew where he throws a large dinner party for Jesus, **vs. 27-32**.
 2. The second is Jesus' rebuke of the grumbings of the Pharisees by the bridegroom analogy, **vs. 33-35**.
 3. The third is Jesus' parables about old vs. new, using wine and wineskins in analogy, **vs. 36-39**.
- 2. The second section shows Jesus' rebuke of the grumbings of the Pharisees where he uses the bridegroom analogy, vs. 33-35.**

Vs. 33

Luke 5:33, "And they said to Him, "The disciples of John often fast and offer prayers, the *disciples* of the Pharisees also do the same, but Yours eat and drink'."

In Matthew's Gospel, this question is presented to Jesus by the disciples of John the Baptist, **Mat 9:14**, and in Mark's, both John's and the Pharisees' disciple's pose the question, **Mark 2:18**, not just the Pharisees', as Luke seems to indicate.

"**Fast**" is the verb NESTEUDO νηστεύω, which is a compound of the prefix NE "not," and ESTHIO "to eat," and means, "to not eat, to fast, or abstain from food." Luke only uses it in this narrative, three times, and for the self-righteous Pharisee in **Luke 18:12**. Mark only used it for this narrative, **Mark 2:18-20**, and Matthew too, **Mat 9:14-15**, plus in **Mat 6:16-17**, for the Lord's teachings on proper fasting, and in **Mat 4:2**, for the Lord's fasting 40 days and 40 nights. In preparation for the revelation of God, Jesus fasted, like Moses did, **Exo 34:28**, in order to be equipped to confirm the Messianic authority and power with which He had been invested.

Luke also used it in **Acts 13:2-3**, during the setting apart of Paul and Barnabas for their missionary work. The Noun and Adjective are also used in the NT. We will note the importance of "fasting" below.

John's "**disciples**" MATHETES are said to "**often**" PUKNA πικνὰ meaning, "frequently," "**fast**" and "**offer prayers**" POIEO DENSEIS δεήσεις that means, "request, petition, prayer, or supplication." Only Luke uses it in the Gospels, but it is used throughout the Epistles for "prayers and supplications." Therefore, these are petitionary prayers. As such, there was a link between prayers and fasting, even in Jesus's time.

"**Do the same**" in the Greek is HOMOIOS ὁμοίως that means, "in like manner, likewise, similarly, etc." The ones that fast and pray like John's disciples are the Pharisees' disciples.

Then we see that Jesus' disciples are accused of not fasting, and therefore praying as they should, using the contrasting Conjunction DE for "**but yours**," and the Present, Active, Indicative of the verbs ESTHIO and PINO, for "**eat and drink**."

Interestingly, they cite their own actions and authority, not the Scriptures. They generalize from their example to everyone else. This is self-righteous arrogance!

The first step in becoming a self-righteous Pharisee is using your own personal example as a requirement for everyone else to obey. Sounds like our society today, a bunch of Pharisees, though they abhor religion! Interesting!

So, what is this all about? This accusation towards Jesus' disciples actually charged them of not living the proper spiritual life unto God. Interestingly, this indictment was understood similarly from both the secular world from the ancient pagan societies and a Jewish context; both from a religious understanding. You see, "eating and drinking" meant in both these contexts, that Jesus and His disciples were actually in league with demons.

In ancient antiquity "fasting" was used to:

1. Ward off evil spirits, demonic possession, who could gain power over men through eating.
2. A custom of mourning the dead, because if the soul of a dead person is near, there is danger of demonic infection through eating and drinking.
3. Preparing for intercourse with a deity and reception of ecstatic / magical powers. Therefore, if you "eat and drink," you do not receive communication from the deity nor its power.

Therefore, "fasting" meant you would ward off evil spirits and be receptive to a deity's communion and power. And with fasting came prayer, where you would be able to petition the deity. In Jewish thought, right up to Jesus' day, it was much the same yet directed to YHWH, the True God and Deity.

God never directed the Israelites to fast other than on the "Day of Atonement," **Lev 16:29-31; 23:27-32; Num 29:7**. This was a corporate fast, meaning for all the people to perform communally. It is simply called "the fast" in **Acts 27:9**, by Paul; a suggestion of its importance. Yet, the Lord never instructed individual fasting, although He did not condemn it either if done in a right way. As such, individually it was a voluntary observance. In the OT, fasting was a means of expressing grief, repentance, and humility, **2 Sam 1:12; 1 Kings 21:27; Jonah 3:7**.

Contrastingly, just about every religious observances God ordained for the nation of Israel, He involved feasting and celebrating in community; not fasting!

According to tradition, the Pharisees fasted twice a week, Mondays and Thursdays, as we see the self-righteous Pharisee doing in **Luke 18:12**. By this time, it had become a common sign of piety for the Pharisees and the disciples of John, and they could no longer distinguish between God's Law and their own oral traditions.

Nevertheless, fasting is used in both the Old and New Testaments in both a positive way and a negative way, cf. **Isa 1:14; 58:3-6; Dan 9:3; Zech 7:5**. Fasting is almost universally tied to prayer, cf. **Luke 2:37**.

Therefore, fasting and prayer, was not the issue as to being good or bad, but the underlining meaning and implications that both the non-Jews and Jews who were at the party would understand. In other words, Jesus and His disciples were also "sinners," like the rest of the party goers, considered to be in league with Satan and the demonic forces. So, we see the tie-in with Jesus' prior healings and demonic exorcisms, as He was deviously and subliminally being accused of being in league with Satan.

In addition, we see fasting associated with mourning the death of someone as in the ancient world, as they would fast because if the soul of a dead person is near, there was danger of demonic infection through eating and drinking. Fasting over the dead also happened in the OT:

1. For tragic events, **Judges 20:26; 1 Sam 31:13 = 1 Chron 10:12; 2 Sam 1:12; 3:35; Esther 4:3; Jer 14:1-12; Joel 1:14; 2:12-15**.
2. For personal sorrow, **1 Sam 1:7-8; 20:34; Job 3:24; Psa 42:3; 102:4; 107:17-18**.

One other note is that "eating" was the action of the first sin committed by man in the Garden of Eden, **Gen 3:1-6**. Therefore, "eating" has the additional connotation of sin and sinning. For sure, Jesus and His disciples were being

called “sinners” by these self-righteous groups, along with the guests at Levi’s dinner, **vs. 30**.

Interestingly, Jesus uses this analogy along with reference to a wedding ceremony to rebuke the false accusations of the Pharisees, Scribes, their disciples and the disciples of John, as they continued to think that Jesus’ attendance at the dinner party scandalized their religion. Their comments illustrate that they are religious ascetics, people who believe you must avoid all forms of pleasure or self-indulgence as an act of self-discipline for religious purpose. The ascetic believes abstaining makes you godlier and that it pleases God. They think the severe treatment of the body and avoiding pleasure leads to holiness, cf. **Col 2:20-23; 1 Tim 4:3**.

Vs. 34

Luke 5:34, “And Jesus said to them, ‘You cannot make the attendants of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them, can you?’”

Here, Jesus’ evokes the analogy of a Jewish wedding or marriage. God often used it when promising Israel a Redeemer. Their Messiah would be their Bridegroom, despite Israel’s unfaithfulness during betrothal, **Isa 54:5-8; 62:4-5; Jer 2:2; Ezekiel 16; Hosea 2:14-23**.

In that occasion, the bridegroom’s friends went with the bridegroom to the bride’s house, and escorted her to her new home. Arriving at the bridegroom’s house, a feast usually lasting seven days ensued, **Mat 22:4; Luke 14:8; John 2:8-9**.

Bridegroom’s friends are here called the “**attendants of the bridegroom,**” which is actually in the Greek, the plural of HIOS “**sons,**” and the singular Noun NUMPHON νυμφών that means, “wedding hall or bridechamber,” So, literally it is, “sons of the bridechamber.” It is only used in this narrative in **Mat 9:5; Mark 2:19;** and our verse, plus **Mat 22:10**, for the Lord’s Parable of the Marriage Feast.

Mat 22:10, “Those slaves went out into the streets, and gathered together all they found, both evil and good; and the wedding hall was filled with dinner guests.”

“**Bridechamber**” is the room where a marriage is consummated. Going back to the secular use in ancient Greek, it was used in the context of pagan worship, where in a temple, sexual fertility rites were conducted. It is not used in the LXX of the OT.

In the NT, it is a “wedding hall,” and with HIOS speaks to the “sons or children of the bridechamber.” This refers to those guests of the bridegroom closest to him who played a special role in the ceremonies (i.e., “bridegroom attendants”).

Jesus was pointing out that during the marriage celebration there was a feast for all to enjoy with eating and drinking. Therefore, during the wedding celebration, you would not ask the closest people to the “**bridegroom**” NUMPHIOS, νυμφίος, to not eat. You would do just the opposite and encourage them to eat and drink, i.e., celebrate! In the analogy of a Jewish wedding, the bridegroom’s coming was a time of joy and indulgence, not gloom and denial.

““*NUMPHIOS,*” within Hellenism was used to convey the concept of the bride and bridegroom as analogous to the relationship of the Savior and men, particularly within the realm of the Gnostic oriented structures.” (Günther, “Marriage,” Colin Brown, 2:584).

In the LXX of the OT, it is used for “bridegroom,” in **Jer 7:34; 16:9; 25:10**, that would speak no more. Then, regarding the return and restoration of Israel from her captivity, the picture is used of the voice of the “bridegroom” that would speak once again and be heard in the land. Symbolically, the implication is that of the loss and eventual regaining of joy by a people who had disobeyed God, who had repented, and who then were restored. This is what Jesus was portraying about Himself and Israel. Further, it is figuratively used with regard to the relationship between God and the nation of Israel, **Isa 61:10; 62:5**.

In the NT, it is only used in the Gospels and once in **Rev 18:23**, and typically refers to Christ related to His believers, (i.e., the Church). It is also related to the Messiah.

Interestingly, John the Baptist is called the “friend of the Bridegroom,” in **John 3:29**, who played a key role in the

marriage picture. He was an “attendant.” This should have had an impact on John the Baptist’s disciples who were part of Levi’s party interrogation of Jesus, **Mat 9:14**.

Vs. 35

Luke 5:35, “But *the* days will come; and when the bridegroom is taken away from them, then they will fast in those days.”

Here, the Lord alludes to His foreordained death for the first time, though Simeon had alluded to it earlier, **Luke 2:35**.

Jesus’ words predict, but do not command a fast. He commanded no such fasts while He was here, and the apostolic Church kept none. History shows that prescribed fasts typically become formal and tend to become Phariseeism.

Yet, He does say that the time for rejoicing would not last forever, as Jesus intimated, He would be “**taken away**,” using the Aorist, Passive, Subjective of the Verb APAIRO ἀπαίρω that is only used in this narrative in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. This word prophesied Jesus’ coming departure. It was prophetic of His Crucifixion and Ascension.

When that happens, “**they will fast**,” which is the Future, Active, Indicative of the Verb NESTEULO, once again. Therefore, upon Jesus’ death and ascension to heaven, the attendants of the Messiah will fast due to mourning. On two occasions we see the disciples fasting after Jesus’ ascension, **Acts 13:3; 14:23**.

Interestingly, the believer in Christ should not be in a state of mourning, but perpetual imminence; expecting His return with joy. It seems that this may be addressed to Israel, who will be in a perpetual state of mourning at the loss of their Messiah, though subliminally! Then upon His return, there will be great rejoicing by all once again! Therefore, to the Scribes, Pharisees, and others religion it was a funeral; but to Jesus, it was a wedding feast!

These passages explain the friction which existed during the transition from the dispensation of Law to the dispensation of Grace, which is further explained in the following verses.

3. The third section is Jesus’ parables about old vs. new, using garments, wine, and wineskins in analogy, vs. 36-39.

Vs. 36

Luke 5:36, “And He was also telling them a parable: “No one tears a piece of cloth from a new garment and puts it on an old garment; otherwise he will both tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old.”

Here, we have the great parable of our Lord about the old garments, wine, and wineskins versus the new.

“**Tears**” is the Verb SCHIZŌ σχίζω that means, “break, chop, cleave, divide, open, rend, separate, split, or tear.” Here, it is used for the analogy that old and new are not compatible. In reference to that, we also see this word used for the rending of the veil in the temple in Jerusalem from top to bottom after the death of Jesus on the Cross, **Mat 27:51; Mark 15:38**. This was a sign that access to God had been made possible because of the redemptive work of Christ upon the Cross, **Heb 6:19; 9:8; 10:19-20**. It was also used in **John 19:24**, when the soldiers as Jesus’ crucifixion decided to cast lots for Jesus’ garments rather than tearing them. Finally, Mark used SCHIZO to describe heaven opening for the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, **Mark 1:10**, which began Jesus’ ministry to make all things new, cf. **2 Cor 5:17; Rev 21:5**.

Interestingly, several other words in our passage are also used in the crucifixion narrative, so we see that the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ is highly in view in our passages.

“**Piece of cloth**” is the Greek Noun EPIBLEMA ἐπίβλημα that means, “a patch.” It is only used in this narrative in Matthew, Mark and Luke. Luke uses it twice in the verse. In addition, in the LXX of **Isa 3:22**, it is used for “cloaks,” which reminds us of Jesus’ healings by touching His cloak in **Mat 9:20; 14:38; Mark 5:27; 6:56; Luke 8:44**, which, as we have been noting, points to Jesus’ healing of our sins through His completed work upon the Cross.

“**New garment**” uses the Adjective KAINOS for “new” that means, “that which is new in nature and essence, that

which is superior to the old.” In respect to form it means, “recently made, recent, unused, or unworn.” In respect to substance it means, “of a new kind, unprecedented, novel, uncommon, or unheard of.”

Then we have the Noun HIMATION ἱμάτιον that means, “garment, clothing, cloak, or robe.” This word is used extensively in the NT, including our Lord’s crucifixion when His garments were divided by the soldiers at His crucifixion, **Mat 27:31-35; Mark 15:20, 24; Luke 23:34; John 19:23-24**, according to prophecy, **Psa 22:18**. His crucifixion is what makes us “new” again!

“**Old garment**” uses HIMATION once again, this time with the Adjective PALAIOS παλαιός that means, “old, ancient, worn out, or worthless.” Luke uses this Adjective in **vs. 36** (twice), **37, 39** (twice) of this narrative. It is also used in **Rom 6:6; 1 Cor 5:7-8; 2 Cor 3:14; Eph 4:22; Col 3:9**, for comparisons of the old life vs. the new life in Christ.

Rom 6:6, “Knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin.”

1 Cor 5:7-8, “Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. ⁸Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”

2 Cor 3:14, “But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ.”

Eph 4:22, “That, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit.”

Col 3:9, “Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices.”

“**Will not match**” uses the Negative OUK and the Future, Active Indicative of the Verb SUMPHONEO συμφωνέω that means, “agree, make a deal, or be in alliance with.” In Greek literature, it was used meaning, “sound together, be in harmony, or be in unison.” The word also carried the musical connotation of “harmonize.” It is used 6 times in the NT, typically for “agree,” where two parties agree with each other or not, if the negative is used like it is here.

In our passage, it means that the two pieces of cloth, (which represent the old nature of man vs. the new nature of the believer), will not be compatible as Mark says they will “pull away from one another.” Further, the gospel of Jesus Christ was not to be a patch attached to the Mosaic Law. The Age of Grace in the NT grows out of the Old, Age of the Law. But although the seeds of the gospel are found in the old covenant, the gospel of Jesus and the Age of Grace are something new. It is not designed to blend with the old ritual system; it is entirely new. Therefore, the old life, (the Age of the Law, or the unregenerated man), is not compatible with the new life, (the Age of Grace, or the regenerated man in Christ).

Vs. 37

Luke 5:37, “And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled out, and the skins will be ruined.”

Turning from “garments,” which spoke of our Lord’s crucifixion and resultant healing of sin, Luke now relates Jesus’ “wine and wineskin” analogy.

“**New wine**” uses the other Greek Adjective for “new” NEOS νέος meaning, “new, fresh, young, or recently born.” Besides young, youthful, new in time, and recently born this Adjective also emphasizes new in quality or essence, similar to KAINOS, but with the emphasis of quality! So, we see the “born again” analogy.

“**Wine**” is the Noun OINOS οἶνος that means, “wine, fermented grape juice, or fermented juice of other kinds.” It is used 33 times in the NT. Concerning our Parable of the Wineskins, the juice would be acted on by yeast from the old wineskins and would begin to foam. Such gases could split any wineskin, but especially an older one that was already stretched out. New wine would be grape juice (or a grapeade) made from grape syrup while old wine would be 2 to 3 years old. The alcohol content in that day was from 4-12 percent.

Wine has a dual usage of good and bad in the Bible, we see this in the first use of wine being an episode with Noah and his sons, **Gen 9:21-24**. The Hebrew for “wine” is YAYIN. The first usage of wine speaks of an act of sin where we see on one hand someone maliciously exposes sin, which is a further sin, and on the other hand someone covers sin. This is a great type and picture of salvation found in Christ versus the world. The world wants to expose your sins and run you down, as the Pharisees and Scribes are trying to do to Jesus, yet Christ covers all of our sins and lifts us up, **Isa 40:31; James 4:10**. Do you see the bitter/sweet analogy; Sin and the covering of sin!

Rom 4:7-8, “**Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, and whose sins have been covered. ⁸Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account.**” cf. **Psalm 32:1-2**.

Psa 85:2, “**You forgave the iniquity of Your people; You covered all their sin.**”

This word also plays heavily in our Lord’s Crucifixion, as the soldiers tried to give Jesus “wine mixed with gall or myrrh,” or sour wine when He thirsted, **Mat 27:14; Mark 15:23**, which he refused. In other words, the new wine cannot be mixed with anything else. There is only one way to salvation and one form of the spiritual life and that is through Jesus Christ.

We also know that the “cup” our Lord used in the Passover celebration the night before His crucifixion contained wine, as was the tradition of the Passover. The “new wine life” is realized through the New Covenant Jesus won at the Cross, **1 Cor 11:25**.

Wine is also used in several of Jesus’ healing narratives, **Luke 10:34; John 4:46**. It was also used in the first miracle Jesus performed, which was at the wedding in Cana, **John 2:3-10; 4:46**, when He turned the water into wine. We also see wine used regarding God’s judgment of the sinner in, **Rev 16:19; 19:15**. Interestingly, wine is also used negatively throughout the epistles and Revelation because of its ability to make one drunk, **Rom 14:21; Eph 5:18; 1 Tim 3:8; Titus 2:3; Rev 14:8-10; 17:2; 18:3**. So, we see in it the dual nature!

[See our website for the Doctrine of Wine, for more on the duality of its use in Scriptures.](#)

“**Old wineskins**” is the Adjective PALAIOS once again, with the Noun ASKOS ἀσκός. It is a leather skin from an animal made into a bag or bottle. It is only used in this narrative in Matthew, Mark and Luke; the synoptic Gospels. Old Wineskins represents the Age of the Law and our unregenerate nature, living constantly under sin and the Sin Nature inside Satan’s Cosmic System, **1 Cor 3:16; 2 Cor 6:16**.

“**Will burst**” is the Future, Active, Indicative of the Verb RHEGNUMI ρήγνυμι that means, “break, tear, throw down, or dash to the ground.” It is used of the “tearing by dogs or swine,” **Mat 7:6**, and of a demon-possessed person being dashed to the ground (convulsing) by a demon, **Mark 9:18; Luke 9:42**. So, we see the tie-in to Jesus’ exorcisms and the accusations the Pharisees, Scribes, and John’s disciples were making towards Jesus and His disciples by eating and drinking rather than fasting, as we noted above.

“**Will be spilled out**” uses the Future, Passive, Indicative of the verb EKCHUNO ἐκχύνω that means, “pour out, shed, spill.” Only Luke uses it in this narrative, yet all three synoptic Gospels use it for our Lord’s Passover supper when He said, “**this is My blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins,**” **Mat 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20**.

It is also used for the “pouring out” of God’s love who gives every believer the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, **Rom 5:5**; cf. **Acts 10:45**.

Rom 5:5, “**And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.**”

We also see its dual usage regarding judgment from God as it is found in Judas Iscariot’s final narrative, **Acts 1:18**, and in **Jude 1:11** for those who “rush headlong,” (follow) in Balaam’s footsteps.

“**And the skins will be ruined**” uses the Future, Middle, Indicative of the Verb APOLLUMI ἀπόλλυμι for “ruined” that means, “destroy, ruin, kill, lose, be lost, perish, or to put to death.” It is one of three words in the NT, (the others are APOLEIA and OLETHROS), that convey the NT teachings on eternal destruction.

The message of the wrath of God upon unrepentant sinners is even more emphatic in the NT than in the Old. Whereas in the old covenant the warnings of God's impending judgment often refer to retribution in this life, the perspective is different in the NT. As to the reward of righteousness and the punishment of sin, man will not share fully in them until the arrival of the world to come, just as salvation will be totally realized, so too will the warnings of the eternal punishment be fully experienced. It would be a total misunderstanding to think that God is milder or more tolerant of sin in the NT than He was under the old covenant.

*"Punishment is an eternal and irrevocable loss. The punishment is the loss of Messianic eschatological salvation. The "lost ones" fail to reach the goal of salvation history. They will not be allowed to participate in the kingdom of God, the new age, eternal life, and the resurrected community of God, **Mat 22:13; 25:41; 2 Thes 1:9; cf. Mat 16:26; Luke 9:25.** To be without God eternally is to "live" an existence without the grace of God and outside of the realm of His love. In such an existence, the lost do not benefit from any of the spiritual or material blessings that they may have shared in this earthly life. God is the origin and source of life. Any existence apart from Him is no longer life, but death. Because eternal life itself is knowledge of God and the One He sent, Jesus Christ (John 17:3), it is eternal death to be separated from His fellowship."* (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary.)

Vs. 38

Luke 5:38, "But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins."

Here is the contrasting argument.

"**New wine**" is NEOS OINOS, and "**fresh wineskins**" is KAINOS ASKOS or "new wineskins." This is speaking about the new spiritual life that is found in Christ Jesus that is put in the new creation of the regenerated born-again believer.

"**Must be put into**" is the Verbal Adjective BLETEOS βλητέος that means, "must be put or thrown." It implies necessity and propriety. It is only used by Mark and Luke in this narrative. Matthew uses the root word BALLO, "throw, cast, put, etc."

Later Greek copies added to this verse what Matthew has, "**and both are preserved together.**"

"**Preserved**" is the Greek verb SUNTEREO συντηρέω in the Present tense, Passive voice, Indicative mood, Third Person, Plural. This word means, "to preserve a thing from perishing or being lost, and to keep within one's self, or keep in mind a thing lest it be forgotten."

It was used in the Imperfect tense and Active voice to describe Mary's treasuring up or pondering the things being said about the Babe in **Luke 2:19**, of John the Baptist being kept safe temporarily in **Mark 6:19-20**, and in the Kings James rendering of **Luke 5:38**, our next passage.

In **Mat 9:17**, the Passive voice says that the preserving is something received. Both the New Wine and New Wineskin will receive preserving, being kept safe. It means eternal security, **2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:13; 4:30.**

When wine and wineskins are combined, they represent your new spiritual life. Separately they speak to that which provided for that new life. As such, the New Wine represents the Word of God/Gospel of Jesus Christ first heard and believed on for your salvation and the Wineskin represents your regenerated human spirit that houses your new spiritual life. And all this is made possible during the new Age / Dispensation of Grace or the Church Age, which began on the day of Pentecost after our Lord's ascension, and will terminate with the Rapture of the Church that ushers in the Tribulation. So, combined it speaks to the beginning and housing of your new spiritual life. According to **Mat 9:17**, both will be preserved.

Once again, our Lord was saying that the old forms of Judaism were not suitable for containing the new force of the new Age of Grace; the Church Age. There is a power in the new Age that needed a new container. The Church became that new container. New "containers" would be needed for the coming of the Holy Spirit. He needed new persons in whom He could dwell. That is why Jesus told Nicodemus, "**You must be born again,**" **John 3:7.** Therefore, those who would believe on Christ become "new creatures," (creations), a new spiritual species, **2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15.**

Gal 6:15, “For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.”

2 Cor 5:17, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”

Vs. 39

Luke 5:39, “And no one, after drinking old *wine* wishes for new; for he says, ‘The old is good *enough*.’”

Here we have a new phrase that is not found in the other Gospels. In this passage, the Old Wine is alluded to be superior to New Wine. God is using earthly terms and Jesus is using a play on words. It is a juxtaposition; either a reversal or sarcasm.

“**Good**” here is the Adjective, CHRESTOS χρηστός that means, “good, pleasant, easy, useful, serviceable, reputable, kind, or loving.” In this case, it means “suitable.” That is why the translators added “enough.” This word is also predominantly used in the NT for God’s goodness, as it also describes the qualities of being “kind, merciful, generous, etc.,” i.e., the Grace of God!

1 Cor 15:33, “Do not be deceived: ‘Bad company corrupts good morals.’”

Rom 2:4, “Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?”

Eph 4:32, “Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.”

Remember, this is a play on words and we can interpret it in two different ways, yet both give the same overall message.

First, we have a reversal of meaning. That is, the old wine was considered better than new wine; hence Jesus’ point that those who had drunk the old did not want the new. To the believer, in a reversal of meaning, the Old wine represents the better of the two, which is the new spiritual life, in the New Nature, in the new Dispensation. In this analogy, Christ is saying once we have tasted the superior Old Wine, (i.e., New Nature, New Age, etc.), we will not want to go back to the inferior New Wine (i.e., Old Nature, being under the Law, etc.).

Secondly, through another lens, this can also be sarcasm that speak to the legalistic religious types and worldly unbelievers who are of the Cosmic System, “Old Wine” (Satan’s counterfeit life), who will not want any of the new wine, (the new life in Christ). They are satisfied with the Cosmic System and will reject the newness of life that is found in Christ. This is an obvious allusion to the Pharisees and others who would not accept Jesus’ “new” life. The Pharisees had become steeped in the “old wine” of their traditions and rituals. They would not accept the “new wine” of the grace plan of God that provides a new creation in a new Dispensation. In their self-sufficiency and pride, they believed they needed nothing new. Judaism had been tried and found true; they wanted nothing else. In other words, these people are not looking for the new, they are satisfied with who they are and their good works. Therefore, they do not need God’s grace and goodness in their life.

In either case, the point is, there is a difference between the old and the new. Jesus was here to bring a new creation, with a new spiritual life, and a new Dispensation to live that life that was far better than the spiritual life of the old or past Dispensation; the Age of the Law.

So, our Lord is saying that the New Spiritual Life cannot reside inside our old self that was totally controlled by the sin nature or in the old way of the Law. We must have a New Nature for the New Spiritual life to live in. That is why God gives us the regenerated Human Spirit at the moment of salvation, so that our New Life has a place to reside and dwell. Likewise, the New Nature is the temple of the Holy Spirit. So, He too needs the regenerate New Wineskin to dwell in.

1 Cor 3:16, “Do you not know that you are a temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you?”

Therefore, A pivotal point had come into the history of Redemption: The Law had served a useful purpose as a

“tutor,” **Gal 3:24**. But now, a new and living way was soon to begin providing direct access to God and the power of the indwelling Spirit to enable us to follow in the steps of Christ.