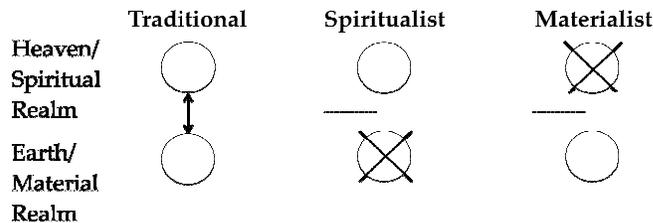


**Luke 4:31 – 44**

<sup>4:31</sup> And he came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and he was teaching them on the Sabbath; <sup>32</sup> and they were amazed at his teaching, for his message was with authority. <sup>33</sup> In the synagogue there was a man possessed by the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, <sup>34</sup> ‘Let us alone! What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are – the Holy One of God!’ <sup>35</sup> But Jesus rebuked him, saying, ‘Be quiet and come out of him!’ And when the demon had thrown him down in the midst of the people, he came out of him without doing him any harm. <sup>36</sup> And amazement came upon them all, and they began talking with one another saying, ‘What is this message? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits and they come out.’ <sup>37</sup> And the report about him was spreading into every locality in the surrounding district. <sup>38</sup> Then he got up and left the synagogue, and entered Simon’s home. Now Simon’s mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked him to help her. <sup>39</sup> And standing over her, he rebuked the fever, and it left her; and she immediately got up and waited on them. <sup>40</sup> While the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to him; and laying his hands on each one of them, he was healing them. <sup>41</sup> Demons also were coming out of many, shouting, ‘You are the Son of God!’ But rebuking them, he would not allow them to speak, because they knew him to be the Christ [i.e. Messianic King]. <sup>42</sup> When day came, Jesus left and went to a secluded place; and the crowds were searching for him, and came to him and tried to keep him from going away from them. <sup>43</sup> But he said to them, ‘I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose.’ <sup>44</sup> So he kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

**Historical and Cultural Background**

- At this time, the Roman Empire ruled over Israel. Revolutionary guerrilla fighters were very common during this time. Hostilities were high especially in the Galilee area where Capernaum was, because of the interaction between Jews and Gentiles.
- In the previous section, Jesus announced himself and his mission in the Nazareth synagogue. Luke’s point often rests on a contrast between paired events. In this case, the Nazareth and Capernaum synagogue encounters are meant to be compared.
- Demons are fallen spirits who exploit weaknesses and sins in people (like anger, Ephesians 4:26 – 27). Three basic worldviews:



## Questions

1. What are demons?
  - a. Yes, they are real even today. One recent newspaper article is titled: ‘Nurse, DCS case manager say they saw boy walk up wall, prompting a series of exorcisms.’ (IndyStar, Jan 25, 2014) Notice the write up by a non-Christian case worker:

Medical staff reported that while the children were at their primary doctor’s office the medical staff reported they observed \*\*\* be lifted and thrown into the wall with nobody touching him... \*\*\* had the weird grin on his face and began to walk backwards while the grandmother was holding his hand and he walked up the wall backwards while holding the grandmother’s hand and he never let go. He flipped over and landed on his feet in front of the grandmother and sat down in the chair. A few minutes later he looked as if he was back to himself. (State of Indiana, Intake Officer’s Report, Apr 24, 2012, <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/1004899-intake-officers-report.html>)

- b. Satan and the demons are fallen angels whose original task from God was to serve and love human beings (Ps.91:11; 1 Cor.6:3). Since God serves and loves human beings, he made angels ‘in His image’ in that sense. It was the good to which they were called higher to fulfill their nature. Satan wanted to prove to God that they should not serve humans, and that God should not either. So Satan tempted Adam and Eve, they fell into corruption, and some angels were apparently persuaded (Rev.12:9). God still loves them in the sense that He upholds their being, and calls them still to serve and love human beings – their original purpose. But they refuse, and receive His love as torment.
    - c. Illus: ‘To us a human is primarily food; our aim is the absorption of its will into ours, the increase of our own area of selfhood at its expense. But the obedience which the Enemy demands of men is quite a different thing. One must face the fact that all the talk about His love for men, and His service being perfect freedom, is not (as one would gladly believe) mere propaganda, but an appalling truth. He really does want to fill the universe with a lot of loathsome little replicas of Himself – creatures whose life, on its miniature scale, will be qualitatively like His own, not because he has absorbed them but because their wills freely conform to His. We want cattle who can finally become food; He wants servants who can finally become sons. We want to suck in, He wants to give out. We are empty and would be filled; He is full and flows over. Our war aim is a world in which Our Father Below has drawn all other beings into himself: the Enemy wants a world full of beings united to Him but still distinct.’ (C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*, letter 8; see also Matthew 12:28 – 29; 43 – 45)
    - d. If people are wondering why people might be attracted to demons, explain it this way: Demons engage with our negative emotions like jealousy (Gen.3), fear (1 Sam.28), and bitterness (Eph.4:26 – 27). The offer more power...
      - i. To curse or affect other people
        1. Pharaoh’s magicians (Ex.5 – 10)
        2. Balaam the magician(Num.21 – 24)
      - ii. To desecrate objects
        1. Animals (Gen.3; Mt.8:31 – 32; Mk.5:11 – 13; Lk.8:32 – 33)
        2. Land & Locations (Ex.5 – 10; Lev.18:25, 27; 20:3; Num.35:34; Dt.21:23)- 2. How does Jesus setting the captives free, proclaiming liberty to prisoners, which he said in the previous synagogue in Nazareth (Lk.4:18; Isa.61:1)? He is liberating people from spiritual oppression? This is one of the meanings of Jesus’ deliverance.
  - a. Whenever Jesus or his disciples entered a new geographic area, they cast out demons from people first (Lk.8:26 – 39; 9:1 – 10; 10:1 – 24; Acts 8:5 – 8; 16:16 – 18; 19:13 – 17; etc.). This seems to be a marker of cleansing in a limited sense, bringing more freedom to people so that they might choose Jesus.
  - b. Application: Pray for protection and power in ministry. We don’t know all the ways that the spiritual world interacts with us and our world. But Jesus calls us to at least consider the possible dangers of beings who seek to influence us through lies and certain kinds of powers.
- 3. Why do demons seem to know who Jesus is?

- a. They are spiritual beings who have some kind of insight or understanding of Jesus because of his existence as the Son of God
  - b. Who has known Jesus' identity before?
    - i. Heavenly beings: The angel Gabriel (Lk.1:26 – 33)
    - ii. Human beings: Mary of Nazareth (Lk.1:32, 35)
    - iii. Human beings: John the Baptist in the womb of his mother Elizabeth (Lk.1:41)
    - iv. Heavenly beings: The angels and shepherds at the birth of Jesus (Lk.2:8 – 20)
    - v. Human beings: Simeon and Anna (Lk.2:25 – 32, 36 – 38)
    - vi. Heavenly beings: God the Father (Lk.3:21 – 22)
    - vii. Heavenly beings: Satan in the wilderness (Lk.4:1 – 13)
  - c. Why don't most humans know or recognize Jesus? Because they don't really understand the Hebrew Scriptures. That's the implication of Luke.
4. What is the attitude of the people at Capernaum towards Jesus? They seem to want Jesus to just stay there and not go anywhere else. So that if they got sick or needed a miracle, he would be right there.
- a. Do you think it's unkind of Jesus to leave Capernaum? Or is it unkind of them to hog him all to himself?
  - b. Application for Christians: Jesus does want us to have friends and community on the human level. But he also recognizes that one of the biggest problems we have is our inability to extend community to other people. Jesus wants to reach not just our little Capernaums. And he wants to do more than just provide us some nice benefits, help us find a nice Christian person to marry, and have a stable life. He wants to carry us with him wherever he goes, to love and serve people.
  - c. Application for non-Christians: Do you want to continue next week? Or do you find yourself in one of these two synagogues, rejecting Jesus already?