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Luke Chapter 8

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Abstract: A commentary on the events of Luke 8, accompanied by parallel columns of the King James translation of the chapter alongside a new rendition.



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Luke Chapter 8

INTRODUCTION

The Savior moves seamlessly from Jews to Gentiles, from those afflicted with demons to those with serious illness, from devoted followers to dotting family members. Remarkably, no stories of conflict appear in chapter 8. Such accounts recede until “a certain lawyer” challenges Jesus about the meaning of one’s neighbor (see 10:25–37). Instead, Luke offers to readers samples of Jesus’ most potent miracles and some of the best of his teaching, beginning with his watershed parable of the sower. Further, Jesus steps onto gentile territory and, with no dimming of power, brings needed help to a man tormented by a legion of demons.

Thus, Luke writes that Jesus is “preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom” (8:1) and, through the parable of the sower (see 8:4–15), introduces his central teaching about hearing and obeying, emphasizing this point when turning attention to his family (see 8:19–21), as well as to the elements and to illnesses that hear and obey him. At the chapter’s beginning, Luke signals the miracle-working—the “shewing” of “the glad tidings” (8:1)—by writing that one of the women disciples, Mary Magdalene, has been delivered from “seven devils” (8:2). Luke then reports Jesus’ calming of a storm (see 8:22–25), his healing of a demoniac in gentile territory (see 8:26–39), his healing of the woman with the issue of blood (see 8:43–48), and his raising of Jairus’s daughter from death (see 8:41–42, 49–56). Amidst all these activities, Luke pointedly affirms that the Twelve are at Jesus’ side, witnessing all (see 8:1).

But others join them, keeping their company and adding a measure of dignity. They include “certain women” who, out of their generosity and abundance, “ministered unto him of their substance” (8:2–3). Notably, Luke places these women next to the Apostles in his report, almost as if they form the leadership core of women in Jesus’ nascent kingdom. Notice of these women does not exhaust the numbers of new companions. For

we learn later of “men which have companied with us [the Twelve] all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us” (Acts 1:21). Within this group travel the two men—Joseph Justus and Matthias—who are considered as successors to the fallen Judas (see Acts 1:23).

Notably, women play a variety of prominent roles in the incidents recorded in chapter 8. We read early on about the women who follow Jesus, some of whom “had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities” (8:2). Implicitly, Jesus’ words about “lighting a candle” include the activities of women, even though the translation of the saying erroneously begins “No man” (8:16). A proper translation would be “no one” or “no person” (see the Note on 8:16). Further, Jesus’ mother visits him and he responds to her presence with a saying about his spiritual family (see 8:19–21). In addition, the daughter of Jairus, “about twelve years of age,” the age that will see her step out of childhood into adulthood, receives Jesus’ healing ministrations (see 8:41–42, 49–56). Lastly, the woman “having an issue of blood twelve years” comes suddenly and astonishingly to full health when she touches “the border of his garment” (8:43–48).

Of Jesus’ teachings, the parable of the sower stands almost without peer. It is the longest parable in Luke’s Gospel thus far (see 4:23; 5:36; 6:39). The story, drawn from common life, portrays an uncommon message: not all will respond to divine truth in the same way, and the manner of a person’s response makes all the difference. In a ringing voice—“he cried” (8:8)—Jesus demands that people hear and obey, thus declaring in the clearest terms the heart of his saving ministry. But he knows human nature. Many will allow the devil to take “the word out of their hearts” (8:12); others will “in time of temptation fall away” (8:13); still others will become “choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life” (8:14). For them, their eternal future appears dreary. However, another group of listeners, in complete contrast, “having heard the word, keep it” (8:15). Jesus has come seeking these people.

Not incidentally, with the parable of the sower, Luke begins again to reproduce accounts found in Mark and Matthew. With a few exceptions, the order of events, until Jesus turns from Galilee toward Jerusalem (see 9:51), generally follows Mark’s record from Mark 4:1 to 6:44, the end of the story of the feeding of the five thousand. The exceptions come in the form of Luke’s omission of the parable of the seed growing secretly, which is recounted only by Mark (see Mark 4:26–29); his omission of the death of the Baptist (see Mark 6:17–29); and his rehearsal of the parable of the mustard seed in a later scene (see 13:18–19; Mark 4:30–32). In this long

section of stories, from Luke 8:4 through 9:50, we must reckon seriously with the possibility that Luke has chosen to follow Mark. Even so, enough differences exist to raise questions so that Marshall is willing to write of “oral traditions” influencing Luke’s account,¹ thus opening the door to the notion of Luke learning firsthand from the recollections of witnesses, as he hints at the opening of his Gospel (see 1:3).²

Underlying several accounts in this chapter is the report of Isaiah’s call to be a prophet (see Isa. 6). This prophetic account undergirds the central pair of the Savior’s teachings in this chapter, to hear and to obey. The first hint of ties to Isaiah arises in Jesus’ concluding words from the parable of the sower: “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear” (8:8). This echo from Isaiah grows into a loud voice in Jesus’ reasons for telling parables; for those who choose not to respond to his teachings, he speaks in parables so “that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand” (8:10).³ These words link directly to Isaiah. In the prophet’s case, God sends him with a message that his hearers will reject: “Go, and tell this people [of Jerusalem], Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not” (Isa. 6:9). But this is not all. Later in this chapter, Luke tells of the woman afflicted by “an issue of blood twelve years” (8:43). In a determined act, she threaded her way through a throng of people surrounding Jesus and touched “the border of his garment”; she was healed “immediately” (8:44). Although the term translated “border” (Greek *kraspedon*) can bear this meaning, it regularly refers to one of the four tassels that hung on a Jew’s outer garment worn to remind the person of God’s commandments (see Num. 15:38–39; Deut. 22:12).⁴ Such a garment recalls the divine garment whose hem fills the heavenly temple seen by Isaiah. This hem (Hebrew *shul*), noted in other sacred, ritual contexts (see Ex. 28:33–34), is translated in the KJV as God’s “train” (Isa. 6:1).⁵ The woman’s act, which brings healing, is to touch Jesus’ garment—a piece of clothing that already carries religious significance—and thereby to receive an immediate outpouring of divine power, effectively confirming that Jesus wears God’s garment.

1. Marshall, *Luke*, 318.

2. Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 93–132, 146–49, 313–14.

3. Jesus raises these matters elsewhere (see 10:23–24; 11:33–36).

4. Plummer, *Luke*, 235; *TDNT*, 3:904.

5. BDB, 1002; Margaret Barker, “Isaiah,” in *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*, ed. James D. G. Dunn and John W. Rogerson (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2003), 504.

The ties to Isaiah's experience are even broader and richer. Two dimensions stand out: seeing and hearing. Light illumines the darkness in Jesus' parable of the candle or lamp (see 8:16–18) wherein he declares that those "which enter in" a lighted home or room "see the light." Thus, seeing the light, in contrast to not seeing it when it is under "a vessel" or "under a bed," forms the heart of the saying (8:16). In the stilling of the storm (see 8:22–25), Jesus "rebuked the wind and the raging of the water." Notably, nature hears him and obeys. Luke concludes that "there was a calm" (8:24). Further, in the story of the healing of the Gergesene demoniac (see 8:26–39), the man, when healed, begs Jesus "that he might be with him" in his ministry (8:38). Jesus refuses, saying, "Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee." The man hears and obeys, bearing witness "throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him" (8:39). Unlike Isaiah's contemporaries, who will hear "but understand not" (Isa. 6:9), this healed man hears his master. In sum, the broad connections to the call of Isaiah underscore that God's powers have come among his people but not all will respond.

In terms of Jesus' other miracles, perhaps the most important story in chapter 8 recounts his healing of the man afflicted by devils in gentile territory. To this point, Jesus is evidently operating entirely within Jewish territory.⁶ But by crossing the northern end of the Sea of Galilee and entering the general area of the Decapolis on the east side of the lake, Jesus leads his closest followers onto foreign ground. Why is this act significant? Because ancients generally thought that the power of a god reaches a barrier at the frontier where one passes from the territory of one god into that of another. A good illustration of this concept lies in the story of Naaman, the Syrian military officer, who, after being healed, requests that he be allowed to take two mule loads of Israel's earth back home to Damascus so that he can properly worship Jehovah, the worker of the miracle and the owner of that earth (see 2 Kgs. 5:17). In this light, Jesus knowingly departs from the territory of his own people and travels into a territory where people worship other gods. But, as the story of the demoniac demonstrates, Jesus' power does not diminish or flounder when he comes into that foreign territory. One point of the story is to say that Jesus is God of the whole earth and all its peoples, not just of Jews.

6. That Jews and Gentiles lived apart in their own towns is the archaeological point in Berlin, "Romanization and Anti-Romanization," 57–73; Berlin, "Jewish Life before the Revolt," 417–70; Jensen, *Herod Antipas in Galilee*, 236–39.

THE EARLIEST FOLLOWERS (8:1–3)

(Compare Matt. 9:35; Mark 6:6)

King James Translation

1 And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him, 2 And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, 3 And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.

New Rendition

1 And it came to pass that, afterward, he traveled through city and town preaching and announcing the good news of the kingdom of God, and with him were the twelve 2 and some women who had been healed from evil spirits and diseases: Mary, who is called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils; 3 and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward; and Susanna, and many others who served them from their own resources.

Notes

8:1 *afterward*: Luke's terminology moves the story along, showing both sequence and passage of time. The expression (Greek *en tō kathexēs*), translated *afterward*, brings forward terminology that appears only in Luke's records and has to do with order in the sequence of time or space (see Luke 1:3; Acts 3:24; 11:4; 18:23).⁷

he went throughout every city and village: In 9:51, Luke will later narrate that Jesus turns away from Galilee and “stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem” because he knows “the time was come that he should be received up.” Before this moment, Luke stresses Jesus' genuine attempt to reach every person in Galilee (see 4:42–44).

shewing the glad tidings: Although the verb (Greek *euangelizomai*) means to announce good news, it appears that Luke intends two further senses. The first dimension of this verb, when paired with the verb “to preach,” guides readers to the content of the Savior's preaching—“the glad tidings.”⁸ Second, Luke seems to intend at least an indirect reference to Jesus' miraculous powers which, in their own way, announce him and his message, for he will next draw attention to “healed” women.

7. BAGD, 389.

8. Marshall, *Luke*, 316.

the twelve: We hear of the Twelve for the first time since 6:17, but they are companions and witnesses of all that occurs in the meantime. Significantly, concerning the Twelve the Joseph Smith Translation adds “who were ordained of him,” stressing that by this time they receive their ordination from Jesus himself (JST 8:1), perhaps along with others since the language is not limiting. This early ordination likely has to do with receiving the Melchizedek Priesthood, and the later commissioning scene rehearses their empowerment as Apostles (see the Notes on 9:1 and 9:2). The Twelve, of course, along with the women mentioned in 8:2, will become the chief witnesses of Jesus’ resurrection.⁹ Hence, Luke establishes the presence, already in Galilee, of the main witnesses “which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us” (Acts 1:21).

with him: A reader senses that the continuing presence of the Twelve with the Savior means that he is training them at every turn, educating them about their future roles. Moreover, the preposition “with” (Greek *syn*) points to the full fellowship that these men enjoy with Jesus throughout his ministry, as do the women mentioned next (see Acts 1:14; the Notes on 6:17; 8:45; 22:14, 28; 23:43; 24:33).¹⁰ The women, therefore, are also being trained.¹¹

8:2 certain women: Luke keeps track of the fact that, besides male disciples, women follow Jesus from place to place, directly associating them with the Twelve in full fellowship with Jesus (see the Note on 8:1). It seems probable that such women either do not have the responsibility of families or are well enough off to hire help, as 8:3 indicates (“their substance”). In any event, they assist in supplying necessities for Jesus (see 8:3). Their presence raises the timeless issue of female discipleship as characterized in the story of Mary and Martha (see 10:38–42). Moreover, notices of them here, near the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, and later at the scene of the announcement of the resurrection (see 24:1–10), means that their association with him arcs through most of his ministry, establishing them as first-rank witnesses.¹² Hence, because Luke features them so often and so prominently, they most certainly are important female participants in his nascent church organization, working alongside the Twelve and other disciples, though in

9. Marshall, *Luke*, 315.

10. *TDNT*, 7:770, 794–97.

11. Tannehill, *Luke*, 138–39; Green, *Luke*, 317–20.

12. Plummer, *Luke*, 214–15; Caird, *Luke*, 116; Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 48–51.

a different capacity, as the verb “ministered” indicates (see the Notes on 8:1, 3; 22:8; 23:56; the Analysis on 22:7–13 and 23:50–56).¹³ Notably, the other Gospels feature the Galilean women disciples only at the end (see Matt. 27:55–56; Mark 15:40–41; John 16:9; 19:25). The fact that these women associate with Jesus and his group of male disciples is highly unusual in their society and probably draws unwanted criticism, though unrecorded. Luke’s notice signals that Jesus’ attitude toward women differs sharply from the attitude common in his culture (see John 4:27). As an example, “He that talks much with womankind brings evil upon himself . . . and at the last will inherit Gehenna.”¹⁴ It is worth noting that the notices of their presence near the beginning of Jesus’ ministry and at its end forms a literary *inclusio* that frames much of Luke’s story (see the Analysis on 23:44–45).¹⁵

which had been healed: The one notable feature common to these women followers of Jesus is the fact that they all “had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities” (8:2) and are thus motivated to assist him, and the Twelve, in their ministry.¹⁶

Mary called Magdalene: Mary hails from the town of Magdala near the west shore of the Sea of Galilee—modern Migdāl—which lies about three miles north of Tiberias and four and one-half miles southwest of Capernaum. An earlier name for this town is Taricheae, a fish-salting center (see the Note on 5:6). Mary’s historic connection to Jesus appears in the accounts of the end of his life and the first approach to his tomb (see 24:10; Matt. 27:56, 61; 28:1; Mark 15:40, 47; 16:1, 9; John 19:25; 20:1, 18).

out of whom went seven devils: This detail about Mary’s experience as a follower of Jesus is the only one preserved about her in the New Testament and highlights her as one of those “healed of evil spirits” (see also Mark 16:9). Attempts to tie her to the “sinner” woman of 7:37–50 fail because being freed from demons differs markedly from being freed from sin.¹⁷ Infestation by multiple devils appears in the report of the Gergesene demoniac and in Jesus’ story about the displaced unclean spirit (see the Notes on 8:30 and 11:26).

8:3 Joanna: Mentioned again in 24:10 as one of the women who visit Jesus’ sepulcher early, this woman’s name is probably the feminine

13. Evans, *Luke*, 122–23; Stein, *Luke*, 241.

14. *Mishnah Pirke Aboth* 1:5; *TDNT*, 1:781–83; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1:696; Stein, *Luke*, 240.

15. Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 129–31, 366–67, 388, 390–93.

16. Plummer, *Luke*, 216.

17. Plummer, *Luke*, 216; Marshall, *Luke*, 316; Morris, *Luke*, 164.

counterpart to the name John and means “Jehovah has been gracious” or “Jehovah has given.”¹⁸

wife of Chuza Herod’s steward: This connection may be the closest that Jesus and his disciples enjoy with the governor’s house, for the passage evidently points to Herod Antipas. The term translated “steward” (Greek *epitropos*) generally means manager.¹⁹ The title does not allow us to determine exactly which office Chuza held. Whether he ever joins his wife in her devotion to Jesus we do not learn. But Chuza and his wife are presumably people of means and are therefore the channel through which Herod and his courtiers learn about Jesus (see 9:7–9).

Susanna: The name of this woman appears only here. In Hebrew, her name is Shoshana, a name which goes back to earlier Semitic roots, as well as Egyptian, and means lily (see 2 Chr. 4:5; Hos. 14:6 [Hebrew text]).²⁰

many others: With these simple words, we begin to grasp the resonance that women feel toward Jesus’ message and their willingness to follow him.

ministered unto him of their substance: These women, apparently well off, support Jesus and also, it seems evident, the Twelve in their ministering efforts by providing for their physical needs. In fact, many early manuscripts feature the plural pronoun “unto them,” likely the original reading,²¹ instead of the singular “unto him.” The verb translated “ministered” (Greek *diakoneō*) points to serving at table, but also taking charge of meals as women customarily do (see 10:40; Acts 6:2). Beyond these meanings, it hints that these women perform acts of care for Jesus and the other disciples, assisting and elevating the entire body of followers,²² much like the modern Relief Society. The tense of the verb, the imperfect, indicates that their service is repeated and on-going.²³

Analysis

These three verses form a needed bridge between the Savior’s early ministry in Galilee and his subsequent efforts to reach out to people in this region before he begins to wend his way south toward Jerusalem (see 9:51). Luke insists that Jesus makes the effort to contact all, traveling “throughout

18. Burton H. Throckmorton Jr., “Joanna,” in *IDB*, 2:909; *BDB*, 220.

19. *BAGD*, 303.

20. *BDB*, 1004; Walter Ewing Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939), 608a.

21. Plummer, *Luke*, 216; Marshall, *Luke*, 317.

22. *TDNT*, 2:84–93; Marshall, *Luke*, 317; Evans, *Luke*, 122–23.

23. Blass and Debrunner, *Greek Grammar*, §§327, 325.

every city and village” in the region and taking “the twelve” as witnesses (8:1). What follows in chapters 8 and 9 forms a sampling from this later Galilean ministry.

At the heart of the unofficial entourage that travels with him and the Twelve during these days walks a group of women whose lives Jesus touches literally by relieving them “of evil spirits and infirmities” (8:2). Matthew and Mark tell us of these women from Galilee, but not until the ends of their Gospels and without the detail of Jesus’ liberating acts, except the deliverance of Mary Magdalene (see Matt. 27:55–56; Mark 15:40–41; 16:9). Luke chooses to introduce them at about the time they are first gathering around the Savior, thus highlighting their early presence among his followers. As a result, we are not surprised at their sudden appearance in the stories of Jesus’ crucifixion, burial and resurrection.

From these verses, we carry away a sense that these women help to maintain Jesus, and the Twelve, from their own purses—from their own resources. Plainly implied is their access to ample means, indicating that they enjoy a right to financial resources and, importantly, carry with them the support of their husbands and families. Most, if not all, must have already raised their children and are able to spend time away from home. We know the names of some, though not all. In these verses, Luke notes the names of three; for the others, we must consult the other Gospels.

Mary Magdalene

Joanna the wife of Chuza (see Luke 24:10)

Susanna

Mary the mother of James the less and Joses (see Matt. 27:56, 61; 28:1; Mark 15:40, 47; 16:1; Luke 24:10)

Salome (see Mark 15:40; 16:1)

The mother of Zebedee’s children (see Matt. 27:56)

Jesus’ mother (see John 19:25)

Jesus’ mother’s sister (see John 19:25)

Mary the wife of Cleophas (see John 19:25)²⁴

The woman named Salome of Mark’s account and “the mother of Zebedee’s children” of Matthew’s record may be the same person because they appear in almost identical lists of women who come from Galilee to Jerusalem and witness Jesus’ death (see Mark 15:40–41; Matt. 27:55–56). In sum, from the Gospel reports we can identify at least eight women who, for

24. On the women mentioned in John’s gospel, see Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 2:904–6.

large portions of Jesus' ministry in Galilee and beyond, travel with him and support him and the Twelve. Their long association explains their presence in the body that gathers with the Twelve to choose a successor for the fallen Judas (see Acts 1:14).

It is worth noting that we find no conflict stories in the Gospels that embroil women. All such confrontations with Jesus involve men.²⁵ Evidently, during his ministry Jesus gives no occasion to a woman to seek amends from him, whereas, plainly, certain men take advantage of women, including those who devour "widows' houses" (20:47).

PARABLE OF THE SOWER (8:4–15)

(Compare Matt. 13:1–23; Mark 4:1–20)

King James Translation

4 And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable: 5 A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. 6 And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. 7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. 8 And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

9 And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be? 10 And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they

New Rendition

4 And while a great crowd was gathering together and people were coming to him from city after city, he spoke by way of parable: 5 "A sower went out to sow his seed. And while he was sowing, some fell beside the road and was trampled, and the birds of the sky ate it. 6 And some fell down on rock, and after it had sprouted, it dried up, because it did not have moisture. 7 And some fell into the midst of thorns, and when the thorns had grown up with it, they choked it. 8 And other fell into good ground, and when it sprouted, it produced fruit a hundredfold." After saying this, he said loudly, "Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear."

9 And his disciples began to ask him what this parable might mean. 10 And he said, "To you it has been permitted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God; but to the rest, it has been given

25. Morris, *Luke*, 165.

might not see, and hearing they might not understand.

11 Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. 12 Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. 13 They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. 14 And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. 15 But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.

in parables, so that ‘although they look, they may not see, and although they hear, they may not understand.’

11 “And this is the parable: the seed is the word of God. 12 Those beside the road are they who hear; then the devil comes and takes the word out of their hearts, so that they might not be saved because they believed. 13 Those on the rock, when they heard, joyfully accepted the word. But these have no root; they believe for a time but they fall away in time of trial. 14 As for that which fell into the thorns, these are they who hear but are choked by the anxieties, riches, and pleasures of life as they go forth, and do not bear fruit to maturity. 15 As for that in the good ground, these are they who, hearing the word with a good and virtuous heart, accept it and produce fruit by persevering.”

Notes

8:4 when much people were gathered together: Luke enhances the timeless quality of what Jesus says next by not tying the parable to time or place, although both Matthew and Mark locate Jesus’ following parable in a boat next to the seashore (see Matt. 13:2; Mark 4:1).

out of every city: Jesus is still in Galilee, but we do not know where he and the gathering crowd are. Not only does he travel “throughout every city and village” (8:1), but now from all over Galilee people are responding to him by seeking him out. Even so, their presence alone is not sufficient. As Jesus will point out in his interpretation of the parable, and elsewhere, the issue is how a person responds to his message and not whether a person puts on a good show by being present (see 8:11–15, 21).

he spake by a parable: Previously, Luke labels other sayings as parables (Greek *parabolē*), but the following saying will constitute Jesus’ first major parable (see the Notes on 4:23 and 5:36). Scholars have long held that a “typical parable . . . presents one single point of comparison.”²⁶

26. Dodd, *Parables*, 18; also Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 295–99; Plummer, *Luke*, 125–26; *TDOT*, 9:64–67; *TDNT*, 5:744–61.

8:5 *A sower went out to sow his seed:* Although it is reasonable to see the parable as drawing attention to the soils on which the seed falls,²⁷ the rhythm and similarity of the Greek terms “sower,” “to sow,” and “seed” (*speirōn, speirai, sporon*) bring the focus firmly onto the sower and his seed.

by the way side: The literal expression is “along the path” and points to the edge where some people choose to stand, just off the proper path. Perhaps oddly, the seed here will be “trodden down,” apparently because passersby will not always walk in the middle of the path but along its edges.

the fowls of the air devoured it: This seed sits on the surface of the ground where birds can quickly eat it. Apparently, the sower has not previously turned and broken the soil next to the path, leaving a hardened edge where this seed falls.

8:6 *a rock:* The best manuscripts read “the rock.” The underlying rock in this region consists of limestone, and in many places the rocks are more plentiful than the soil which lies thinly atop the rocky ground.

it lacked moisture: Even if the seed fell on soil, the typically thin layer of soil atop the underneath rock dries quickly in the sun, drying out the seed.

8:7 *the thorns sprang up with it:* The reference must be to rapidly growing thistles rather than to thorn bushes that grow more slowly. The Greek term *akantha* is imprecise and allows both meanings.²⁸

8:8 *bare fruit an hundredfold:* It is not clear why Luke does not repeat the “thirtyfold” and “sixtyfold” of Matthew and Mark (see Matt. 13:8; Mark 4:8). The common element, of course, is that the seed which lands on good ground produces abundantly, in clear contrast to that which falls on other patches of soil or onto rocks. The term “hundredfold” becomes common in modern scripture (see D&C 78:19; 82:18–19; etc.).

he cried: Unlike the reports in Matthew and Mark that portray the following words about hearing as a natural conclusion to the parable (see Matt. 13:9; Mark 4:9), Luke emphasizes these concluding words by writing that Jesus raises his voice (Greek verb *phoneō*), not once but repeatedly, for Luke writes the imperfect form of the verb which underscores iterative action.²⁹

He that hath ears to hear, let him hear: In these words, we find one of Jesus’ purposes in recounting the parable—it has to do directly with hearing (see 6:47, 49; 8:12–15, 21; 14:35; 16:29, 31; 21:38; the Notes on 6:27;

27. DNTC, 1:288–89.

28. Liddell and Scott, *Lexicon*, 47; BAGD, 28–29.

29. BAGD, 878; TDNT, 9:303; Blass and Debrunner, *Greek Grammar*, §325.

11:28; 19:48; the Analysis below)³⁰ and implicitly with obeying, as will also become clear in his remarks about his mother and brothers, and in his instructions to the demoniac (see 8:19–21, 38–40). Moreover, as we shall see, threads lie within these and later lines in chapter 8 that tie back to the call of Isaiah: “Hear ye indeed, but understand not” (Isa. 6:9–10). Importantly, Jesus’ saying appears again in his warning about salt that has “lost his savour” (14:34; also 9:44–45) and, more distantly, in the Lord’s concluding words to the churches in Asia (see Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22).

8:9 *his disciples asked him:* In introducing the interpretation of the parable of the Sower, Luke is more spare in his introductory expression than Mark and Matthew, who point to a private conversation—“when he was alone” (Mark 4:10) and “the disciples came” (Matt. 13:10). Moreover, in identifying who the disciples are, Mark writes “they that were about him with the twelve” (Mark 4:10), whereas Luke achieves this end when opening his story about the parable by naming “the twelve” along with other followers who specifically include women (see Luke 8:1–3).

8:10 *Unto you it is given:* With these words, Jesus declares the purpose of parables before he unveils the meaning of the parable of the sower. That purpose is both to reveal and conceal. In this case, the revelation comes to his closest followers, though not yet, because they plainly do not understand. Obviously, Jesus stands as the source of that understanding.

the mysteries of the kingdom of God: The term “mystery” (Greek *mystērion*) carries the sense of special knowledge, often acquired in a sacred or ritual setting. This sense is also at home in the wider Greco-Roman world.³¹ On the expression “kingdom of God,” which is common in Luke’s report, see the Note on 6:20.

to others in parables: Jesus frames the other side of his observation—the elegant doses of truth for the initiated, coming as “mysteries” that brim with knowledge, form impenetrable “parables” for those who choose not to hear.

that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand: Jesus’ words recall directly God’s words to his people through the youthful Isaiah at the time of his call: “Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not . . . make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears . . . and convert,

30. Brad H. Young, *The Parables: Jewish Tradition and Christian Interpretation* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998), 251.

31. *TDNT*, 4:802–27.

and be healed” (Isa. 6:9–10). This echo of Isa. 6 will reappear in the saying about the lamp (see 8:16–18), the visit of his mother and brothers (see 8:19–21), and the story of the woman with the issue of blood (see 8:43–48). Seeing and hearing, in light of the connections to Isaiah’s call in the temple, bear overtones of sacred actions involving seeing and hearing during worship in temple and synagogue. In a different vein, Joseph Smith taught that, according to the parable of the sower, “those who had been previously looking for a Messiah to come . . . but had not sufficient light, on account of their unbelief, to discern Him to be their Savior” will “have taken away from them all the light, understanding, and faith which they had upon this subject (see also Alma 12:11).”³²

8:11 *The seed is the word of God:* Jesus comes directly to his main point for understanding the parable. One thinks of a similar comparison in the book of Alma that ties “the word” to a seed. In this latter case, the seed grows into a tree (see Alma 32:28–43). The term “word” as a description of Jesus’ message (Greek *logos*) is widely viewed as a term at home in the early church and not in Jesus’ preaching.³³ But the interpretation of this parable, which begins in this verse, is consistent with what Jesus says elsewhere³⁴ and “word” occurs in other passages as a pointer to Jesus’ message (see 4:32, 36; 5:1; 6:47; 8:21; 9:26; 10:39; 11:28; etc.).

8:12 *they that hear:* Jesus makes clear that those on the side of the path do hear, evidently responding in some measure to the gospel fragrance. But their warm reception does not guarantee their future. In another vein, the plural “they” of Jesus’ explanation replaces the singular “seed” in the Greek text of the parable itself (see 8:5–8), indicating that the seed of the explanation represents people rather than a plant.³⁵

then cometh the devil: These words uncover the inevitable response from inimical forces of the unseen world against those who, to any degree, accept the gospel—to counter good with evil, to blanket the light with darkness. In a word, the devil never stays away.

taketh away the word out of their hearts: The stakes are enormous for the individual, with no less than that person’s eternal salvation in the balance. In interpreting this parable, Joseph Smith focused on the notion of

32. *TPJS*, 95; also Monte S. Nyman, “Joseph Smith’s Interpretation of the New Testament Parables of the Kingdom,” in Skinner, Davis, and Griffin, *Bountiful Harvest*, 265–67.

33. For example, *TDNT*, 4:113–20; Jeremias, *Parables*, 77.

34. Marshall, *Luke*, 323–24.

35. Marshall, *Luke*, 325; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1:713.

the state of one's heart. Speaking of those "whose hearts are full of iniquity, and have no desire for the principles of truth," he taught that they "do not understand the word of truth when they hear it. The devil taketh away the word of truth out of their hearts, because there is no desire for righteousness in them."³⁶

8:13 receive the word with joy: The response of these individuals is brighter and warmer. But even this stronger reception of God's word does not anchor their future. Something is missing, of course: depth of root.

in time of temptation: The phrase can also mean "in time of trial" (see the Note on 4:2). Implicit in Jesus' words is the unavoidable prospect of being tested, an experience that is always paired with accepting his message. This sense resides clearly in the term translated "time" (Greek *kairos*), which consistently bears the meaning of the decisive moment when responding to the divine (see 1:20; 4:13; 12:56; 18:30; 19:44; 20:10; 21:8, 24, 36).³⁷ The only exceptions to this meaning are found at 12:42 and 13:1.

8:14 go forth: These words are a bit enigmatic. The participle (Greek *poreuomenoi*) can mean straightforwardly "as they go on their way." But it can also be read as a virtual passive with the meaning "driven along by" worries and wealth.³⁸ In either case, Jesus shows his grasp of the on-going, inescapable influences in life. He will illustrate in vivid form these influences—"cares and riches and pleasures of this life"—in later parables (see 12:15–21; 14:16–24; 15:11–32; 16:1–12; etc.).

bring no fruit to perfection: The idea of "fruit" is not a part of the verb (Greek *telesphoreō*), but is implicit from the language of the next verse.³⁹ Bluntly, the sense is that, in life, such a person brings nothing worthwhile to perfection or to a completed state.

8:15 on the good ground: The phrase can mean "in the good ground," with the sense that the seed is now enfolded within good soil where it will begin to grow (see D&C 6:33).⁴⁰

they, which: Between these terms the Joseph Smith Translation adds "who receive the word," emphasizing an inner willingness on the part of these people to embrace the divine word (see the Note on 8:18).

36. *TPJS*, 96.

37. *TDNT*, 3:455–56, 458–61.

38. BAGD, 698–99; Marshall, *Luke*, 326.

39. BAGD, 818.

40. Plummer, *Luke*, 221.

an honest and good heart: The two adjectives describing a person's heart (Greek *kalos* and *agathos*) both embody the broad sense of "good." A helpful translation might be "a good and noble heart."⁴¹

with patience: A better translation of the phrase (Greek *en hypomonē*) would be "with steadfastness," underscoring endurance as an essential aspect of clinging to the word.⁴²

Analysis

As the Savior's first major parable, that of the sower stands in a position of emphasis and, not incidentally, captures the fragrant essence of his teaching. In this light, it is arguably the most important of his parables.⁴³ At its center, Jesus discloses the heart of his ministry: his efforts to reach out to all in the hope of effecting a change in those who respond by hearing his word and growing abundantly—so abundantly, it seems, that they influence positively those who either do not respond, or respond for a season and are now withdrawn.⁴⁴ The process for everyone begins the same way: by hearing, and then deciding how to react.

Some scholars write that Jesus' explanatory words mirror the experiences of later Christian preachers. Therefore, they do not come from him but are added after his ministry. Thus, his original words, now embedded in the telling of the parable (see 8:5–8), have been interpreted allegorically by later believers (see 8:11–15).⁴⁵ Such a view not only denies that Jesus has by now figured out the pattern of people's acceptance and rejection during his trek through "every city and village" (8:1), a pattern that underlies the parable, but also refuses to grant that he himself may have adopted allegory when explaining parables. Moreover, this shrunken understanding does not take account of the breadth of Jesus' approach to issues and of ties to the world of Jewish teaching.⁴⁶

Elements that link back to the report of Isaiah's call begin to appear in this parable (see Isa. 6). There, the prophet hears the Lord's spoken words that ooze with warning about closed ears and unseeing eyes, a generally lazy and unresponsive indifference that leaves "the heart of this people fat,

41. Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1:714.

42. BAGD, 854; Marshall, *Luke*, 327.

43. Morris, *Luke*, 167.

44. Morris, *Luke*, 167.

45. Dodd, *Parables*, 135–36; Jeremias, *Parables*, 77–78; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1:711.

46. Marshall, *Luke*, 323–24; Young, *Parables*, 259–68.

and . . . their ears heavy” (Isa. 6:10). By turning his hearers to Isaiah’s record, Jesus’ words focus them on this warning, applying it to those who are listening to him half-heartedly during his tour around Galilee. In another prophet’s words, “O foolish people . . . which have eyes, and see not; which have ears, and hear not” (Jer. 5:21). A dispassionate curiosity about Jesus’ message will not do (see D&C 1:14).

The reference to Isaiah brings up a further, sacred dimension. The experience of Isaiah takes place in the earthly temple, from whence the divine vision transports him into the heavenly temple (see Isa. 6:1). In this grand place, Isaiah sees the enthronement of Jehovah and hears celestial singing and God’s words.⁴⁷ The moment brims with royalty and holiness. To be sure, the locale of the Savior’s recitation of the parable of the sower does not bear any of the physical trappings of the temple. But other dimensions are present. First, like the temple, Jesus has become the focal point of gathering: “much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city” (8:4). Second, in his explanation to his disciples, Jesus declares that to them “it is given to know the mysteries” (8:10). Reference to mysteries, as we have seen, draws up images of sacred teaching and ceremony.⁴⁸ For the disciples, Jesus’ explanation offers a moment of sacred instruction which can come to them in no other way. The holiness of the moment is underscored by nothing less than Jesus’ reference to his divine lordship, that is, to “the mysteries of the kingdom of God” (8:10; emphasis added).⁴⁹

A third element connects to the other two. It has to do with Jesus’ emphasis on hearing. Ancient holy rites do not occur in silence. On the contrary, evidence exists that sacred, even secret teaching is passed on by word of mouth to devotees. One of the parts of the experience is the obligation, usually under oath, that recipients not divulge—orally or otherwise—what they receive in oral or other form.⁵⁰ Notably, Jesus points out that genuine understanding belongs to his closest followers. Naturally, we should not make more of this point about hearing in sacred settings than the text can bear. But the overt connections between the parable, with its

47. R. B. Y. Scott, “The Book of Isaiah,” in *The Interpreter’s Bible*, ed. George Arthur Buttrick, 12 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1951–57), 5:207–8.

48. Raymond E. Brown, *The Semitic Background of the Term “Mystery” in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), 1–30; *TDNT*, 4:802–27.

49. *TDNT*, 4:818–19.

50. *TDNT*, 4:806–7; for imitation mysteries that involve an oral component, see Moses 5:49–50.

explanation, and Isaiah's call in the temple demand a close look at pieces that might disclose subtle ties.

Hearing, of course, links to obeying. These connecting themes appear farther on in Luke's chapter, namely, in the brief story of the arrival of Jesus' mother and brothers, and in the account of Jesus' foray into the country of the Gergesenes. Such apparent ties bring a sense of unity to the whole. In the first instance, the appearance of Jesus' "mother and his brethren" leads him to say that followers will assume these honored relationships when they "hear the word of God, and do it" (8:19, 21). In the second instance, after Jesus heals the man afflicted with the demons, he refuses to let the man follow him but instead asks him to return to his "own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto [him]." Jesus must know that, after turning back, the man, obeying, will broadcast "throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him" (8:39). Effectively, the man becomes a witness for Jesus among his own people. Moreover, and more to the point, the man becomes a willing hearer and, thereafter, willingly obeys.

LIGHT AND KNOWLEDGE (8:16–18)

(Compare Matt. 5:15; 10:26; 13:12; Mark 4:21–25)

King James Translation

16 No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light. 17 For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad. 18 Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.

New Rendition

16 "No one, after lighting a lamp, covers it with a jar or places it under a couch, but places it on a lamp stand so that those who come in may see its light. 17 For there is nothing secret that will not become visible, and nothing hidden that will not surely be known or come to light. 18 So take care how you hear, for he who has, to him will be given, and he who does not have, even what he thinks he has will be taken from him."

Notes

8:16 *No man*: The translation leads a reader to see a male person as an actor. But the term (Greek *oudeis*), though masculine, carries the sense of a collective term, and therefore includes the actions of women (see 11:33).⁵¹ See the similar sayings at Matthew 5:15 and Mark 4:21.

***candle*:** The term (Greek *lychnos*) means lamp, not candle.⁵² Such lamps, made of clay, are common and feature a hole in the top for pouring in oil and a narrow spout through which a flax wick is drawn for lighting.⁵³ The amount of light that a clay lamp generates is little, lighting a small room only dimly; in the dark, the light seems bright (see the Notes on 11:33; 24:39).

***candle . . . under a bed*:** Jesus seems to turn to hyperbole to make a point that hearers will not soon forget. For the image of a person placing a lamp under a bed, where it could ignite a fire, stands completely against common sense. In this vein, his words disclose that, in his culture, beds rest upon legs or some other device, or are hung by ropes.⁵⁴ Moreover, the one who hides light risks God’s condemnation. Returning to Isaiah, we read, “Woe unto them that . . . put darkness for light” (Isa. 5:20).

***candlestick*:** The word (Greek *lychnia*) refers to a lamp stand, not a candle holder, from which lamps are hung or on which they are placed (see the Note on 11:33).⁵⁵

***they which enter in*:** On the surface, those who come inside have entered a home. But on a metaphorical level, Jesus may be referring to those who enter the kingdom.⁵⁶

***see the light*:** Coming in from the darkness, our gaze is always drawn to a lighted lamp that gives perspective and location to everything in the room.

8:17 *nothing is secret*: These words allude back to “the mysteries” which are kept secret (8:10) and are disclosed only to initiates. Here, the meaning seems to be that what is now secret and hidden from view will become public knowledge, a possible allusion to how Jesus will work out the Atonement.⁵⁷ There may also be a reference to the opposition to Jesus

51. Blass and Debrunner, *Greek Grammar*, §139, a case of a “collective (generic) singular.”

52. BAGD, 484; Irene and Walter Jacob, “Flora,” in *ABD*, 2:815.

53. *TDNT*, 4:324.

54. Peter Connolly, *Living in the Time of Jesus of Nazareth* (Jerusalem: Steimatzky, 1988), 56–57 (illustrations).

55. BAGD, 484; *TDNT*, 4:324.

56. Marshall, *Luke*, 329.

57. Marshall, *Luke*, 330.

that is growing in secret and will become manifest in events linked to his death (see the Note on 6:11 and the Analysis on 6:6–12). Mark preserves an almost identical saying (see Mark 4:22).

8:18 *Take heed:* The verb (Greek *blepō*) is the same as that translated “see” in 8:10 and 8:16, and has to do fundamentally with sight, though here it concerns the mental function of paying attention.⁵⁸ All such meanings link back to Jesus’ warning from Isaiah 6 in 8:10—“that seeing they might not see.”

whosoever hath . . . and whosoever hath not: The prior warning, “Take heed therefore how ye hear,” shapes the meaning of Jesus’ statement. It does not have to do so much with wealth as with a person’s spiritual state after responding to Jesus’ words (see the Note on 18:27). The Joseph Smith Translation underscores this observation: “whosoever receiveth . . . and whosoever receiveth not.” Thus, it is not a matter of what a person possesses after hearing Jesus’ words but what one is willing to receive from them (see the Note on 8:15).

he seemeth he hath: The verb rendered “to seem” (Greek *dokēō*) should be translated “to think.” The issue here is one of self-deception.⁵⁹

Analysis

The Savior entrusts these explanatory sayings to his closest disciples, as Mark 4:10 and Luke 8:9 make clear. In Christian memory, they are plainly associated with the parable of the sower because, in Mark’s Gospel, they follow that parable, as they do in Luke, who here is evidently following Mark’s order. Since the link between the sayings and the parable is not fully apparent, those who remember these sayings may have tied them to the parable because of the predominance of the verbs “to hear” and “to see” within both, being catchwords that aid memory (see 8:8, 10, 16, 18).

Some scholars see these sayings as independent, even disconnected one from another because they appear separated in other Gospel contexts.⁶⁰ But the emphases on “seeing” and “hearing” weld them to the prior parable, and to one another, suggesting that they are a natural continuation.

58. BAGD, 142–43.

59. Plummer, *Luke*, 223; BAGD, 200–201; *TDNT*, 2:232.

60. Beare, *Earliest Records of Jesus*, 113; William L. Lane, *The Gospel according to Mark: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1974), 164.

More important for our purposes are their meaning for the disciples and their role in Jesus' special instruction to them.

The first element to notice is the evident night-time scene that Jesus sketches with his words, speaking of lighting a lamp. Darkness now becomes an important ingredient of what follows, standing in sharp contrast to "the light" that one immediately sees in a dark place. On the surface, Jesus' words remind the disciples of common experiences. But we have to assume that he is not speaking to this notable group of insiders about merely ordinary events. The thrust of his words will push forward a spiritual message (see D&C 14:9). Hence, all these sayings carry a sacred element that he intends his intimate followers to grasp. He accentuates this sacred aspect by alluding to words that the Lord declares in the temple to Isaiah about not hearing and seeing while the prophet is, in fact, hearing and seeing an extraordinary vision of a divine celebration (see Isa. 6:1–10).⁶¹

Darkness frames Jesus' saying not only about the lamp and the light but also what is secret and hidden. For darkness covers secret acts and, in fact, tries both to shun and to quench light (see John 1:5). Such acts that diminish light, he declares, will "be made manifest . . . and come abroad." That is, as a result of his efforts, they will lose their power, their influence: "There is nothing which is secret save it shall be revealed; there is no work of darkness save it shall be made manifest in the light" (2 Ne. 30:17). Moreover, in these lines arises a pointer to the future Atonement. For at the moment when the arresting crowd is about to lead him from Gethsemane, in the moon-flecked darkness, Jesus derides them, saying, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness" (Luke 22:53).

This more positive view offers another scope to Jesus' words. The day will come that those teachings hidden in the divine economy will come into the light among the faithful: "to them will I [the Lord] reveal all mysteries, yea, all the hidden mysteries of my kingdom from days of old, and for ages to come, . . . even the wonders of eternity" (D&C 76:7–8).⁶² Such a prospect matches Jesus' promise embedded in these sayings: "for whosoever hath, to him shall be given" (8:18). It also fits the promise of illumination that begins to glow when a person lights a lamp so "that they which enter in may see the light" (8:16).

61. Scott, "Book of Isaiah," 5:206, 208–9; Barker, "Isaiah," 504.

62. *DNTC*, 1:291–92.

MOTHER AND BROTHERS (8:19–21)

(Compare Matt. 12:46–50; Mark 3:31–35)

King James Translation

19 Then came to him his mother and his brethren, and could not come at him for the press. 20 And it was told him by certain which said, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee. 21 And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.

New Rendition

19 And his mother and his brothers approached him and could not get close to him because of the crowd. 20 And it was reported to him, “Your mother and brothers are standing outside because they want to see you.” 21 And replying he said to them, “My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.”

Notes

8:19 *his mother and his brethren*: Luke is evidently following his source faithfully, perhaps Mark 3:31, a source that does not name Jesus’ mother in this brief story. Luke, of course, knows her name, though he does not repeat it outside the infancy stories (see 1:27, 30, 34, etc.). The appearance of his brothers raises important questions. Some commentators question the plain sense of the word “brothers” in this passage and open the possibility that the term (Greek *adelphoi*) means simply “relatives,” harmonizing with the view that Mary remains a virgin perpetually and that these “brothers” come from an earlier marriage of Joseph,⁶³ a view made popular in early Christianity by the second century text *Protevangelium of James* 9:2.⁶⁴ But no substantial reason exists to discount the view that these men are blood brothers of Jesus who are born to Mary and Joseph.⁶⁵ The Joseph Smith Translation includes a relevant statement: “Jesus grew up with his brethren” (JST Matt. 3:24). We learn the names of these brothers in Matthew 13:55 and Mark 6:3: James, Joses, Judas, and Simon.

***could not come at him for the press*:** Only Luke preserves the observation that the crowd is so packed that Jesus’ mother and brothers cannot

63. Brown, *Birth*, 64, 132, 303–6; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1:723–24.

64. NTA, 1:379; James, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 42.

65. Morris, *Luke*, 168; S. Kent Brown, “Zacharias and Elisabeth, Joseph and Mary,” in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ: From Bethlehem through the Sermon on the Mount*, ed. Richard Nietzel Holzapfel and Thomas A. Wayment (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005), 102–3.

reach him, though the other accounts imply this condition (see Matt. 12:46; Mark 3:31). Hence, we should think of Jesus no longer with just his close disciples but teaching in a more public setting where a crowd can gather, perhaps in a home or a walled enclosure of some sort. The Joseph Smith Translation adjusts Luke’s description to a more realistic view, clarifying the situation: “could not speak to him for the multitude” (JST 8:19). Implicit in this scene is the notion that even those closest to Jesus need to expend effort to reach him; access to him is not automatic.

8:20 *desiring to see thee*: The family members come to transact some sort of business, though Luke does not report what it is.

8:21 *My mother and my brethren*: Multiple meanings grace this passage. On one level, Jesus is holding up his family members as examples, thus pointing to his home as the major nurturing influence on his youth (see the Notes on 2:51 and 4:16).⁶⁶ On another, through his words he is encouraging them to accept his work because we possess indicators that his brothers are slow to respond to him (see John 7:3–5). A third understanding holds that he is speaking metaphorically, turning enduring human relationships within families into the sweet fragrances of eternal connections because of obedience, connections that carry the abiding elements of family ties (see the Notes on 8:48, 55; also D&C 132:55).

***my brethren*:** The other two accounts of this scene feature Jesus’ words about a “sister” among the obedient (see Matt. 12:50; Mark 3:35). It seems odd that Luke, who more than any other evangelist writes about women, omits this term from Jesus’ words. If he is truly following Mark at this point, the omission is all the more curious. Either he is not following Mark, or he allows the expression “my mother” to stand for all women, essentially highlighting a title that carries a dignity that “sister” does not.⁶⁷

***these which hear the word of God, and do it*:** With these words to the gathered crowd, Jesus arrives at exactly the same spot he reaches in the parable of the sower (see the Note on 8:8) and, with his closest followers, in the sayings about the lamp (see 8:16–18). Each of these teachings, one following the other, loads weight onto the principles of hearing and obeying. Moreover, Jesus will later respond to praise for his mother by uttering a beatitude that again ties these principles together, suggesting that his mother serves in his mind as the person who best exemplifies hearing and obeying (see 11:27–28).

66. TDNT, 8:43.

67. Brown, *Mary and Elisabeth*, 71–73.

Analysis

The themes of hearing and obeying do not retreat from the Savior's words here. Instead, they increase in intensity and find a place within family relationships. Their central place in the parable of the sower, their engaging prominence in the sayings about the lamp, and finally their acute emphasis in the scene with Jesus' mother and brothers underscores the undiminished force of these principles within Jesus' message. They are not to be missed; they are not to be set aside; they are not to be dimmed either in this life or in eternity. Jesus' pointer to abiding relationships among the obedient, which come to resemble and even transform themselves into family relationships, opens up a stream of rewards that cascades upon those who embrace these principles, rewards that carry beyond this life.

Thus, Jesus not only draws attention to the arrival of his family members but thereby hones principles that link obedience and family loyalties. The strong relationships within families are also to characterize the strength of a person's passion to obey. The ultimate reward is to become a part of Jesus' eternal family. More than that, we sense that Jesus' words also point us to eternal, enduring family relationships.

The absence of one person from this scene—Joseph—speaks loudly. His absence is magnified by the arrival of Mary and her sons without him. And he does not appear in the rest of the Gospel records. What might this mean? His lack of presence in the accounts indicates that by this time he has passed away and Mary is a widow. His nonappearance particularly in the final scenes in Jerusalem stands as proof that he is no longer alive.⁶⁸

The omission of Mary's name from these verses is puzzling. To be sure, her name does not appear in Luke's apparent source, Mark 3:31. But Luke surely knows her name, not simply because he repeats it in the infancy stories of chapters 1 and 2, but because her name is prominent both among Jesus' closest followers and within the earliest Christian community (see Acts 1:14). The absence of her name may indicate that Luke gathers the materials for Jesus' ministry early on, gives them some narrative shape, and only later comes to know the stories associated with Jesus' birth and youth where Mary's name is prominent.⁶⁹

68. Brown, *Mary and Elisabeth*, 72.

69. Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1:488–89, holds that the original written gospel began with chapter 3, though this view seems to be beyond demonstration (see the Introduction III.C).

STILLING THE STORM (8:22–25)

(Compare Matt. 8:23–27; Mark 4:35–41)

King James Translation

22 Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples: and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth. 23 But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy. 24 And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish. Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm.

25 And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him.

New Rendition

22 And it came to pass on one of those days that he and his disciples embarked on a boat, and he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side of the lake.” And they cast off. 23 And as they sailed along, he fell asleep, and a fierce wind came down upon the lake, and they began to be swamped and in danger. 24 And coming to him they woke him, saying, “Master, master, we are perishing.” And when he had arisen, he rebuked the wind and the surging water. And they stopped, and it became calm.

25 And he said to them, “Where is your faith?” And, fearful, they were amazed, saying to one another, “Who, then, is this? For he commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him.”

Notes

8:22 on a certain day: Luke loosens this next story from time ties whereas Mark does not (see Mark 4:35). For Luke, it seems, Jesus’ powers over nature (wind and water) and inside gentile territory (casting out demons) are not sculpted during mere special occasions, but exist always (see the Notes on 6:1; 8:4; 18:9). Perhaps notably, the events of this day do not link to the Sabbath, as other stories do, thus underlining their significance in Christian memory.

the other side: The boat will head toward the east side. Jesus and his followers have been active mainly on the north and west shores of the lake, though his recent preaching trip takes him “throughout every city and village” of Galilee (8:1).

the lake: This is Luke’s customary term for the Sea of Galilee (see 5:1, 2; 8:22, 23, 33).

8:23 *there came down:* The Sea of Galilee sits in a large bowl surrounded by high, steep hills to the north, east, and west. The morning winds typically blow down from the eastern hills, descending from the Golan Heights. The afternoon winds blow down from the western hills, coming from the Mediterranean. The notice shows that Luke is quite aware of the geography of the lake and its surrounding hills (see Note on 8:27; the Introduction V.C). Perhaps significantly, neither Matthew nor Mark makes a note about storms descending onto the lake's surface (see Matt. 8:24; Mark 4:37).

they were filled with water: The tense of the verb is imperfect and is better rendered "they began to be filled." In the minds of the translators, the whitecaps are fierce enough that they begin to splash into the boat, for they add the italicized phrase "with water." But the Joseph Smith Translation adjusts the whole expression to say, "they were filled with fear," correcting what is occurring in the historical moment.

8:24 *Master, master:* This title (Greek *epistata*) occurs previously on Peter's lips and appears to take the place of "rabbi" in Luke's Gospel (see the Note on 5:5).⁷⁰

rebuked: The Greek verb *epitimaō* has appeared in stories of Jesus healing people from unclean spirits and diseases (see 4:35, 39, 41). The power of his rebuke now pushes forward in controlling natural elements such as wind and water.

they ceased, and there was a calm: Nature responds to her king, as Jesus will later affirm during his descent from the Mount of Olives into Jerusalem (see the Notes on 8:25 and 19:40).

8:25 *Where is your faith?:* Jesus' question asks in essence why the faith of the disciples is not effective, why they fear, as the Joseph Smith Translation verifies, whereas the form of the question in Mark 4:40 challenges whether they possess any faith: "how is it that ye have no faith?"⁷¹

What manner of man is this: Strictly, the question is, "So, who is this?" This question frames the query of the ages and, in its content, mirrors other questions such as Pharaoh's edgy inquiry, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?" (Ex. 5:2; see also Mosiah 11:27).

they obey him: A few manuscripts, including the earliest (P⁷⁵), omit this expression, but most include it.⁷² An allusion points back to the need

70. Marshall, *Luke*, 203.

71. Morris, *Luke*, 170; Johnson, *Luke*, 136.

72. Marshall, *Luke*, 335.

for humans to obey Jesus' words, as at the conclusion of the parable of the sower and in his meaning about who his mother and brothers are (see 8:8, 21). Even if people will not hear and obey, nature will (see the Notes on 8:24 and 19:40).

Analysis

In this account of the stilling of the windstorm, the compelling element is that, by this time, almost naturally, Jesus' disciples turn to him. Although we can interpret their effort to rouse him as an attempt to warn him of looming danger, they seem rather to see themselves in desperate straits and thus reach out to him for aid. They are surprised, of course, at the raw power that he manifests in deflating the storm (see 8:25), but during prior days and weeks they witness his enormous gifts of healing and his control of nature. Therefore, although they know the lake and its moods, in their desperation and fear, they seek his help since they themselves feel powerless.

In its own way, this story stands as a fulfillment of the parable of the sower. On that occasion, at the end of the parable, Jesus "cried" to his audience and fairly shouted, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" (8:8). Now, in the boat, Jesus "rebuked the wind." The wind hears. The wind obeys. Thus, Jesus' words point up the immediacy of nature's obedience, whereas among his people he will find an "immense indifference, unyieldingness, sluggishness, and inertia of the heart."⁷³

Jesus' calming of the storm continues a pattern of progressively revealing his powers, a practice that we have observed especially in chapter 5. There Jesus shows his powers in controlling "the deep" (5:4), the invisible region beneath the waters, a major step up from healing people from diseases and demons (see 4:35, 40–41). Here, in the boat, he controls the region above the waters, subjecting the visible powers of nature to his command.

73. Abraham Heschel, *The Prophets* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1962), 188–89.

HEALING THE GERGESENE DEMONIAK (8:26–40)

(Compare Matt. 8:28–34; Mark 5:1–20)

King James Translation

26 And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee. 27 And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs. 28 When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not. 29 (For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.)

30 And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him. 31 And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep. 32 And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them. 33 Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked.

34 When they that fed them saw what was done, they fled, and went and told it in the city and in the country. 35 Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found

New Rendition

26 And they sailed toward the land of Gerasenes, which was opposite Galilee. 27 And as he was disembarking on the land, a certain man from the city who had a devil met him; for a long time he had not worn clothes, nor lived in a house, but was in the tombs. 28 And when he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him, and said with a loud voice, “What have I to do with thee, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I plead with you, do not torture me.” 29 For he had commanded the unclean spirit to depart from the man. For many times it had violently seized him, and he was bound in handcuffs and fetters to control him, but breaking through the bonds he was driven by the devil into the wilderness.

30 And Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” and he said, “Legion,” for many devils had gone into him. 31 And they kept asking him not to command them to depart into the abyss. 32 And there was there a considerable herd of pigs grazing on the hillside, and they asked him to allow them to enter those; and he gave them permission. 33 And after the devils had left the man, they entered the pigs, and the herd rushed headlong down the slope into the lake and drowned.

34 And when the swineherds saw what had happened, they fled and reported it in the city and in the fields. 35 And they came out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus and

the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. 36 They also which saw it told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed. 37 Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear: and he went up into the ship, and returned back again.

38 Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away, saying, 39 Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him.

40 And it came to pass, that, when Jesus was returned, the people gladly received him: for they were all waiting for him.

found the man, out of whom the devils had gone, clothed and in sound mind sitting at the feet of Jesus, and they were afraid. 36 And those who had seen this reported to them how the man who had been possessed by a devil had been saved. 37 Then the whole population from the region around the Gerasenes asked him to leave them, for they had been gripped by great fear. So embarking on his ship, he returned.

38 And the man out of whom the devils had gone began to beg that he might be with him. But Jesus sent him away saying, 39 “Return to your home and tell how much God has done for you.” And he went out through the whole city declaring how much Jesus had done for him.

40 And it came to pass when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, for everyone was expecting him.

Notes

8:26 *the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee:* The site of ancient Gadara lies in northwest Jordan (modern Umm Qeis), six miles southeast of the southern end of the Sea of Galilee. From the description of the swine running down a slope into the water of the lake (see 8:33), this site cannot be where the action described in the next few verses takes place.⁷⁴ Instead, we must think of a place along the east edge of the Sea of Galilee, on a steep slope below the towering bluffs of Gaulanitis, the modern Golan Heights. It is only here that animals can run directly down into deep water. Luke’s expression “over against Galilee” also points to the east side of the lake, opposite the province of Galilee that lies on the western side and where Herod Antipas is tetrarch (see 3:1). The best candidate is Gergasa on the east shore of the lake, even though the earliest text reads

74. Aharoni and others, *Carta Bible Atlas*, maps 180, 181, 214, 215, etc.

“Gerasenes” (ⲡ⁷⁵). Significantly, the territory of the Gergesenes stands in gentile territory.⁷⁵ By coming here, Jesus signals to his followers that his power reaches beyond the areas inhabited by fellow Jews (see the Note on 9:6).

Gadarenes: This name lies at the heart of a textual problem. A few early manuscripts preserve the name *Gergesenes* while others feature *Gadarenes*, the reading followed in the KJV. The earliest manuscript of Luke, ⲡ⁷⁵, as well as others, record the name *Gerasenes*, in accord with the earliest and best reading of Mark 5:1, a possible source for Luke’s name here. However, the city of Gerasa, or Jerash, lies some thirty miles south and east of the lake.⁷⁶

over against Galilee: Luke’s phrase “over against Galilee” (Greek *anti-pera*, meaning “opposite”⁷⁷), an expression that Matthew and Mark do not preserve (see Matt. 8:28; Mark 5:1), may indicate that Luke senses the difficulty with the name in his source and that he is trying to specify the locale where the miracle takes place.⁷⁸ If this observation is correct, it points to his personal acquaintance with the Galilee area (see the Note on 8:23).

8:27 the city: For the reasons spelled out in the Note on 8:26, the city cannot be Gadara or Gerasa. Instead, we should think of either Gergesa, which lies close to the shore, or Hippos, which stands high on an eastern hill overlooking the lake.⁷⁹

devils: The term is “demons” (Greek *daimonia*). The powers of such beings appear in what follows and in the brief story of the healing of the possessed man at the synagogue in Capernaum (see 4:33–35).

in the tombs: Jewish readers of this story will immediately think of the religiously unclean state of this man, for contact with the dead, and their tombs, renders a person unclean (see Num. 19:11–16).

8:28 fell down before him: The verb (Greek *prospiptō*), “to fall down before,” is the same that describes Peter’s action in his boat after the miracle of the catch of fish (see 5:8) and that of the woman healed of her issue of blood (see 8:47; also Acts 16:29). The action represents that of a person who is acknowledging one much greater.⁸⁰

75. Aharoni and others, *Carta Bible Atlas*, map 230.

76. Aharoni and others, *Carta Bible Atlas*, maps 173, 181, 214, 215, etc.

77. BAGD, 75.

78. Marshall, *Luke*, 336–37; Aharoni and others, *Carta Bible Atlas*, maps 264, 265.

79. Aharoni and others, *Carta Bible Atlas*, map 230; Ogden and Skinner, *Verse by Verse*, 238–39.

80. BAGD, 725; Lampe, *Lexicon*, 1181.

What have I to do with thee: The question in Greek is exactly the same as appears in Jesus’ words to his mother in John 2:4 and means literally “What is there to me and to you?” On the lips of the demoniac, it comes out with a noisy and public acknowledgment of Jesus as the “Son of God most high.”

God most high: The expression embeds a pagan title that may have been normal for the gentile demoniac to repeat. It also recalls the words of the angel to Mary about “the power of the Highest” overshadowing her (see the Note on 1:32).

8:29 *the unclean spirit:* In the current case, Jesus is dealing with a single demonic spirit, as the following singular references indicate. In 8:31–33 the plural emerges, as if the single demonic spirit that possesses the body of the man is the spokesperson for others who are nearby. But 8:30 tells us that “many devils were entered into him.” Other scripture holds that fully one-third of the premortal spirits follow Satan and turn from the Father, taking up residence on the earth (see D&C 29:36–37; 76:33). These spirits have power to possess the bodies of humans.⁸¹

oftentimes it had caught him: It is not clear by what means the demon “caught” the man and takes possession of his body. But the imperfect tense of the verb (Greek *sunarpazō*) points to repeated and forceful action, whether by human agency or natural forces (see Acts 6:12; 19:29; 27:15).⁸² On one occasion, an angel reveals that “devils” or “evil spirits” can “dwell in the hearts of the children of men,” though not indicating how this occurs (Mosiah 3:6).

he was kept bound with chains and in fetters: The imperfect tense of the verb (Greek *desmeuō*)⁸³ indicates the customary state of the man, though it is not clear who has the courage or strength to bind him, for, as Mark writes, “neither could any man tame him” (Mark 5:4).

the devil: This term (Greek *daimonion*) does not point to Satan who is designated in 4:2 by a different word (Greek *diabolos*).

8:30 *Jesus asked him . . . What is thy name?:* The question does not reflect Jesus’ intent to carry on a pleasant conversation with the demon. Instead, we should likely see two elements within Jesus’ question. First, it forms a not-so-subtle reminder to the demonic spirit of its premortal past and its decision not to follow the Savior, whom it knows from before (see

81. Chauncey C. Riddle, “Devils,” in *EM*, 1:380–82.

82. BAGD, 792–93; Blass and Debrunner, *Greek Grammar*, §§327, 325.

83. BAGD, 174.

D&C 29:36–37). Second, knowing a person’s name allows one to exercise a measure of control, an aspect that seems to lie behind the demons’ naming of Jesus when he comes to cast them out (see 4:34, 41; Acts 16:16–17).⁸⁴

Legion: The term (Greek *legiōn*, from Latin *legio*) denotes a legion of soldiers that, when fully mobilized, consists of up to six thousand men.⁸⁵ The sense is that a lot of demons afflict the victim. There may be a suggestion that the term describes an organizational structure in the world of demons.⁸⁶

many devils: That multiple demons take possession of the man should not surprise us because Mary Magdalene undergoes a similar experience (see the Notes on 8:2; 11:26).

8:31 *And they besought him:* The Joseph Smith Translation moves this entire verse to the end of verse 32, clarifying that, in negotiating with Jesus, the demons seek two favors, to enter into the swine and to avoid the deep.

the deep: This region is the well-known place of the departed dead (see Rom. 10:7) and of dark, evil forces (see Rev. 9:1–2, 11; 11:7; 17:8) where Satan will be bound for a thousand years (see Rev. 20:1, 3). This term (Greek *abyssos*), unlike that in 5:4 which connects to redemption (Greek *bathos*; see the Note on 5:4), ties back to the watery chaos of Genesis 1:2 and Moses 2:2 that God subdues (see LXX Gen. 1:2).⁸⁷

8:32 *an herd of many swine:* Besides a notation that would endear this story to Jewish hearers because swine are among the forbidden animals, the expression points out how ancients raised pigs—in herds.

on the mountain: This detail is a part of the story (see Mark 5:11) and ties the story firmly to this region because high, steep hills rise above the east side of the lake.

he would suffer them to enter into them: It seems apparent that the demons are not permitted to enter into animals; only the Lord can permit such an act, as this account illustrates.⁸⁸

And he suffered them: At the end of this sentence, the Joseph Smith Translation places all of verse 31, and then adds, “And he [Jesus] said unto them [the demons], Come out of the man,” signaling to the demons that negotiations have ended and that he is taking control of the afflicted man.

84. Marshall, *Luke*, 196–97; Green, *Luke*, 339.

85. BAGD, 469; OCD, 591; TDNT, 4:68.

86. Green, *Luke*, 339, n. 76.

87. TDNT, 1:9–10; Johnson, *Luke*, 137.

88. Riddle, “Devils,” 1:380–82.

8:33 *Then went the devils out of the man:* What is the final fate of the demons (Greek *daimonia*)? It seems that their escape from Jesus into the swine is only a temporary respite from their ultimate fate,⁸⁹ in “a place prepared for them from the beginning, which place is hell” (D&C 29:38).

were choked: The same verb (Greek *apopnigō*) appears in 8:7, there in the active sense of thorns that choke new growth. Here, in the passive voice, the meaning is similar—to be deprived of life in the waters of the lake, that is, to be drowned.

8:34 *went and told it in the city and in the country:* The keepers of the swine bear the tidings about the loss of the pigs. They, of course, have an interest in deflecting blame from themselves. They spread the news both in the nearby town and among the farms, for the plural noun (Greek *agros*) refers to fields and farmlands (see 9:12; 15:15).⁹⁰

8:35 *came to Jesus:* The language is compelling. Citizens, knowing only what the herders report, approach the person who has effected an astonishing yet disturbing occurrence. But rather than approaching Jesus with an open heart, we surmise, they come to him already full of anger and frustration over the loss of the herd of swine which surely represents a major source of income for many among them.

sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: The contrast is striking between the calm exhibited by the healed man, who before now is unmanageable (see 8:29), and the violent stampede of the pigs (see 8:33).

they were afraid: This response mirrors that of many others, including his disciples on occasion, who witness or hear about Jesus’ enormous powers, although the disciples’ reaction is more like awe (see 5:10, 26; 7:16; 8:25; and the Notes on 5:26 and 7:16).⁹¹

8:36 *They also which saw it:* Evidently, besides the swine herders, there are other witnesses of the surprising behavior of the pigs; these people, who do not flee at the stampede, see the curing of the bedeviled man. Their story differs remarkably because they know of the graciousness that Jesus offers to the man. But their account makes little difference. Not incidentally, the Joseph Smith Translation substitutes the words “the miracle” for the term “it” that is added by the translators, illustrating that the witnesses see the miracle as it unfolds.

89. Marshall, *Luke*, 340.

90. BAGD, 13; Marshall, *Luke*, 608.

91. BAGD, 870–71; Welch, “Miracles, *Maleficium*, and *Maiestas* in the Trial of Jesus,” 355–64.

8:37 *the whole multitude*: As Luke reports the matter, not one person is willing to see Jesus remain among them. A total rejection. But within a few weeks, the Seventy will come among them, and other Gentiles, and the response will be different (see 10:1, 17–18).

***he went up into the ship*:** Jesus shows his response to those who reject him—to withdraw peacefully and without malice.

***the ship . . . returned back*:** This detail tells us that this miracle does not take place during the months of November through February when the winds come from the northwest, making it impossible to sail back to Capernaum on the north shore of the lake late in the day, which is the evident time of return.

8:38 *with him*: This prepositional phrase points to the learning and enduring relationship that a disciple enjoys with the master (see the Notes on 8:1, 45). In this case, the gentile man seeks the same privileges that the Twelve enjoy.⁹²

***Jesus sent him away*:** Although Jesus commissions the man to broadcast the testimony of his healing (see 8:39), the verb (Greek *apoluō*) carries no sense of a calling.⁹³ The time is not yet fitting for authorizing a Gentile.

8:39 *Return to thine own house*: Whatever the man's status in his home, whether son or father, his years of torment leave much to be repaired in his home.

***published*:** The verb (Greek *kērussō*) typically describes the proclaiming of the gospel in the New Testament.⁹⁴

***the whole city*:** Everyone in the city, of course, soon learns about the healing. But the healed man reinforces the news with his own testimony of what has happened, thus opening the citizens' hearts to the later visit of the Seventy among Gentiles (see the Note on 8:37 and the Analysis on 10:1–12).

***how great things Jesus had done*:** The Savior's instruction to the man is to show what God has done for him. Here, the man proclaims what *Jesus* has done. By including this subtle but unmistakable shift, Luke equates Jesus' doings with those of God.

8:40 *the people*: The word (Greek *ochlos*) really points to a crowd or multitude.⁹⁵ It is possible that Luke's term bridges to the next story about the illness of Jairus's daughter wherein a "multitude" accompanies him

92. *TDNT*, 7:770, 794–95.

93. *BAGD*, 95–96.

94. *TDNT*, 3:703–14.

95. *BAGD*, 605.

(8:45; same word, in the plural). The crowd who receives Jesus upon his return is distinctive in that “they were all waiting for him.” No one in this waiting throng bears him any unkind feelings.

Analysis

In a real sense, the story of the healing of the demoniac man fulfills the parable of the sower. For the man clearly represents the seed falling onto good soil. And the Savior’s desire that the man remain among his people, who reject Jesus, implicitly points to the man’s beneficial value among those who lie along “the way side” and are “choked,” that is, who reject Jesus and whatever message he might bring to them.

In this connection, Jesus fulfills a latent prophecy that lies within his words in the Nazareth synagogue. There he speaks of Elijah’s preservation of the widow of Sarepta and Elisha’s healing of Naaman the leper (4:25–27). In each case, a Gentile benefits from the generosity of divine action. In each case, the number of beneficiaries is one. And each case affirms God’s power beyond the confines of the Israelite people. Exactly the same set of situations plays out in the healing of the demoniac. Although this healing is admittedly more spectacular, the notoriety of the healing of Naaman, because of its place in the Bible, would have rivaled that of the demoniac.

In a different vein, rather than seeing Jesus’ foray into gentile territory as a failure wherein he retreats in defeat, effectively losing to the demons when citizens reject him,⁹⁶ his trip succeeds because he leaves a first-rank witness among them whose sad and tortured past is well known to all. This witness, of course, talks “throughout the whole city [about] how great things Jesus had done unto him” (8:39). His efforts carry the sweet fragrances of the gospel message among his fellow Gentiles and effectively prepare them for the coming of the seventy disciples who will labor in gentile territory, a fact apparent from Jesus’ suspension of food laws so that these disciples can accept the hospitality of gentile hosts (see 10:7–8).⁹⁷

Threads that tie back to the early chapters of Genesis weave throughout this story. The first thread links back to God’s preparation of chaotic matter for creation when “darkness was upon the face of the deep” (Gen. 1:2; see Moses 2:2; Abr. 4:2). In Luke’s story, Jesus shows his power over the stormy lake and later listens to the demons beg him not to drive them into the lake, “into the deep” (8:31). The term for *deep* (Greek *abyssos*) is the same that

96. Marshall, *Luke*, 339–40, reviews and rejects this view.

97. Brown, “Seventy in Scripture,” 1:25–45.

appears in LXX Genesis 1:2. Plainly, Luke connects Jesus' powers over "the deep" with those manifested in the earth's creation, effectively tying the Savior to both events. There is more. In other ancient sources, the deep, whether water or otherwise, is where disobedient spirits, including the devil, are confined until the judgment.⁹⁸ Plainly, in Luke's language, Jesus holds power over this lightless region.

This is the second time that Luke repeats the word for "deep" in its connection with the lake. In the first instance, the term comes on Jesus' lips as he instructs Peter to cast his net. There, the Greek word is *bathos* and exhibits ties to redemption (see the Note on 5:4). By repeating both terms, whose links draw up compelling images of creation and redemption, the accounts offer readers hints at the breadth of Jesus' actions as well as his history. He is both creator and redeemer; he is both the subduing lord of chaos and the gracious lord of deliverance.

In a way, the contest between the devil and the Savior marches on. And Jesus continues to show his power over the territory that the devil has staked out.⁹⁹ In the case of the demoniac, Jesus drives away allies of the devil, those who in the beginning "were thrust down, and thus [became] the devil and his angels" (D&C 29:37). That such creatures would inject themselves into Jesus' ministry, and be subdued, is prophesied by an angel more than a century before his birth: "he [Jesus] shall cast out devils, or the evil spirits which dwell in the hearts of the children of men" (Mosiah 3:6). That such evil spirits are able to dwell in people arises because their spirit bodies are more refined than mortal bodies. For spirit "is material, but . . . it is more pure, elastic and refined matter than the body."¹⁰⁰ Moreover, the "devil has no body. . . . He is pleased when he can obtain the tabernacle of man, and when cast out by the Savior he asked to go into the herd of swine, showing that he would prefer a swine's body to having none."¹⁰¹

A striking contrast rests in the sudden, wild actions of the swine and the becalmed demeanor of the healed man. Witnesses, including the disciples, see that "the herd ran violently down a steep place" (8:33). The sudden, unpredictable behavior of the pigs mirrors that of the uncontrollable demoniac. In each case, of course, the conduct is self-destructive. Unexpectedly, the man becomes placid, peaceful, fully in control of himself. And Jesus

98. 1 En. 10:4–6; 18:11–16; *Jub.* 5:6–10; also 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 1:6; Rev. 20:1–3.

99. *TDNT*, 3:400–401.

100. *TPJS*, 207; Jensen, "Spirit," 3:1403–5.

101. *TPJS*, 181; also 297–98.

is the instigator of the switch from quiet swine to unmanageable, from unruly man to clothed and calm. For those who witness, the sequence of events must have been stunning and unforgettable. In the end, the Savior’s act demonstrates the high value of human well-being in contrast to that of animals (see 12:7—“ye are of more value than many sparrows”).

Out of this scene arises the question whether Jesus is oblivious to the financial hardship that will come to those who lose their pigs. This concern—that the Savior seemingly leaves the region in economic tatters due to the loss of the herd of pigs—draws forward an important issue. Why does Jesus allow the loss to occur? After all, it is he who permits the demons to invade the bodies of the swine. And he surely must know what will result. So, why? In response, any answer is beset by speculation.

To state the obvious, Jesus’ action leaves an indelible impression of power on those who witness the event, from the Twelve to the herdsmen and, not less, to the demoniac. That legacy will remain always in the retelling of the incident. Does Jesus intend to leave such an impression? We cannot know. But that is surely one result, and he will anticipate it.

Now that he has people’s attention, the door is open for the healed man to tell his story, to bear his testimony, so to speak, about Jesus’ stunning power brought to bear in releasing him from the demons’ grip. People not afflicted in this overwhelming way cannot begin to appreciate the enormity of the relief that washes over this man. We can only imagine, imperfectly, the passion with which he retells his story.

On the edges of the account, a person senses the anger in those who lose their pigs. And for good reason. Why are they upset? Because of the loss of personal property. To be sure, they come to fear the man Jesus (see 8:37). He tips their lives askew as no one does before. But is it not a lesson—a hard one, of course—in the matter of how to value earthly treasures? Very possibly. In Jesus’ ministry, he is concerned about eternal, ultimate matters, clearly “more interested in saving people than in material prosperity”¹⁰² (see the Notes on 6:24; 12:6).

One more important coloration is worth observing. In the stories of the stilling of the storm and the healing of the demoniac, fear is the common undergirding element (see 8:25, 37). The antidote to this fear is faith, the mention of which is positioned in Jesus’ words at the end of one story and the beginning of the other: “Where is your faith?” (8:25).

102. Morris, *Luke*, 172.

HEALING JAIRUS'S DAUGHTER, PART 1 (8:41–42)

(Compare Matt. 9:18–19; Mark 5:21–24)

King James Translation

41 And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house: 42 For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying.

But as he went the people thronged him.

New Rendition

41 And behold, a man came whose name was Jairus, and he was a leader of the synagogue. And falling at the feet of Jesus, he began to entreat him to enter his home, 42 because he had a daughter, his only child, about twelve years of age, and she was dying.

And while he was going, the crowds thronged him.

Notes

8:41 *Jairus*: The man's Hebrew name is Ya'ir. He may well bear the Greek form of his name, Iarios, among gentile acquaintances. Noting the vividness of the following story, the recollection probably rests on Jairus's eyewitness testimony, although it might come from Peter, James, and John (see 8:51).¹⁰³

***a ruler of the synagogue*:** Both this passage and Matthew 9:1, 9, indicate that Jesus is in Capernaum when the next series of events occurs. Mark 5:21 records that "he was nigh unto the sea." Capernaum, of course, lies on the northern shore of the lake. As a possible member of the synagogue board (see the Note on 13:14),¹⁰⁴ Jairus likely witnesses the first recorded miracle in the Capernaum synagogue (see 4:33–36) and knows of the other miracles that Jesus performs in and near the town.

***he fell down at Jesus' feet*:** The man falls to his knees, as the verb indicates (Greek participle of *piptō*). It is an act of genuine humility and devotion to fall at Jesus' feet, acknowledging him as master (see the Notes on 5:8; 7:38, 40, 45; 24:5).¹⁰⁵

8:42 *one only daughter*: This expression underlines the deep feeling that fills the heart of this man and his wife. They are desperate to find a remedy to their daughter's life-threatening illness. She is the only child as

103. Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 39–40, 46–47, 54–55.

104. Marshall, *Luke*, 343.

105. *TDNT*, 6:625, 629–31.

illustrated by the Greek adjective *monogenēs*, “only or sole begotten.”¹⁰⁶ A further element has to do with the word “daughter” (Greek *thugatēr*). It appears in this story and the story of the woman with the “issue of blood,” uniting them (see 8:48, 49).

about twelve years of age: One of the potentially tragic dimensions of this story lies in these words—the daughter stands on the threshold of adulthood. For age twelve brings a young woman to the age when she can marry. Hence, it is the season of life that introduces children into the next phase of their lives (see the Note on 2:42).¹⁰⁷

she lay a dying: This detail brings us to the nub of the story. The girl lies afflicted with a fatal illness from which she cannot recover. Matthew in fact reports that she has just passed away (see Matt. 9:18).

the people thronged him: The density of the crowd, which Mark also emphasizes (see Mark 5:24), is made up of those who greet him on his return from the east side of the lake (see 8:40) and those who, acting to support Jairus, come with him to find Jesus, for many are already gathered at his home, knowing the daughter’s serious state (see 8:52–53). The pressing throng, of course, helps to frame the next story of the woman who suffers from “an issue of blood twelve years” (8:43).

Analysis

The scene switches from Gentiles to Jews. For emphasis rests on Jairus’s thoroughgoing Jewishness because his devotion to his religion cannot be more manifest than in the overt activity of serving in the synagogue, as he is doing. As a person of trust and lofty responsibility in the synagogue, he may experience some reticence in coming to the stranger from Nazareth for help, though we cannot be certain. But he and his wife are desperate, and when Jairus meets Jesus he exhibits full humility of spirit.

A hint at the depth of his plight lies in his plea that the Savior “come into his house.” As a synagogue official, he will know of the healing of the centurion’s servant from a distance (see 7:10). The centurion’s participation in the synagogue’s construction certainly involves him with its officials, including Jairus (see 7:5). But Jairus, and presumably his wife, want Jesus to come into their home and bring with him a reassurance that only his physical presence can offer.

106. BAGD, 529.

107. Marshall, *Luke*, 126, 343; *Mishnah Pirke Aboth* 5:21; Josephus, *A.J.* 5.10.4 (§348).

The story about Jairus forms bookends around the report of the woman with the issue of blood in all the sources (see Matt. 9:18–25; Mark 5:22–43). This feature means that the two accounts come together in the memory of those who are originally present for the two miracles, bespeaking the authenticity of the stories.¹⁰⁸

HEALING THE HEMORRHAGING WOMAN (8:43–48)

(Compare Matt. 9:20–22; Mark 5:25–34)

King James Translation

43 And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any, 44 Came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanchèd. 45 And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, Master, the multitude throng thee and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? 46 And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.

47 And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately. 48 And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.

New Rendition

43 And a woman who had had a hemorrhage for twelve years, who having spent her livelihood on doctors, could not be healed by anyone. 44 Coming up from behind, she touched the tassel of his cloak. And immediately her bleeding stopped. 45 And Jesus said, “Who touched me?” And while everyone was denying it, Peter said, “Master, the crowds throng and press you.” 46 But Jesus said, “Someone touched me, because I noticed power leaving me.”

47 And when the woman saw that she had not escaped notice, she came trembling and, falling down before him, she reported the cause of her touching him in front of all the people and how she was immediately healed. 48 And he said, “Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace.”

108. Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 39–42, 45–46, 54–55.

Notes

8:43 a woman: Sadly, early Christian memory does not preserve the name of this woman whose healing becomes so ingrained in the gospel tradition, as happens for others (see 8:2–3).

an issue of blood: Evidently, the woman suffers from uterine hemorrhaging. In the eyes of the Mosaic law, she is constantly and ritually unclean (see Lev. 15:25–31).¹⁰⁹ Hence, she cannot participate in acts of worship and renders unclean any structure that she enters, including the homes of acquaintances and synagogues, and any person whom she touches (see the Notes on 5:13; 7:6; 10:7; the Analysis on 5:12–16).¹¹⁰

spent all her living upon physicians: This expression is textually in question. The earliest manuscript (P⁷⁵) and others omit it, but a significant group of early texts preserve the reading, opening the door to its authenticity.¹¹¹

neither could be healed of any: Twelve years of frustration are packed into this expression. The physician’s art, even as practiced by the best in major population centers, is not capable of healing a woman with this sort of complaint. In her world, she likely turns to women physicians who possess skills beyond those of midwives. Their general healing approach is through herbs and vegetables, usually grown in their own gardens. Beyond these, they employ unguents or drugs administered with wine or water. Naturally, no legal recourse is open to a sick person when medical procedures fail.¹¹²

8:44 Came behind: With a pressing crowd of men surrounding Jesus as he walks through the narrow streets of Capernaum, and perhaps even impeding his efforts to reach Jairus’s home, the woman maneuvers and pushes her way into a spot that she can touch his garment with her hand.¹¹³ A person expects that a woman does not normally allow herself to be in this spot because the teeming throng will consist of men only, as in the modern Middle East, with women perhaps walking behind. If so, these words underline the raw strength of her determination and faith.

109. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 763–65.

110. Hayes, “Purity and Impurity, Ritual,” 16:746–48; Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 763–68.

111. Marshall, *Luke*, 344.

112. Ralph Jackson, *Doctors and Diseases in the Roman Empire* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), 58, 65, 70–82, 86–87, 91–93; Ray Laurence, “Health and the Life Course at Herculaneum and Pompeii,” in *Health in Antiquity*, ed. Helen King (London: Routledge, 2005), 92; Howard Clark Kee, “Medicine and Healing,” in *ABD*, 4:660–62; Vivian Nutton, *Ancient Medicine*, 2d ed. (Florence, Ky.: Taylor and Francis, 2013), 101.

113. Morris, *Luke*, 174–76.

touched the border of his garment: Sacred allusions lie in these words. The garment that Jesus wears is possibly the one mandated by the Bible to be decorated on its edges as a reminder of God’s commandments (see Num. 15:38–39; Deut. 22:12). The hem may be as a hem on tunics found in the so-called Cave of Letters.¹¹⁴ In another vein, temple allusions stand in the fact that the afflicted woman touches the hem or one of the tassels hanging from a corner of the garment. It is this part of the Lord’s garment that Isaiah sees in vision. The KJV translates this expression as “his train” (Isa. 6:1), but it has to do with the hem, the part the woman touches. In effect, she touches God’s garment. And she is not the only person to do so, as Matthew 14:35–36 clarifies.¹¹⁵

immediately her issue of blood stanchd: It seems plain that the woman knows what happens, feeling at once the difference within her body, as Mark 5:29 indicates.

8:45 *Who touched me:* Jesus’ question drives home the point that he is aware when his powers bring about something and when someone’s faith draws out those powers.

Peter and they that were with him: The earliest manuscript (P⁷⁵) and others omit the expression “and they that were with him,” but most early texts preserve this reading, essentially the same group of texts that repeat the expression “spent all her living upon physicians” (8:43). Luke alone identifies Peter as spokesman. The phrase “with him” points to the presence of others of the Twelve (see 22:33, 56, 59; 24:44; the Notes on 6:17; 8:1; 22:14, 28).¹¹⁶

8:46 *touched . . . virtue:* That Jesus wants to make a point by coaxing the woman from the crowd appears when we contrast this scene with the one described in 6:19 wherein many apparently touch him and feel his power. In those earlier cases, he seems not to draw attention to the experience. In the woman’s case, he evidently wants her neighbors, who know her condition, to learn that she is healed. Thus her healing includes an important social dimension of being allowed back into her society as well as physical and religious ones. Incidentally, the term translated “virtue” is the Greek word *dynamis*, usually rendered “power” (see 6:19; the Notes on 1:35; 4:6, 14, 36; the Analysis on 4:1–13).¹¹⁷

114. Yadin, *Bar-Kokhba*, 72–73, 82–83; Yadin, *Finds from the Bar Kokhba Period*, 204–246, plates 73–80.

115. See the LDS Bible note on Isa. 6:1 “his train”; John D. Garr, *The Hem of His Garment: Touching the Power in God’s Word* (Atlanta: Golden Key Books, 2000), 15–32; Barker, “Isaiah,” 504.

116. *TDNT*, 7:770, 794–95.

117. BAGD, 206–7, 277–78; *TDNT*, 2:299–308, 562–70.

8:47 *she was healed immediately*: This condition stands in ripe contrast to the lack of healing that will characterize those who can have it if they will see and hear (see Isa. 6:10). What is more, she is unclean but comes away from the experience completely whole. Rather than diminishing Jesus' powers by her unclean touch, her experience shows that his powers sweep away her unclean condition in an instant (see the Notes on 5:13; 7:6, 14; 10:7; the Analysis on 5:12–16).

***she came trembling*:** Trembling is the response of those who honor and fear the Lord (see LXX Isa. 66:2, 5; Dan. 6:26); and even nature trembles before God (see LXX Ps. 103:32; Jer. 4:24). The pattern of fear and then divine reassurance billows to the surface of this story, much as Zacharias, Mary, and the shepherds experience it at the approach of the angel (see 1:12–13, 29–30; 2:9–10), and as Isaiah experiences at his call (see Isa. 6:5–11).¹¹⁸

***she declared unto him before all the people*:** The woman's humility shows in her willingness to lay bare her situation in front of all who stand by, not just before Jesus. In another vein, by allowing her to tell her story, Jesus is making certain that her acquaintances know of her new situation—she is no longer unclean.

***how she was healed immediately*:** Effectively, the woman bears her testimony about the way that God has dealt with her. Other women, of course, receive astonishing blessings, for example the widow of Nain (see 7:11–17).

8:48 *Daughter*: This term of endearment not only effectively reassures her that she now possesses a full part in her people Israel, socially and religiously,¹¹⁹ but also introduces her to a new relationship with Jesus who, whether or not he is biologically younger than she, now stands as a father to her. Within the context of Jesus' healing of Jairus's daughter and giving her back into the care of her parents (see the Note on 8:55), this new relationship points directly at family ties and inherent duties within them (see the Notes on 4:38; 8:21; 18:20).¹²⁰

***thy faith hath made thee whole*:** The expression is stronger and more encompassing than the KJV translation indicates. The meaning is “your faith has saved you,” pointing to her salvation as a result of her faith (see the Notes on 7:50; 17:19; 18:42).

118. Barker, “Isaiah,” 504

119. Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1:747.

120. Balla, *Child-Parent Relationship*, 122–23.

Analysis

One of the most memorable and beloved stories in the Gospels, this report of the woman healed of her hemorrhaging, lays before us the full array of the Savior's bounties as he offers healing to the afflicted. He binds up the woman physically, yes, drenching her in the sweet aromas of full health. But he also lifts her back into her social world, complete with friends and companions and family members who can now feel comfortable in her presence because she no longer bears in her body perpetual uncleanness. Moreover, she can worship, not just privately and alone, but in the synagogue and in her beloved temple, surrounded by others who are devoted to God. In a word, she is whole again every whit.

Remarkably, the woman is the actor in this scene, initiating the contact with Jesus. In her actions, which plainly disclose her deep desire for relief, she apparently pushes beyond the customary decorum for women who, generally, are to remain on the edge of society's bustle, not interacting with men and keeping themselves out of sight. But these expectations may rest mainly on women in large metropolitan areas, such as Jerusalem, rather than on those who dwell in smaller towns.¹²¹ Nevertheless, her aggressive approach through a tight crowd of men is completely out of character for women. And through her actions readers will take away a sense of what it means to come to the Savior—with determination and strength and, of course, faith (see 8:48).

Connections to the call of Isaiah enrich the story of the woman's healing, thus linking this account with the parable of the sower and Jesus' reasons for speaking in parables (see 8:8, 10). The first link that comes to view between Isaiah's call and the report about the woman, of course, has to do with her touching the hem of Jesus' outer garment. In Isaiah's vision, the hem is the part of God's garment that graces the temple as he moves through it to his throne (see Isa. 6:1). Second, in that sacred setting, Isaiah expresses his sense of uncleanness in the presence of God and his entourage (see Isa. 6:5). So too the woman is unclean. Although she does not give voice to her uncleanness as Isaiah does, her actions, done as inconspicuously and quickly as possible, express her diminished status. Third, she is made clean, as the prophet is, by a touch of the holy (see Isa. 6:6–7). Fourth, as a direct contrast, unlike those of Isaiah's era whose eyes will "perceive not" and will thus not "be healed" (Isa. 6:9–10), the woman sees clearly and is healed, bringing to herself the grand gift of salvation. Within

121. Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 359–63.

this connection lies heavily an implicit judgment on those who do not come to Jesus with eyes of faith and seeing.

Above all, faith stands at the center of this story as the Savior’s words to the woman affirm: “thy faith hath made thee whole” (8:48), opening the door of salvation. Her actions are not tinged by superstition or belief in magic, as some hold,¹²² but, as Jesus declares, they rise from the warm radiance of her belief that her actions will lead to healing.¹²³

HEALING JAIRUS’S DAUGHTER, PART 2 (8:49–56)

(Compare Matt. 9:23–26; Mark 5:35–43)

King James Translation

49 While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue’s house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master. 50 But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole. 51 And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden.

52 And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth. 53 And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. 54 And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise. 55 And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat. 56 And her parents were astonished: but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done.

New Rendition

49 While he was still speaking, a representative of the synagogue leader came saying, “Your daughter has died, do not trouble the teacher any longer.” 50 And when Jesus heard, he replied to him, saying, “Do not fear, only believe and she will be saved.” 51 And when he went in the house, he did not let anyone enter with him, except for Peter, John, and James, and the father and mother of the child.

52 And all were crying and mourning her; but he said, “Do not cry, for she is not dead but sleeps.” 53 And they ridiculed him because they knew she was dead. 54 And after he had taken her hand, he called out, saying, “Child, arise.” 55 And her spirit returned and she immediately stood up, and he commanded that she be given something to eat. 56 And her parents were astonished, but he commanded them not to say to anyone what had happened.

122. Plummer, *Luke*, 235.

123. Caird, *Luke*, 124; Marshall, *Luke*, 345; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1:744.

Notes

8:49 *While he yet spake:* This expression, also found in Mark 5:35, points to an eyewitness account that recalls such a detail.

trouble not the Master: The messenger can be a man or woman, as the Greek term *tis* for “someone” or “one” shows. The messenger and those he or she represents in Jairus’s home exhibit no faith that Jesus can raise the dead even if they know that he can heal the sick. Evidently, the news of Jesus raising the widow’s son in Nain has not yet reached Capernaum or, if it has, this person does not embrace it.

8:50 *when Jesus heard it, he answered him:* The Joseph Smith Translation clarifies the historical situation that, when Jesus hears the news from the messenger, he responds not to him but to Jairus: “Jesus heard him [the messenger], and he said unto the ruler of the synagogue . . .” (JST 8:50).

Fear not: believe only: This couplet frames the essence of what Jesus seeks from his true followers. The first words, “Fear not,” point back to the angel’s words addressed to Zacharias, Mary, and the shepherds just before important moments guided by divine powers (see 1:13, 30; 2:10). The second part, “believe only,” contradicts the doubt lurking in the man’s words, “trouble not the Master” (8:49).

she shall be made whole: The verb (Greek *sōzō*) can carry the sense of salvation, as it does in the case of the woman with the issue of blood, “thy faith hath made thee whole” (see the Note on 8:48). But here the meaning has to do with wholeness or being rescued from affliction.¹²⁴ Moreover, the faith is to come from the girl’s parents since she has already passed through death’s doors and therefore Jesus is not offering salvation.

8:51 *he suffered no man to go in:* This line offers the first hint that Jesus will take complete charge of the situation in the home. The crowd that accompanies him consists mostly of men, at least in its core (see the Note on 8:44). Jesus has decided on those few whom he will invite into the home, and he will allow no others.

Peter, and James, and John: A group of early Greek texts reverses the names of James and John, placing John first, as in 9:28 and in some early manuscripts of Acts 1:13. The main point is that Jesus singles out these three Apostles for the first time to become witnesses to a special event that he creates and shapes. The experience will shape an important teaching moment for them in the form of Jesus’ acts.

124. BAGD, 805–6.

the father and the mother of the maiden: Naturally, Jesus wants the girl’s parents to be present. The word translated “maiden” (Greek *pais*) really refers to a girl, as it does in 8:54.¹²⁵

8:52 *all wept, and bewailed her:* These people must already be in the home keeping a vigil with the girl’s parents. By the time Jesus arrives, other mourners may have joined this crowd. Matthew writes about “people making a noise” and Mark reports a “tumult” (see Matt. 9:23; Mark 5:38). It is evident that the home is filled with a lot of racket.

Weep not: Jesus’ words appear to anticipate the future rejoicing that will come not just at the raising of the daughter from death but also in the restoration of family and social relationships when death’s grip is shattered.

she is not dead, but sleepeth: Jesus’ statement, evidently spoken from his divine point of view, must seem strange to those gathered, as their reaction illustrates (see 8:53). These words, of course, breathe the air of faith and hope even in the face of helplessness. A similar sense lies in other New Testament passages that characterize death as a sleep (see John 11:11–14; Acts 13:36; 1 Cor. 11:30; 15:20, 51; 1 Thes. 4:14–15).

8:53 *knowing that she was dead:* Irony stands in Luke’s words. Those gathered know that she is already dead, but they do not *know* that Jesus possesses the power to treat her death as if she is sleeping.

8:54 *he put them all out:* Luke may not have included this detail. The earliest (P⁷⁵) and other manuscripts leave out this expression, although other early texts record Jesus’ expulsion of the mourners. According to the other synoptic Gospels, Jesus ushers out the mourners, affirming the authenticity of the event (see Matt. 9:25; Mark 5:40). Doubtless, Jesus creates a peaceful and quiet atmosphere inside the home, an atmosphere wherein he can perform an astonishing miracle (see the Notes on 4:41 and 8:27). It is the act of a clear-thinking leader who understands the connection between holy acts and calmness, creating an important teaching moment for his Apostles. Peter certainly grasps the lesson and applies it when he raises Tabitha from the dead in Joppa (see Acts 9:40).

took her by the hand, and called: The actions are those of a person waking another. Jesus, of course, takes the girl’s hand in his, an essential act for his blessing (see the Notes on 4:40; 5:13; 13:13; 18:15).¹²⁶ The verb translated

125. BAGD, 610.

126. TDNT, 9:431–32.

“called” (Greek *phōneō*) informs readers that Jesus raises his voice, as if calling the girl from a distance.¹²⁷

8:55 her spirit came again: The expression affirms that Jairus’s daughter has passed away and that Jesus is calling her spirit, which in death departs from her body, back to her body. Although the verb (Greek *epistrephō*) can mean “to convert,” here it means “to turn back, to return.”¹²⁸ This story, of course, recalls Elijah’s miracle of restoring a boy to life and his spirit returning (see 1 Kgs. 17:21–22).

he commanded: Luke continues to stress that Jesus is clearly in charge even though he and the three disciples are in the home of Jairus and his wife (see the Note on 8:51). In addition, his instruction is directed to the girl’s parents and underlines that he is giving her back into their care, restoring the relationships in their home and family (see the Notes on 4:38; 8:48; 18:20).¹²⁹

to give her meat: Jesus means that she should receive something to eat. For Luke, eating is proof that the formerly dead person is truly alive again (see 24:41–43).¹³⁰

8:56 her parents were astonished: The parents, and even the crowd outside of the home, become witnesses of this miracle, effectively making the memories “the shared recollections of a group” (see 4:32, 36; 5:26; the Note on 4:14). Their story, when combined with those of the Twelve, will become a part of the eyewitness record of Jesus’ ministry (see 5:9; 8:56; 9:43; 10:23–24; 20:26).¹³¹

they should tell no man: Luke may draw this notation from Mark 5:43. In Luke’s retelling, it seems to fit awkwardly, whereas in Mark’s account, which is shaped in part to fit his view of Jesus’ ministry, this notation matches Mark’s understanding that Jesus hides his messiahship from the public as much as he is able. From our review of Luke’s Gospel thus far, he plainly sees Jesus reaching out to as many people as he can with clarity about who he is (see the Notes on 4:15, 18–19; 8:1). Moreover, Jesus’ command not to talk about what happens might go back to the excessively negative reaction of the mourners and a willingness to let them believe whatever they want to believe (see 8:53).¹³²

127. BAGD, 878; Marshall, *Luke*, 348.

128. TDNT, 7:722–29.

129. Balla, *Child-Parent Relationship*, 122–23.

130. Marshall, *Luke*, 348.

131. Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 93–132, 146–49, 313–14.

132. Marshall, *Luke*, 342.

Analysis

For a second time, in a matter of minutes, the Savior features faith as the moving element behind his powers. As it is for the woman with the hemorrhage, so it is for the girl's parents. Plainly, Jesus' powers are not for mere display, to be set out in front of those who do not believe in him, as with the crowd of mourners. But a single individual, full of faith and unseen, can draw healing from him within a large group, as the afflicted woman does.

In the story about the girl, the faith of her parents shines brightly through the clouds of desperation and anxiety about her condition. Their trust in the Savior brightens the principle that the faith of others can lead to blessings for persons unable to exercise faith. But for the faith of Jairus and his wife to become effective, he, as a synagogue official, has to be willing to come in humility and seek earnestly the Savior's aid, effectively mirroring the act and attitude of the afflicted woman.

In both accounts, Jesus appears as an example of a discerning priesthood leader. First, he knows when a person of faith draws power out of him, as the woman does. He also discerns her diminished circumstance among her acquaintances because of her unclean state, and he brings her healing into the light of day so that all will know of her new status. In the case of the sick girl, he takes charge of the situation that he finds in her parents' home, allowing only a limited number of persons to accompany him—three Apostles in this case—and obliging the noisy mourners to go outside, thus creating a reverent, calm atmosphere wherein to perform the miracle of restoring her life.

From the story of the young girl, it becomes apparent that in death one's spirit becomes spatially separated from one's body. This observation is echoed in the account of Elijah's restoration of life to the only son of the widow with whom he is boarding (see 1 Kgs. 17:21–22)¹³³ and in the report of the raising of Lazarus when Jesus shouts the command, "Lazarus, come forth" (John 11:43), as if calling Lazarus' spirit from a distance.

Notably, the stories of the young girl and the ailing woman bring to a close a chapter that opens with an acknowledgment of women who both minister to the needs of Jesus and his disciples and receive of his ministrations (see 8:2–3). Herein one of Luke's purposes becomes clear: to affirm that the Savior is the Savior of all, whether men or women, whether Jews or Gentiles.

133. Marshall, *Luke*, 348.