

Research: Peter's Mother-in-law Healed of a Fever

Matt 8: 14-16

Peter lived with his wife, his mother-in-law, and his brother Andrew in Capernaum.

He was in the fishing business with his brother Andrew, in addition to James and John and their father Zebedee. This city became the home base for Jesus' ministry throughout Galilee.

Capernaum was a bustling port of international commerce and industry because of the Via Maris, or the "Way of the Sea," running through it. This caravan route from Egypt to Damascus ran near the city along the hills. A custom-house employed tax-gatherers (publicans) to obtain a toll on travelers. A Roman garrison housed Roman soldiers. The official residence of Herod Antipas' representative was located there. A thriving fishing industry exported a variety of fish which were caught from the fresh waters of the Galilean Sea. Jews, Christians, and Gentiles lived together all around the Sea in uneasy cohabitation.

14 ¶ And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever.

"And when Jesus was come into Peter's house.—St. Mark ([Mark 1:29](#)) and St. Luke ([Luke 4:38](#)) relate more specifically that it was on the Sabbath, and that our Lord had previously taught in the synagogue and healed a demoniac. The sons of Zebedee and of Jona had all been present, and when the service was over they came to the house in which Peter apparently (though born in Bethsaida, [John 1:44](#)) had settled on his marriage" (Ellicott online).

"Sick of a fever.—St. Luke, with a kind of medical precision, adds, 'with a great fever,' and that they (Peter, John, and the others) asked Him about her, as if consulting about a case of which they almost despaired" (Ellicott online).

"Peter had a wife, yet was an apostle of Christ, who showed that he approved of the married state, by being thus kind to Peter's wife's relations" (Henry online).

Whatever the cause of the fever, it had her bedridden. Luke describes it as a "great fever" or a high fever (Luke 4:38).

Fever is *puresso* in Greek and it means “to be on fire, i.e. (specially), to be sick of a fever” (Thayer #4445).

15 And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them.

Touched in Greek is *haptomai* which means “attach oneself; to touch; cling to; adhere;

The root word is *hapto* which means “to set on fire; kindle light; to fasten fire to a thing.”

SH 586:13-14

FIRE.Fear; remorse; lust; hatred; destruction; affliction purifying and elevating man.

The healing was so instantaneous and complete that she began to serve the needs of her guests, probably preparing food for the Sabbath meal.

Ministered in Greek is *diakoneo* and means “to be a servant, to serve or wait upon; to wait at a table and offer food and drink to guests. It can also mean to take care of the poor and sick; or is another name for a church deacon” (Thayer 137).

16 ¶ When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick:

“What is here recorded occurred on the evening of the Sabbath, [Mark 1:21-32](#). The Jews kept the Sabbath from evening to evening, [Leviticus 23:32](#). On the Sabbath they would not even bring their sick to be healed [Luke 13:14](#); but as soon as it was closed, on the evening of the same day, they came in multitudes to be cured” (Barnes online).

To be possessed is *daimonizomai* in Greek and means “to be under the power of a demon; In the N.T. are persons afflicted with especially severe diseases, either bodily or mental (such as paralysis, blindness, deafness, loss of speech, epilepsy, insanity, etc.); whose bodies in the opinion of the Jews demons had entered, and so held possession of them as not only to afflict them with ills, but also to dethrone the reason and take its place themselves” (Thayer #1139).

When the sun went down, the Sabbath was over; the people began bringing those who were sick to Jesus. “All that were brought to him, he healed” (Barnes 39).

Jesus “drove out many demons” because they knew who he was (v. 34). In Luke, it is more specific: “they knew he was the Christ” (Luke 4:41; *EBC* 8.628).

In Mark 1:33, it says:

And all the city was gathered together at the door.

Almost the whole city came in droves to the door of Peter’s house, hoping for healing. The people of the community who brought ill individuals with them were drawn to the presence of the Christ.

Mark 1:34

And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him.

“They knew that he was the Messiah. If they had spoken, they would have made that known to the people. Jesus was not desirous at that time, that that should be publicly known, or his name be blazoned abroad. The time had not come when he wished it to be promulgated, and he therefore imposed silence on the evil spirits” (Barnes 149).

At this point in his ministry, Jesus has healed in the synagogue, in the precincts of church, and now he has healed in the humble home of a disciple. “The Greek word for ‘healed’ is *therapeuo* and is the root word of our word ‘therapeutic.’ It means more than just healing in the basic sense, it means to serve and to restore to health” (Thayer 288). Not only does a church service include serving in the more traditional sense, but it also includes healing.