

Who Do You Say That I Am?

When we come to the latter half of the Lord's ministry in the Galilean region, we find that Jesus had withdrawn from much of the public scene. As such, many identify four independent "withdrawals." In this lesson, you will do two things. First, you will survey the major events that took place during this time. Second, you will complete a detailed map identifying the major events of the Great Galilean Ministry.

The Compassion of the King

It is often overlooked that after John the Baptist was killed, the Lord Jesus was full of great sorrow. There are many reasons for this. John the Baptist was Jesus' relative. But more significantly, he faithfully devoted his whole life to preparing the way for Christ. Also, observe the way in which he was killed. Not merely was his death merciless, but it had been brought about at the request of a teenage girl at a corrupt party. We also see the compassion of Jesus when crowds come looking for him. We will see that the crowds did not understand who Jesus really was. But the Lord was merciful to them, as Mark tells us, "And when he went ashore, he saw a great multitude, and He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things" (6:34). While this event is a wonderful example of the Lord's mercy, we also find him giving an unexpected response to the disciples: "You give them something to eat." (Mark 6:37). The befuddled reaction of the disciples shows their confusion. Jesus told them not to send the crowd away, and to provide for them on the spot. As we see in so many other situations with Christ, nothing is impossible for him. The first example of the crowd's misapprehension of Christ is their desire to make him a king (John 6:15). Matthew and Mark tell us that Jesus "immediately" diffused the situation by sending the crowds away and getting into the boat. Not only was the time inappropriate, but their understanding of Jesus was misconstrued.

Walk on Water

Walking on water is one of the most imperceptible miracles that Jesus performed. Few things defy the ordinary laws of nature as clearly as this. The fact that a storm on the



Sea of Galilee was taking place adds to the amazement. This is the second storm on the Sea of Galilee that we have encountered. When the lake is tame no one expects a violent storm. However, the eastern cliffs allow for such tempests to take place. When the winds drop off the cliffs, a wild commotion in the water is created. These storms are so intense that many today are afraid of being caught in one. It is fascinating that the disciples thought that Jesus was a ghost. It is also very disappointing. The basic idea of a ghost was not permissible in Jewish thought (see Exodus 22:18; Leviticus 19:31; Deuteronomy 18:11). Out of an act of distrustful fear, the disciples believed in heresy for a few minutes. While Peter's confidence in the Lord allowed him to also walk on the water, his faith did not persevere, which is why he started to sink. The great power of Jesus is contrasted to the weakness of the disciples' faith.

The Bread of Life

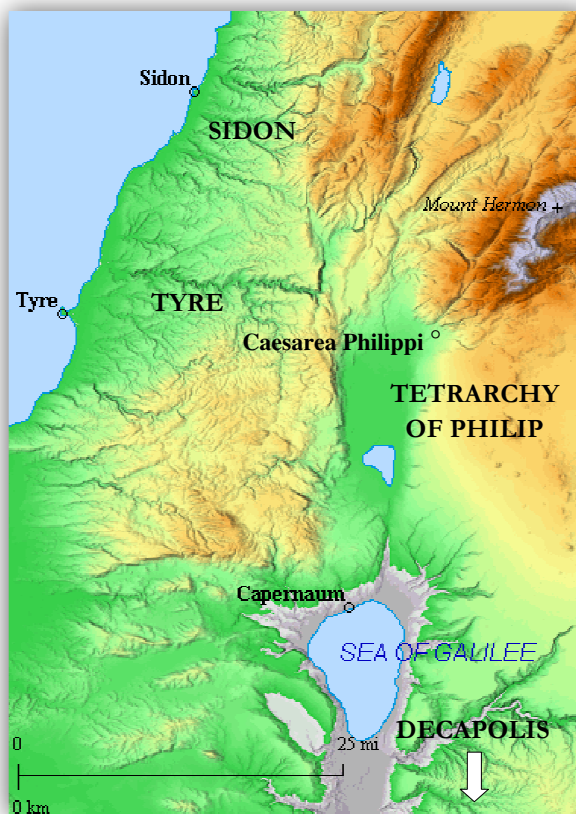
After crossing to the other side of the lake, the Lord was well received at Genessaret. However, when they had gone back to Capernaum, the same crowd who was fed was looking for him. Knowing their motives, Jesus explained to them that he is the bread of life (John 6). They were seeking bread for their bodies, but did not understand that Jesus could feed their souls. However, many “stumbled” over this (6:60-61) because of their spiritual blindness (cf. 6:37, 44).

They Don’t Wash Their Hands?!

We find another situation where the Pharisees traveled from Jerusalem to speak with Jesus. They had confronted him about his disciples not washing their hands before eating. No one understood germs in the ancient world. Their concern was not your mom’s concern. Washing hands was purely a ritual. Can you imagine traveling from Jerusalem to Capernaum to confront someone for not washing their hands? The fact that the Pharisees did this makes plain their motives to attack Jesus.

Savior of the Gentiles

That the Lord was speaking to the Canaanite woman in an apparently uninviting manner is revealed to have been a test of her faith (Matthew 15, Mark 7). For had not the Lord’s purpose been to save the woman, we might wonder why he traveled to Tyre and Sidon. Unlike his journeys across the Sea of Galilee, it was a considerable distance. We should not be surprised that the Lord traveled such distance to save this woman. We have already seen how unconventional Jesus was in saving many others. Our memories think back to the Samaritan woman, and to the outcasts for which Jesus was criticized. There is no inconvenience great enough to stop Jesus from saving sinners. The Lord then traveled through the Galilean region to the Decapolis, which was southeast of the lake. Decapolis means “ten cities” in Greek. It was largely inhabited by Gentiles. In this region the Lord healed a deaf man, among many others with life dominating infirmities. While Jesus was there, he fed a crowd of four thousand (Matthew 15, Mark 8), which bears remarkable similarity to the feeding of the five thousand. The disciples were even baffled the same way at the Lord’s desire to have all of them fed.



And again he went out from the region of Tyre, and came through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, within the region of Decapolis. Mark 7:31

The Sea Monster and Leaven

Before embarking on another withdrawal to a primarily Gentile region, Jesus is again confronted by Pharisees and Sadducees. You are aware of the long embittered history between Pharisees and Sadducees. Jesus was enough of a concern for both of them that they were now working together.

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Knowing that their motives were evil, he did not meet their request for a sign. “An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign; and a sign will not be given it, except for the sign of Jonah.” (Matthew 16:4). This is the second time the Lord referred to the “sign of Jonah.” While crossing the lake again, Jesus uses the imagery of bread once more. Yeast is included in bread, which is what causes it to rise when it is baked. A small amount is only necessary for a whole loaf, because it spreads. This is why the Israelites had to eliminate all leaven on the night before the Passover (Exodus 12:19). In the same way, a little false teaching will go a long way.

In the Territory of Philip

We find that the Lord had gone to another region largely inhabited by Gentiles. As was mentioned in Lesson 4, Philip was generally known to have been a good and unthreatening ruler. They had specifically gone into the district of Caesarea Philippi. This point is highly significant for what took place there. You will remember back to the Pharisees accusation that Jesus was in league with the devil. We recall that event because it is a climactic point in Jesus’ life. Though of a different nature, we have come to another climactic point. When Peter confesses that Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of the living God,” (Matthew 16:16), he was not pontificating on his own reflections. Jesus plainly tells him that the Father has allowed him to understand this. This is the most clear manifestation of Christ’s identity, which took place in an entirely pagan environment. Caesarea Philippi was not just a place where a lot of Gentiles lived. Its historical identity was thoroughly pagan. Its former name was Paneas (Lesson 2, page 2), which came from the name of the god Pan. Jesus did not reveal himself most conspicuously in Jerusalem, but proclaimed his identity in a pagan city. You may reflect on how this shapes the true messianic identity. When we come to this text, we face a controversial issue. Jesus said, “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it.” In Roman Catholic theology, this text is used to justify the office of the pope. It is said that because Jesus called Peter the rock, that he therefore has authority over the church, which is passed down through successive popes (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 892). A common response to this is that “the rock” on which Jesus will build his church is not Peter, but the confession that Peter made: “You are Christ, Son of the living God.” However, this response is not required for an adequate correction of the Roman Catholic error. The problem within the Roman Catholic interpretation is not the charge that Peter is the rock, but that he is made the pope of the church, and that this office is succeeded by other popes. You have already read Acts 2, where the church had begun under the preaching of Peter. You find Peter at the establishment of the church. So, there is no problem in saying that Peter is the rock. The problem is that there is no reason to infer that Peter holds a papal office. For his apostolic authority is not manifested in his office, but in his preaching of the Gospel. Second, there is absolutely no biblical warrant for the succession of apostolic authority through a succession of popes. Additionally, Jesus speaks to Peter as if he is Satan (Matthew 16:23), for suggesting that he should not be killed. Peter’s authority (i.e., “the keys of the kingdom”), is not vested in an office that he is given, but in the preaching of the Gospel.



**Mt Hermon towers
above any peak
in Israel at 9200 ft.**

As part of the Lord's explanation of the suffering soon to come, Jesus speaks of the final judgment (Matthew 16:27). Immediately after, the Lord says, "But I say to you truthfully, there are some of those standing here who shall not taste death until they see the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:27). Why would the Lord refer to this in the context of final judgment? Did he mean that he would return before the disciples would die? This final statement does not refer to the final judgment which the Lord had just been speaking of. He was speaking of something more imminent which was to take place. Many have referred to the destruction of Jerusalem (AD 70) as the fulfillment of this. However, it makes more sense to understand the Transfiguration as the appropriate fulfillment. The Lord said that "some of those..." would see Christ in his kingdom. Only Peter, James and John were on the mountain with Christ. The Transfiguration was the confirmation to the inner three of the kingdom of God. It was a perfectly fitting time for the three to see the Lord's glory unveiled. This occurred within days of Peter's confession, and the Lord's foretelling of his suffering and resurrection. Luke tells us that Jesus was talking to Moses and Elijah about his departure (Luke 9:31). While the full display of the glory of God was revealed, the two prophets anticipated the time when Jesus would return to this glory. Most believe that the Transfiguration took place on Mt. Hermon. Roman Catholicism teaches that it took place on Mt. Tabor. It would have been odd for them to go to Mt. Tabor while they were already in Philip's Tetrarchy. Additionally, there was a Roman structure on Mt. Tabor in the first century.

Return to Galilee

As the Lord returns to Capernaum with his disciples, there are a number of events that perfectly illustrate the thematic development of the Gospels. It is fitting that the disciples are reminded of the coming sufferings of the Savior (Matthew 17:22-23; Mark 9:30-32), and of their place in Christ's kingdom. This is why Jesus did not object to paying the temple tax (Matthew 17:24-27). This is why Jesus teaches the greatest in the kingdom are like children. This is why Jesus warns against rebuking other followers of Christ, and of causing "little ones" to stumble. This is why Jesus teaches about how to appropriately treat a sinning brother in the church. The kingdom of Christ is characterized by love, humility, and forgiveness. It is not characterized by earthly power as the Jews had yearned for

Edward Payson Hammond
on his visit to Mt. Tabor:

On the summit of that mountain
They were taken to a convent,
Where six men, who looked like hermits,
Round an altar highly tinselled,
Stood and sang, or rather chanted
With a nasal twang their jargon,

Ira, irda, ino, no!
Ira, irda, ino, no!

To their idol, Virgin Mary.

On its walls were many paintings,
Of our Lord's transfiguration,
Which they claim was on that mountain,
Tho' 'tis plain to any student,
That upon some spur of Hermon,
That scene must have been located.

None till after the fourth century
Speak of Tabor as the mountain
Where the Lord was once transfigured.
At that time 'tis known with surety,
That 'twas covered o'er with dwellings,
Thus preventing that seclusion,
Which was sought for by our Saviour,
When He would to His disciples
Show that He was more than human,
Yea, that he was God incarnate.
Nought is seen there not but ruins,
Very massive in their structure,
Beasts of prey their only tenants.

Sketches of Palestine, 67-68



Mt Tabor and the Church of
Transfiguration

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so long. We find these things most clearly manifested in Christ, and in his church.

Map 4

At the completion of this map, you are highly encouraged to go back through the Great Galilean Ministry to follow the geographical sequence. The purpose of this map exercise is to familiarize you with the Lord's activities in the Galilean region. You may use the map on page two to orient yourself with the greater surrounding regions. The occasions that Jesus traveled to Jerusalem are not included in this assignment. The route would have been the same one taken by Jesus' family in his youth. The exceptions were when Jesus intentionally went into Samaria on the way back to Galilee.

Label the following near each listed city. Box each item. Only copy the italicized text.

1. **Nazareth:** *No prophet is welcome in his own home (Luke 4:24)*
2. (This is not considered part of the Galilean Ministry). **Cana:** *The Wedding at Cana (John 2)*
3. Draw a triangle that connects **Korazin, Capernaum, and Bethsaida.** If you have room inside the triangle, write: *Evangelical Triangle.* Otherwise write it on top. These three cities are often called the Evangelical Triangle because the Lord did most of his preaching there before pronouncing judgment.
4. **Nain:** *A great prophet has risen among us! (Luke 7:16)*
5. **Gergesa:** *Casting out of Legion into swine (Mark 5).* Some have identified Gadara as an alternative location, but it is not near the Sea of Galilee.
6. **Bethsaida:** *Feeding of the 5,000 (Mark 6)*
7. **Sea of Galilee:** *"What kind of man is this, that even the winds and sea obey him?" (Matt. 13:27)*
8. **Mt. of Beatitudes:** *Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7)*
9. **Gennesaret:** *Healings at Gennesaret (Matt 14)*



There are ski slopes on Mt. Hermon...but only dummies use them.

Reading Assignment: 1 Corinthians; 2 Corinthians 1-7

Greek	Pronunciation	English	Part of Speech
αρτο~	artos	bread, loaf	noun
ζωω	zaw-o	I live	verb
λαοι~	la-os	a people	noun
νυν	noon	now	adverb
πετρα	petra	a rock	noun
πετρο~	pet-ross	a stone	noun