



In the earlier period Jesus spent most of His time in the northern part of the country with only short periods on visits to Jerusalem. After spending the first Passover of His public ministry in Jerusalem, Jesus returns home once again. During the year between the second Passover to the third, Jesus will minister exclusively in the area of Galilee near His original home and the homes of many of His Apostles.

We pick up the narrative from the point where He was at Cana in the north and returns to Jerusalem for a brief story during the second Passover after which He will turn northward again.

There are thirty-six events recorded during this period. Most are described by Matthew, Mark and Luke with John providing the story of the first incident and sharing a description of the last three.

33. Jesus attends second Passover

John 5:1-47

At His first appearance in the temple, Jesus caught the attention of the leaders and the people by His zeal (cleansing the temple) and signs and teaching.

- The priests saw Him as a nuisance and tried to get rid of Him by confronting Him.

During this visit Jesus infuriates the leaders because He does two things:

1. He heals a man on the Sabbath and orders him to pick up his pallet and go home. They accused Him of sinning because He had healed (in the Temple of all places) on a Sabbath – this was work. Jesus gave the man instructions to carry his pallet – this was work.
2. In His preaching He equates Himself with God: punishable by death if untrue.

His position has gone from challenger and nuisance to enemy and threat.

- John says that they begin seeking ways to kill Him
- So that He was now in danger if He stayed in Jerusalem.

34. Return to Galilee

Luke 4:14-30

Luke begins this section with "and" without connecting it to other events, but the information contained matches other information in Matthew and Mark for this time frame.

- Jesus finds himself rejected in Jerusalem, returns to the north once again and goes into His hometown of Nazareth to preach.
- He also begins to declare His true identity by telling them that a passage in Isaiah concerning the Messiah referred directly to Him personally.
- The people are amazed since they see Him only as a hometown boy,
- But when He insists that this is the truth and that if they don't accept it – it will go to the Gentiles (another new development in His preaching).
- They too become angry and try to mob Him.
- He escapes their attack and leaves town.

35. Jesus settles in Capernaum

Matthew 4:13-17; Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:31-37

After His rejection at Nazareth, He goes to adoptive home in Capernaum at the north side of the lake and settles there.

- Here He teaches and performs a miracle (casts out a demon), but here the people are amazed and spread the knowledge of Him throughout the region, helping the spread of His ministry.
- Capernaum was also the home of Peter and Andrew and where Jesus called them to follow Him (Matthew 4:18–20). Jesus also found Matthew, a tax collector in Capernaum, and called him to follow (Matthew 9:9).\

36. Healing of Simon's Mother-in-Law

Matthew 8:14-17; Mark 1:29-34; Luke 4:38-41

These events come close together and are hard to put in order since the writers tell the story differently.

- Preaching and healing at Capernaum
- Healing Simon's Mother-in-Law
- Call to Apostles

However, Mark says that immediately after leaving the synagogue, they went to Peter's house and Jesus healed his Mother-in-Law and many rich who sought Him out. This event leads to the next in logical order.



37. The call of Simon, Andrew, James and John

Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:1-11

Mark appears out of sync with his account, but his gospel is a series of snapshots of Jesus' life, not meant to follow a precise chronological order (unlike Luke who is a historian and is more particular).

- After the powerful preaching followed by the miracles, even a miracle done for the Apostles themselves (Jesus shows them where to find a huge catch of fish), the Lord takes the opportunity to call 4 men into full-time ministry.
- Up until this time these men have continued their work as fishermen and followed Jesus as disciples.
- But now Jesus calls on them to leave everything to be with Him full-time.
- Now their training as Apostles will begin in earnest.

38. Circuit preaching through Galilee

Matthew 4:23-25; Mark 1:35-39; Luke 4:42-44

Once Jesus has His disciples called, they set out on a preaching tour of the region.

- His miracles and teaching, as well as the news of His activity in Jerusalem had caused a great interest in the north.
- Jesus begins the training process of His newly called Apostles by taking them along on the speaking tour that He had up until this point done largely on His own.

39. Jesus heals a leper

Matthew 8:1-4; Mark 1:40-45; Luke 5:12-16

The Jews believed that when the Messiah came, He would be able to cure lepers.

Leprosy has terrified humanity since ancient times and was reported as early as 600 BC in India, China, and Egypt. Hansen's disease is still a major health problem.

The term "leprosy" (including leper, lepers, leprosy, leprous) occurs 68 times in the Bible

- 55 times in the Old Testament (Hebrew = tsara'ath)
- 13 times in the New Testament (Greek = lepros, lepra).
- In the Old Testament, the instances of leprosy most likely meant a variety of infectious skin diseases, and even mold and mildew on clothing and walls.
- The precise meaning of the leprosy in both the Old and New Testaments is still in dispute,
- It probably includes the modern Hansen's disease (especially in the New Testament) and infectious skin diseases.

Many have thought leprosy to be a disease of the skin. It is better classified, however, as a disease of the nervous system because the leprosy bacterium attacks the nerves.

- Leprosy's agent *M. leprae* is a rod-shaped bacterium related to the tuberculosis bacterium.
- Leprosy is spread by multiple skin contacts, as well as by droplets from the upper respiratory tracts, such as nasal secretions that are transmitted from person to person.
- Its symptoms start in the skin and peripheral nervous system (outside the brain and spinal cord), then spread to other parts, such as the hands, feet, face, and earlobes.
- Patients with leprosy experience disfigurement of the skin and bones, twisting of the limbs, and curling of the fingers to form the characteristic claw hand.
- Facial changes include thickening of the outer ear and collapsing of the nose.

Tumor-like growths called lepromas may form on the skin and in the respiratory tract, and the optic nerve may deteriorate.

It was the work of Dr. Paul Brand (the late world-renowned orthopedic surgeon and leprosy physician) with leprosy patients that illustrated, in part, the value of sensing pain in this world.



- The leprosy bacillus destroys nerve endings that carry pain signals; therefore patients with advanced leprosy experience a total loss of physical pain.
- When these people cannot sense touch or pain, they tend to injure themselves or be unaware of injury caused by an outside agent.
- For instance, inattentive patients can pick up a cup of boiling water without flinching.

In fact, some leprosy patients have had their fingers eaten by rats in their sleep because they were totally unaware of it happening; the lack of pain receptors could not warn them of the danger.

According to Dr. Brand, the best example in the Bible of a person with Hansen's disease is the man with the withered hand (Mark 3:5; Matthew 12:13; Luke 6:10). He likely suffered from tuberculoid leprosy.

Let us not be too quick to remove pain in our lives (whether physical, emotional, social, or spiritual pain).

- It may be God's megaphone to get our attention that something is seriously wrong and that we should flee to the One who created us.

This leper comes to Jesus convinced that Jesus could cure him – and Jesus does.

- His reason for coming was faith that Jesus was the Messiah.

Jesus tells him not to tell anyone (to avoid people coming for a cure, but not related to faith).

- The man is overjoyed and can't contain himself and tells everyone.
- This causes the Lord to avoid the cities because of the crowds searching for Him and looking for a sign or miracle.

40. Return to Capernaum

Matthew 9:2-8; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26

The leper's unwanted publicity seems to have forced an end to the preaching tour and Jesus returns to His home in Capernaum.

- While He is in His home there are crowds that come to hear Him speak – even at His house.

It was during this time that several men, who couldn't get inside the house through the door, decide to remove the tile from His roof and lower one of their paralyzed friends through so he could be with the Lord.

- Jesus forgives the man's sins first (to show His divine authority) and when the scribes sitting there questioned if He had authority,
- Jesus healed the man to show that He had both the authority to forgive sins and the power to heal since one goes with the other
- (only God can heal/only God can forgive) – if you can do one you can do the other.

41. The calling of Matthew

Matthew 9:9-13; Mark 2:13-17; Luke 5:27-32

After this event He was by the Sea of Galilee where He found and called Matthew as His next Apostle.

So far, most of His Apostles are relatives and fishermen from His own region.

- Matthew is not a relative or fisherman, but a despised tax collector for the region.
- He collected Roman tax and tacked on a collecting fee for his services.
- As a tax collector for a foreign government, was considered a sinner along with gamblers, thieves, herdsmen, custom officials, etc.
- As such, they could not act as judges or witnesses against others because of their moral uncertainty.

Taxes in Judea at the time of Christ

There were plenty of taxes in ancient Judea: religious and secular:

1. For faithful Jews, there was the voluntary temple tax that had been decreed by Moses to pay for the sacrifices and incense.

- The amount was half of a shekel or about half an ounce of silver.
- We see Peter being asked if Jesus paid this tax in Matthew 17:24-27;
- Jesus had Peter pay the tax for both of them with a shekel found in a fish's mouth.



2. Under the kings of Israel, there were also taxes collected to run the government — these weren't voluntary, and even included military drafts.

- When foreign rulers took over the region of Palestine, they also imposed taxes. In the time of Jesus, Judea was part of the Roman province of Syria.
- It is believed that Roman taxes totaled one percent of a man's income.

And there were other taxes:

- customs taxes,

- import and export taxes,
- toll bridges,
- crop taxes,
- sales tax,
- property taxes,
- and special taxes when there was a war, building project or campaign to finance.

Technically, Romans collected the taxes — rich Romans, who didn't live in Syria, technically ran the tax service. However, what really happened was that these Romans hired local men to collect the taxes for them.

- These local tax collectors were called telon?s (a Greek word meaning “paying at the end”), or publicanus in Latin.
- From this, we get the word “publican” used in some translations of the Bible. In the modern translations, we use the phrase “tax collector.”

But those rich Romans in Rome didn't pay their tax collectors.

Instead, the local tax collectors made their livings off how much extra money they were able to charge people — over and above the legal taxes. And with the above list of different taxes, how could the average person keep track of what they really owed? We might call it “skimming off the top.”

- This is why John the Baptist advised those repentant tax collectors who came to him, “Stop collecting more than what is prescribed” (Lk 3:13).

Most of the time, though, what really happened wasn't “skimming,” but out and out extortion.

- Tax collectors, already hated by their countrymen, would take as much as they could get —
- and often from the poor, who had no recourse.
- These bully tactics, paired with the fact that many “faithful Jews” of the time believed paying taxes to Romans was a sin,
- tax collectors were considered unsavory at best and all but excommunicated at worst.

- Even Jesus noted their popularity when he said, in teaching about an unrepentant sinner: “If he refuses to listen even to the church, then treat him as you would a Gentile or a tax collector” (Mt 18:17).

Jesus, nevertheless, calls this man to follow and he does so immediately.

- He’s so excited about the call that he invites Jews to his home for a feast.
- Many of his "sinner" friends are there and this causes the Jews to murmur that Jesus is associating with sinners.
- Jesus was associating with sinners, but not to share their sins, He was there to call them out of their sins.

42. Questions on fasting

Matthew 9:14-17; Mark 2:18-22; Luke 5:33-39

43. Questions on working

Matthew 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-5

44. Pharisees plot His death

Matthew 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11

Now that He has saturated the north with His healings, miracles, teaching and witnessing about Himself there begins a concerted effort to discredit Him and His teaching!

- At first it was John's disciples along with the Pharisees' disciples who challenged the Apostles because they did not fast.
- Then it was the Pharisees who challenged them for eating grain they picked on the Sabbath.
- The answer to these and all other objections was that Jesus was the Messiah and in His presence no fasting was required, and in His service work was blessed at all times.
- Of course the Pharisees rejected the claim of His being the Messiah and when their efforts to discredit Him fail, they began to try to silence Him for good.

45. Jesus withdraws from the attacks

Matthew 12:15-21; Mark 3:7-12

The confrontations and plots to take His life force Him to withdraw from the public places.

However, this does not stop the crowds from coming to Him – all the way from Jerusalem. Jesus teaches and heals all who come to Him.



46. Jesus appoints the twelve

Matthew 10:1-42; Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-19

His ministry has grown so large that He cannot easily move from place to place because of the crowds; He cannot venture into the main cities without drawing violence towards Himself.

After a long night of prayer, Jesus chooses among His many disciples, 12 who will become His Apostles.

- Disciples are ones who follow.
- Apostles are messengers who are sent ahead.

These twelve men who have been disciples from the beginning of His ministry are called to be in exclusive service to Him and the gospel as Apostles. He gives them instructions about their work and empowers them for the task.

This will change the nature and growth of His ministry as the Apostles will now begin to bring the message ahead of Jesus in preparation for His coming into a place.

Lessons:

Although this section describes much of Jesus' work in the north and the growing opposition towards Him, one thread that's seen through these events is the approach and work of "ministry." For example:

1. Ministry is in stages

Note that God sent Jesus out in stages; as a child, a boy, family, region, main cities, disciples, messengers, etc. Note also that the disciples grew in their time and commitment – first part-time disciples, then Apostles, finally giving their lives to God in death.

In the end God will want us to be with Him and devoted to Him forever (a joy for us) and so as disciples and ministers we are, in this life, working our way towards that total devotion now.

- If you don't want that now, you're not going to have it later.
- Those who love the world (even if they say they are Christians) do so at the expense of devoting themselves to God.
- We need to check which way we're going; more devoted to God or less?

2. Ministry is like stone polishing

The example of what Jesus did with the Apostles is much like what He does with us in the church. He took 12 very different men (zealots, tax collectors, fishermen, intellectuals, etc.) and like 12 uncut, unpolished stones, He put them in a bag and shook them together for three years. Circumstances, work, challenges, etc.

After 3 years 11 of them came out smoother and through the work of the Holy Spirit, jewels – and one was crushed to dust (Judas).

It's the same way with us in the church. Jesus takes different people with different backgrounds, puts us all in a bag and shakes us up for a lifetime. Some will come out as smooth and polished stones ready for His purpose persevering in faith and in love; and some will be turned to dust because of unfaithfulness, sinfulness and lack of commitment.

READING ASSIGNMENT FOR CHAPTER 6

47. Matthew 5:1-8:1; Luke 6:20-49
48. Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10
49. Luke 7:11-17

50. Matthew 11:20-30
51. Luke 7:36-50
52. Luke 8:1-3
53. Matthew 12:22-37; Mark 3:22-30; Luke 11:14-15
54. Matthew 12:38-45; Luke 11:16, Luke 11:24-36
55. Matthew 12:46-50; Mark 3:20-21; Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:19-21
56. Matthew 13:1-53; Mark 4:1-34; Luke 8:4-18
57. Matthew 8:18-27; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25
58. Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-40
59. Matthew 9:1; 18-26; Mark 5:21-43; Luke 8:41-56
60. Matthew 9:27-34
61. Matthew 13:54-58; Mark 6:1-6
62. Matthew 9:35-38; Mark 6:6
63. Matthew 10:1-11:1; Mark 6:7-13; Luke 9:1-6
64. Matthew 14:1-12; Mark 6:14-29; Luke 9:7-9
65. Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-14
66. Matthew 14:22-23; Mark 6:45-56; John 6:15-21
67. John 6:22-71

Discussion Questions

1. Why was it practical for Jesus to approach His ministry in stages? How does this staged pattern relate to us?
2. How are the characteristics of the Apostles like us today as members of God's Kingdom?
3. How can you use this lesson to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?