



In the last section we summed up the events recorded during Jesus' second year of ministry. This period is also known as the year of popularity as we see that He is immensely popular, but has made some deadly enemies: the Pharisees and religious leaders want to kill Him, even some of the disciples are leaving because of the demands of His teaching.

- Most of His teaching and signs have been performed in the northern part of the country with occasional visits to Jerusalem during key festivals.
- The Apostles have now been chosen and are ministering on their own in the northern region as well.
- As He enters the third year of His ministry He will make more appearances in and around Jerusalem to declare His purpose for coming.

We begin the next section of events describing His ministry from the 3rd Passover to the beginning of the Last Passover week.

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## **68. Healings in the Gennesaret area**

*Matthew 14:34-36; Mark 6:55-56*

Our last event found Jesus in the synagogue at Capernaum.

- Gennesaret was a little south of Capernaum.
- Mark says that many were healed simply by touching the "fringe" of His cloak.
- Like other male Jews, faithful to the Law, He had a blue tassel at each corner of His garment and this is what they reached for in faith.

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## 69. Pharisees question hand washing

*Matthew 15:1-20; Mark 7:1-23*

Jesus' successful ministry in Gennesaret was interrupted by Pharisees who had come from Jerusalem to observe and confront Him in order to discredit Him.

- One of their accusations was that His disciples violated the "tradition of the elders" by not observing the ritualistic washing of their hands before eating.

The "Tradition of the Elders" referred to a body of rules and regulations created by the scribes that dictated how the Law was to be applied.

- For example, the Law forbade work on the Sabbath.
- The scribes created over one hundred definitions of what was considered "work" and "leisure" in order to guide the Jews in keeping that command.

Jesus replied that these things were no more than man made rules that had no authority from God and thus no authority over man.

- Jesus went on to show that it wasn't dirty hands or even food that defiled a person's soul.
- It was what came out of the heart that defiled a human's soul.
- This infuriated the Pharisees because He not only discredited their source of authority (tradition of elders)
- He also waved away food restrictions to which the Jews held so dearly.

Restricting types of food was a way of distinguishing the people as separate from other nations and a mark of God's chosen people. Christ was eluding to the fact that soon their faith in Christ would do this for them.

## 70. Jesus heads further north

*Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30*

This break with Jewish tradition was sure to cause even more hatred among Jewish religious leaders so Jesus heads further north into Gentile territory.

- Here He meets a Syrophenician woman who is a Gentile and who asks Him to heal her daughter.

Jesus, using the expressions of that day, tells her that He has come to feed the children and not their pets.

- This is what many Jews thought in those days concerning Gentiles with which they were friendly.
- The woman recognizing the analogy, and without diminishing the role and privilege of the Jews, says that even the pets get a little of the leftovers after the children have eaten.
- She would gladly accept that.

In this woman Jesus finds not only a woman of faith, but also a woman of humility, perseverance and courage. **He rewards all of this by healing her child without even seeing her.**

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## 71. Jesus ministers in Decapolis

*Matthew 15:29-38; Mark 7:31-8:9*

Decapolis is on the east side of the Sea of Galilee where Jesus healed the demoniac and sent him to spread the news of his cure among the region (10 cities).

- Jesus now returns and heals a man who is deaf and a great multitude is assembled to hear Him preach.
- Quite possibly this is the result of the work of this demoniac.
- Jesus not only teaches them, but also performs the miracle of the multiplication of bread and fish for this group – a miracle He has done for the second time.

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## 72. Jesus confronted again by Pharisees

*Matthew 15:39-16:4; Mark 8:10-12*

Jesus finishes in the area of the Decapolis and crosses the Sea of Galilee. Once there the Pharisees are ready with another attack, this time to challenge Him by asking for a sign from "heaven."

- Their point was that His miracles were not spectacular enough.
- They wanted an Old Testament miracle where the sun stood still or fire and brimstone were called down from the sky.

Jesus rebukes them for their blindness in that they can tell what the weather is from the color of the sky, but can't even interpret all of the signs He has already done to prove His legitimacy.

He refuses to give them such a sign and refers them to the story of Jonah and tells them that this will be the definitive sign that He is from God.

- Jonah 3 days in the whale and survived.
- Jesus 3 days in the tomb and resurrected.

**The resurrection will be the sign for everyone, including them, that He is the Messiah sent from God.**

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## **73. Discussion with Apostles in the boat**

*Matthew 16:5-12; Mark 8:13-21*

The Apostles had been traveling with Jesus through all these events.

- They had seen the confrontations with the Pharisees,
- the miracles,
- the feeding of the 4,000.

Now they were once again crossing the Sea of Galilee and Jesus tries to warn them concerning the Pharisees and their hypocrisy. The reason for this is that the Apostles will also have to deal with these people in their ministry.

- Jesus uses a figure of speech that they don't understand
- "leaven of the Pharisees"

- He explains that the Pharisees' false ideas introduced as doctrine from God had taken such a hold that the people accepted it as Law.

The Apostles think He's scolding them because they forgot to bring the leftover bread from the feeding.

- This shows how unsophisticated and hard hearted they were and certainly no match for the Pharisees.

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## **74. Jesus heals a blind man**

*Mark 8:22-26*

Upon arriving on the other side, the people bring Him a blind man to cure and Jesus does so in stages, putting first saliva on his eyes then laying hands on them.

This may have been done to help his faith develop in stages as well.

- First saliva to know that Jesus was doing something for him,
- Then complete healing once he realized that it was Jesus who was giving him sight.

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## **75. Peter's confession**

*Matthew 16:13-20; Mark 8:27-30; Luke 9:18-21*

Jesus had been challenged by the Pharisees and debated with them.

- He was still training and preparing His Apostles to carry on their ministry.
- After all that had happened He tested to see if they remained convinced of His identity.
- Without this certainty they would not be able to withstand what was to come in Jerusalem in the not too distant future.

Jesus asks them of their assessment of Him, and Peter answers for the group in confessing Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah sent from God.

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## **76. Jesus foretells His death and resurrection**

*Matthew 16:21-28; Mark 8:31-9:1; Luke 9:22-27*

Now that they have expressed their belief in His true identity, Jesus can further teach them on the purpose of His ministry – to die and resurrect according to the Word.

- This is the first time He tells them this and they are in shock.
- So much so that Peter, once again, tried to talk Jesus out of doing this.
- He is trying to protect his vision of what the Messiah should or shouldn't do and guarding his own place as an Apostle – no good being the Apostle of a dead Messiah.
- Jesus rebukes him sharply for his very human and selfish motives

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## **77. The transfiguration**

*Matthew 17:1-13; Mark 9:2-13; Luke 9:28-36*

After the first prophecy of His death He takes Peter, James and John up on a mountain and is transfigured into His glorious state.

- Luke says He discusses His coming death with Moses and Elijah.
- Again Peter responds foolishly by wanting to make (booths) tents that will house all of them so they can stay on the mountain in this state.
- God speaks saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, listen to Him."
- The point here is that Moses represents the Law, Elijah the Prophets.
- Now God wants the people to listen to Jesus – He fulfills the Law and Prophets.

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## **78. Casting out a demon that the apostles count not**

*Matthew 17:14-21; Mark 9:14-29; Luke 9:37-43*

When they returned to join the other Apostles, they were embroiled in an argument with the Scribes over a healing they were unable to do.



- Jesus casts a demon out of a boy and rebukes the Apostles for their lack of faith and prayer.
- They had power to do this in the past, but had perhaps forgotten that every miracle and healing was based on faith in God and they were taking more credit than they needed to.
- The argument with the Scribes suggests that they may have wanted to impress them.

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## **79. Jesus foretells His death and resurrection a second time**

*Matthew 17:22-23; Mark 9:30-32; Luke 9:44-45*

Between the first and second times Jesus foretells of His impending death, there are tremendous miracles and signs that take place – still in the northern region, but further north and west.

- After He casts out the demon, Jesus mentions again that He will eventually be killed, but this time adds the idea that He will be betrayed.
- They ask no more questions of Him because they do not like the answers He's giving them, they are in denial.

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## **80. Money from a fish**

*Matthew 17:24-27*

Each male 20 and over had to pay a temple tax. Not to do so was an act of Apostasy.

- Jesus claimed exemption because as the Son of the Father whose house was the Temple, He should not have to pay.
- But to not cause stumbling He miraculously makes a coin appear in the mouth of a fish that Peter catches in order to pay for Himself and Peter.
- Some speculate that since Jesus only paid for Himself and Peter the other Apostles were under 20 at the time. This makes sense, the average age at the time was around 50. Peter was old when he died in 63-64; John was very old 100 AD (80-90).

## 81. Who is the greatest

*Matthew 18:1-35; Mark 9:33-50; Luke 9:46-50*

A dispute arises among them as to who will be the greatest among them in the kingdom. They are still very much under the impression that the kingdom will be some earthly form of government.

Jesus responds to this with a variety of teachings:

- The childlike attitude needed to enter and stay in the kingdom.
- The danger of making a child of God lose their faith, or leading one into sin.
- A discourse on how to deal with disputes among brethren (go alone, bring another, tell the church, etc.).
- A parable about the necessity of forgiveness (the hard-hearted slave who refused to forgive).

All of these teachings are to try to make them understand that relationships in the kingdom are not based on being great through power and control, but being great based on love, mercy and service.

- Mark adds that they also wanted to condemn others who were working in Jesus' name but not part of their group, and Jesus restrained them saying that if you're with Jesus you're with His followers as well.
- With this Jesus' northern ministry will be coming to a close. He will make more trips south until the last week of His life that He will spend in the city where He will be rejected, condemned and crucified.

## Lessons:

### 1. Understanding comes after faith

Note that every time the Apostles expressed their faith in progressive degrees – following Jesus, staying with Him when others rejected, actually acknowledging Him as Messiah – Jesus rewarded them with a clearer vision of who He was. Each time they obeyed and walked by faith He rewarded that faith with a great miracle, a vision, a confirmation that their faith was valid.

It's the same with us today. We don't get understanding and then we believe – it works the other way around. I believe, I obey, then I grow in my understanding



and reassurance that what I believed was true. I'm more sure now of God's forgiveness and promise of the Holy Spirit than I was the day I believed and was baptized. He has rewarded my original faith.

## **2. Unity to the head = unity to the body**

The Apostles didn't want anyone claiming Jesus unless they were part of their group. Jesus said if you're united to Me, you're united to the body. It also works in reverse, if you're not united to the body, you're not united to the head. Jesus died for the church, His body, and union with Him automatically means union with the church. You can't separate the two.

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## **READING ASSIGNMENT FOR CHAPTER 8**

- 82. John 7:1-53
- 83. John 8:1-11
- 84. John 8:12-59
- 85. John 9:1-41
- 86. John 10:1-21
- 87. Luke 9:51-62
- 88. Luke 10:1-24
- 89. Luke 10:25-37
- 90. Luke 10:38-11:13
- 91. Luke 11:14-54
- 92. Luke 12:1-13:5
- 93. Luke 13:6-9
- 94. Luke 13:10-17

## **Discussion Questions**

1. Summarize the following actions by Jesus.
  - Healings in the Gennesaret area (Matthew 14:34-36; Mark 6:55-56)
  - Pharisees question hand washing (Matthew 15:1-20; Mark 7:1-23)
  - Jesus heads further north (Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30)
  - Jesus ministers in Decapolis (Matthew 15:29-38; Mark 7:31-8:9)
  - Jesus confronted again by Pharisees (Matthew 15:39-16:4; Mark 8:10-12)

- Discussions with the Apostles in the boat (Matthew 16:5-12; Mark 8:13-21)
- Jesus heals a blind man (Mark 8:22-26)
- Peter's confession (Matthew 16:13-20; Mark 8:27-30; Luke 9:18-21)
- Jesus foretells His death and resurrection (Matthew 16:21-28; Mark 8:31-9:1; Luke 9:22-27)
- The transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-13; Mark 9:2-13; Luke 9:28-36)
- Casting out a demon that the apostles could not (Matthew 17:14-21; Mark 9:14-29; Luke 9:37-43)
- Jesus foretells His death and resurrection a second time (Matthew 17:22-23; Mark 9:30-32; Luke 9:44-45)
- Money from a fish (Matthew 17:24-27)
- Who is the greatest (Matthew 18:1-35; Mark 9:33-50; Luke 9:46-50)

2. How can you use this lesson to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?