

Harmony Of The Gospels -- Lesson #7

The Galilean Ministry

Matthew 4:13-14:12; Mark 1:14-6:29; Luke 4:14-9:7-9; John 4:46-5:47

I. **The Rejection At Nazareth And The New Home In Capernaum**

- A. The general account of His teaching in Galilee (Matthew 4:17; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 4:14-15).
 1. Matthew 4:17 marks a new period in the public ministry of Jesus. Up to this point, He had taught, but now He begins to preach.
 2. Jesus Himself declares that the prophesied time for the setting up of His kingdom was at hand (cf. Daniel 9:24-27).
 - a) The preaching of Jesus at this time was not significantly different from John's preaching (cf. Matthew 3:2; Luke 3:18; John 1:29, 36; 3:36).
 - b) The fact that repentance is mentioned before belief in Mark 1:15 should be taken to mean that the Jews already believed in God. They needed to be prepared to accept the new faith and new revelation of Christ.
- B. The healing at Cana of the nobleman's son (John 4:46-54).
 1. A "nobleman" was a soldier, courtier or officer of the king. He was probably an officer of Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee.
 2. Miracles were our Lord's credentials; His ministry among men cannot be thought of without them. When John the Baptist's faith in Christ Himself wavered, Jesus referred him to them (Matthew 11:4-5).
 3. The nobleman's faith was different from the centurion's in that he felt that the presence of Jesus was required to perform the miracle. He also thought that the powers of Jesus were limited to the living.
 - a) Jesus enlarges the nobleman's conception of divine power by showing him that His words take effect without regard to distance.
 - b) He first believed in the power of Jesus' presence, then in the power of Jesus' word and finally he believed generally in Jesus, and his household shared his belief.
- C. The first rejection at Nazareth (Luke 4:16-31).
 1. It was customary for Jesus to use the synagogue as His place of teaching on the Sabbath day (Mark 1:39; 3:1-2).
 2. Anointing was the method by which prophets, priests and kings were consecrated or set apart to their particular offices. The prophecy in Isaiah set forth in physical terms what Jesus would perform in both the physical and spiritual realms.

3. The crowd admitted to His marvelous teaching and miraculous works, but were at a loss to account for them because their extreme familiarity with His humanity made it hard for them to believe in His divinity, by which alone His actions could be explained.
 4. The claims of Jesus were too high for them to admit, and to well accredited for them to despise, so they sought refuge from their perplexity by getting angry at Jesus.
 5. In Nazareth, Jesus was no more than the son of a carpenter, and the brother of common young men and girls, while abroad He was hailed as the prophet of Galilee.
 6. The Nazarenes were jealous enough of the claims of Jesus when put in their most modest way, but when Jesus placed Himself alongside Elijah and Elisha, and likened His hearers to poor widows and unclean lepers, they were ready to dash Him to pieces.
- D. The new home in Capernaum (Matthew 4:13-16).
1. "Leaving Nazareth" means that Jesus now ceased to make Nazareth His home. The word "dwelt" means that Jesus made Capernaum His base of operations.
 2. This land or region was the first to suffer in the beginning of the wars which would result in the captivity of the ten tribes. Those who suffered the torments of war would be the ones who would enjoy the light of the gospel.
- E. Jesus finds four fishers of men (Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:1-11).
1. Although Simon and Andrew had accompanied Jesus on at least one journey, they did not yet understand that His service would require all their time. The fact that Jesus now temporarily resided at Capernaum afforded them an opportunity to return to their old occupation.
 2. God has always called the busy to His business; e.g., Moses (Exodus 3:62), Gideon (Judges 6:11), Saul (1 Samuel 10:1-3), David (1 Samuel 16:11-15), Elisha (1 Kings 19:19-21), Matthew (Matthew 9:9) and Saul (Acts 9:1-6).
 3. The words of Peter show a willingness to oblige or honor Jesus, but they were devoid of hope as to what was proposed. Night was the best time for fishing, and the best place to cast the net was near the shore.
 4. This miracle really struck the heart of Peter because it was worked in his own boat, with his own nets and concerned his own business. Religion is only powerful when it becomes personal. Peter's request shows how deeply the miracle impressed him.
 5. The call of Christ here marks a change in their relationship to Him. Up to this point, discipleship had not materially interfered with

business, but this present call separated them from their occupation and prepared them for the call to be apostles (Mark 3:14).

- F. The excitement in the synagogue and the healing of the demoniac (Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:31-37).
 - 1. This probably occurred the next Sabbath after the calling of the four fishermen. Not yet recognizing Jesus' divinity, they could not understand how one so humble could speak with such authority.
 - 2. Matthew, Mark and Luke all referred to the demon as "unclean," correcting the prevailing Greek notion that some of the demons were good. Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8).
 - 3. The power to command this spirit amazed the people because it was more mysterious than the power to work physical miracles.
 - a) By this miracle Jesus demonstrated His possession of the authority which He had just assumed in His teachings.
 - b) Although this is the first miracle recorded by either Mark or Luke, neither of them asserts that it was the first miracle Jesus performed, so there is no conflict with John 2:11.
- G. Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law and many others (Matthew 8:14-17; Mark 1:29-34; Luke 4:38-41).
 - 1. Luke shows that he is a physician for Galen, famous for his work in the medical field, divided fevers into "little" and "great" ones.
 - 2. Her complete recovery emphasized the miracle. Normally, fevers require a period of recovery. However, she recovered immediately.
 - 3. Jesus' reluctance to have the demons reveal Him as the Messiah is best explained by His desire to show by word and deed what kind of Messiah He was before He openly declared Himself as the Messiah.

II. ***The First Tour Of Galilee***

- A. The first tour of Galilee with the four fishermen (Matthew 4:23-25; Mark 1:35-39; Luke 4:42-44).
 - 1. Though Palestine was densely populated, its people were gathered in the cities, so it was usually easy to find solitude outside the city limits. Jesus, being in all things like men, except that He was sinless (Hebrews 2:17), must have found prayer a real necessity.
 - 2. Jesus sought to arouse the entire nation of Israel. That which the disciples regarded as a large work in Capernaum was consequently a very small one in His sight.
 - a) Galilee, according to Josephus, contained about 240 towns and villages.
 - b) Some have calculated that this circuit of Galilee must have taken about four or five months.

3. By His actions, Jesus showed that the kingdom of God had come. The wonders of Moses were mostly miracles of judgment, while those of Jesus were acts of compassion.
 4. The land beyond Jordan was called Perea, which means "beyond." According to Josephus, it included territory between the cities of Pella in the north and Machaerus in the south.
- B. A leper is healed (Matthew 8:1-4; Mark 1:40-45; Luke 5:12-16).
1. The Jews, in addressing any distinguished person, usually employed the title "Lord."
 - a) It is not likely that the leper knew enough of Jesus to address or worship Him as the Son of God.
 - b) He evidently took Jesus for some great prophet, but He must have had great faith, for he was full of confidence that Jesus had power to heal Him.
 2. The leper believed in the power of Jesus, but doubted His willingness to expend it on one so unworthy and so unclean. To the Jew uncleanness was more horrible than disease.
 3. In all things Jesus touches and shares our human state, but instead of His being defiled by our uncleanness, we are purified by His righteousness.
 4. When Jesus told the man to say nothing, He probably did so to prevent too great a crowd from gathering about Him and hindering His work. The healed leper was a testimony that the Messiah had come and that He respected the law of Moses.
- C. Jesus heals a paralytic lowered through the roof (Matthew 9:1-8; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26).
1. The healing of the leper created such excitement that for some time, probably several weeks, Jesus kept out of the cities. His entrance into Capernaum marks the end of His first missionary tour through Galilee.
 2. An Oriental bed is a thin mattress or pallet, made of sheepskin with the wool on it, just large enough for a man to lie upon. This kind of bed could be easily carried by four men.
 3. The four friends of the sick man showed their faith by their bold and persistent efforts which took liberties with the house of a neighbor. The palsied man showed his faith by consenting to the extraordinary means employed in his behalf.
 4. The Pharisees were not faulty in their logic, but were mistaken in their premises; hence, Jesus does not deny their doctrine. He merely corrects their mistaken application of it to Himself.
 5. Discernment of thought was a characteristic mark of the expected Messiah (Isaiah 11:2-3), and Jesus had it (John 2:25). It also is an

- attribute peculiar to God (1 Chronicles 28:9; Jeremiah 17:10; Romans 8:27; Revelation 2:23).
6. The subsequent healing verified the claim to grant forgiveness. As surely as actual healing followed Jesus' statement "Rise," (v. 11), so actual forgiveness resulted from His "your sins are forgiven." The emphasis in this story is not on Jesus' pity for a helpless cripple that moved Him to heal, but on His power to forgive sins. In His act of forgiveness Jesus was also declaring the presence of God's kingdom among humans.
- D. The call of Matthew and his reception in honor of Jesus (Matthew 9:9-13; Mark 2:13-17; Luke 5:27-32).
1. It is interesting to note that Matthew, in his account of his call, does not make himself prominent. All the gospel writers keep themselves in the background.
 2. Although Mark and Luke give us the name "Levi," this fact is not a significant contradiction for many at that time had two names.
 3. Matthew's job was to collect tolls. The Roman Empire collected tolls, tithes, harbor duties, taxes for use of public pasture lands and duties for the use of mines and salt works.
 4. When Matthew was called, he did not delay or seek counsel (cf. Galatians 1:15-16). By calling a publican, Jesus reprovved the religious narrowness of His day.
 5. In order for Jesus to vindicate Himself, He presented three arguments.
 - a) His office was analogous to that of a physician, requiring Him to visit those who were sick with sin.
 - b) God Himself commended such an act of mercy, and preferred it to sacrifice.
 - c) As He came to call sinners to repentance, He must therefore go to the sinners.
- E. Jesus defends His disciples (Matthew 9:14-17; Mark 2:18-22; Luke 5:33-39).
1. Jesus foretells of His visible removal from His disciples by His ascension. His words predicted but did not command a fast.
 2. Jesus justifies the conduct of His disciples by an appeal to the principles of the new dispensation.
 - a) The new dispensation could have rites and forms of its own, but could not conform to the rites of the Pharisees.
 - b) Newly made wineskins were elastic and would expand to accommodate the fermentation of the new wine. The old wineskins would burst if the fermenting liquid were in them.

3. The thought here is that as wine should be put in the appropriate container, so fasting should be observed on appropriate occasions -- not, for instance, at a wedding.

III. ***The Sabbath Controversy In Jerusalem And In Galilee***

- A. Jesus heals a lame man at a feast in Jerusalem (John 5:1-47).
 1. The pool had five covered porticos, probably erected for the accommodation of the sick; hence, it was called Bethesda or "house of mercy."
 2. Jesus asked the man the question, hoping to arouse him from apathy of despair and awakening him to hope and effort. The man's lack of healing was not due to want of interest, but to want of means. Several people rushing down the narrow passage would easily crowd out one who was helpless.
 3. Jesus healed on the Sabbath so He could assert His divine relationship to the Sabbath, and by so doing bring about an argument which would enable Him to develop before them His divine relation to the Father.
 - a) By using the word "man" they suggest the contrast between human authority and divine law.
 - b) They were more concerned about the law than about mercy.
 - c) John 5:16 is the first plain declaration of open hostility to Jesus, though John has already implied it.
 4. The dual nature of Jesus permitted both a divine and a human attitude toward the Sabbath. The Jews rightly interpreted Jesus as asserting a relationship to God differing from that sustained by others.
 5. The Jews regarded Jesus as claiming equality with God in a haughty spirit; but Jesus shows that His claim is really a renunciation of all independent glory. He declares Himself as one who was subservient to the Father.
 6. To "hear" means to receive and obey, so that eternal life is conditioned upon a knowledge of the revelation of the Father and Son and a right use of that knowledge.
 7. The Jews, as they listened to Him, were conscious that He was even then judging and passing a sentence of condemnation upon them. He proceeded to give them five witnesses to His claims.
 - a) John the Baptist (vss. 32-35).
 - b) His works (vs. 36).
 - c) The Father (vs. 37).
 - d) The scriptures (vs. 39).
 - e) Moses (vss. 45-47).

- B. The disciples pluck ears of grain in the fields on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-5).
1. This lesson fits in chronological order with the last if the Bethesda events took place at the Passover. Barley ripens in the Jordan valley about the first of April and this was probably the first Sabbath after Passover.
 2. The Pharisees objected to the plucking of grain because they considered it a kind of reaping, and therefore working, on the Sabbath. The Pharisees prided themselves on their knowledge of the scriptures, but they had not read even its most common incidents.
 3. Jesus referred to the incident recorded in 1 Samuel 21:1-6. The Sabbath was the busiest day of the week for the priests. This profanation of the Sabbath was not real, but merely apparent. Jesus cites this priestly work to prove that the Sabbath prohibition was not universal, and hence might not include what the disciples had done.
 4. If the temple service justified the priests in working on the Sabbath day, much more did the service of Jesus, who was not only the God of the temple, but was Himself the true temple, justify these disciples in doing that which was not legally, but merely traditionally, unlawful.
- C. Jesus heals a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11).
1. The use of the pronoun "their" indicates that the synagogue in question was under the control of the same Pharisees who had objected about plucking grain on the Sabbath.
 2. They were afraid that Jesus might not notice the man, so they spoke about him. However, taught by their experiences in the grainfield, they approached the subject with a guarded question.
 3. The rules of the Pharisees made the Sabbath question completely a matter of doing or not doing. Jesus made it a question of doing good, and His question implies that a failure to do good when one is able is sinful (James 4:17).
 4. The anger of Jesus was not a spiteful, revengeful passion, but a just indignation. Matthew, Mark and Luke tell us here first of the counsel to put Jesus to death, and they described the anger of the Jewish rulers as arising because of this Sabbath question.

IV. ***The Selection Of The Twelve And The Sermon On The Mount***

- A. Jesus teaches and heals great multitudes by the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 12:15-21; Mark 3:7-12).

1. This was the first withdrawal of Jesus for the purpose of self-preservation. After this we find Jesus constantly retiring to avoid the plots of His enemies.
 2. Jesus was a servant in form and obedience (Philippians 2:1; Hebrews 5:9). The word "judgment," as used in the Old Testament, means "rule, doctrine, truth." It is usually understood as meaning that Jesus would reveal the gospel or the full truth of the new dispensation to the Gentiles.
 3. Jesus did not strive or quarrel with the Pharisees, but having put them to silence, He meekly and quietly withdrew from their presence, and the healing of the multitudes aptly fulfilled this prophecy.
 4. Matthew 12:21 sets forth the breadth of Christ's conquest over all nations. It was partially fulfilled by the presence of the Idumeans and the citizens of Tyre and Sidon, but would be completely fulfilled in Acts 10.
- B. Jesus selects twelve disciples after a night of prayer (Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-16).
1. This was a momentous occasion. Jesus was about to choose those to whom He was to entrust the planting, organization and early training of the church which was to be purchased with His blood (Acts 20:28)
 2. The number twelve unquestionably had reference to the twelve tribes of Israel, over whom the apostles were to be judges (Luke 22:30). We find the tribes and apostles associated together in the structure of the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:12-14).
 3. The word "apostle" means "one sent." Its meaning was similar to the word "ambassador" (2 Corinthians 5:20), the messenger whom a king sent to foreign powers.
 - a) Christ Himself was an apostle (Hebrews 3:1), and so He sent them (John 20:21).
 - b) A necessary condition to being an apostle was the seeing of Jesus. They could therefore have no successors.
 4. All the apostles were from Galilee with the exception of Judas Iscariot. Peter, by reason of his early prominence, is named first in all the lists. James and John were probably called "sons of thunder" because of their stormy tempers. James was also called James the Less (Mark 15:40), probably because he was younger than the son of Zebedee. He must not be confused with James the Lord's brother. Judas is named last in all the lists.
- C. The sermon on the mount (Matthew 5:1-7:29; Luke 6:17-49).
1. The sermon is an announcement of certain distinctive features of the kingdom of heaven, which was said to be at hand.

2. The instruction of Jesus was never embellished with oratorical skills. He relied upon the truth contained in His words and not upon the manner in which He uttered it.
3. The following is a brief outline of the teachings in His sermon.
 - a) Introduction: The beatitudes.
 - (1) The sayings in this section are called "beatitudes" from the word *beati* (meaning blessed), with which they begin in the Vulgate. According to Matthew, these beatitudes are nine in number and seven in character. Luke gives us beatitudes not recorded in Matthew.
 - (2) Most of the beatitudes are paradoxical, being the very reverse of the world's view, but Christians who have put them to the test have learned to realize their unquestionable truth.
 - (a) The poor in spirit are those who feel a deep sense of spiritual destitution and comprehend their nothingness before God.
 - (b) The blessing is not upon all that mourn, but upon all those who mourn in reference to sin.
 - (c) Those who are meek and forbearing will receive what the arrogant and selfish grasp after and cannot get.
 - (d) Righteousness is granted to those who hunger in the attainment of a higher degree of righteous living and the forgiveness of sins.
 - (e) The meek bear and the merciful forbear, for by so doing they shall obtain mercy both from God and man.
 - (f) The pure in heart are those who are free from evil desires and purposes.
 - (g) "Peacemakers" include all who make peace between men, whether as individuals or as communities.
 - (h) Those who suffer because of their loyalty to Christ are blessed by being bound more closely to that kingdom for which they suffer.
 - (i) Jesus presents the various forms of sufferings which would come upon the disciples by reason of their loyalty to Him.
 - b) The influence and duties of the Messiah's subjects.
 - (1) Because of the foreign substances in salt, it loses its savor and becomes useless. Pure salt does not lose its savor. God's people keep the world from corruption. However, a disciple may lose those qualities which make him salt.
 - (2) As light dispels darkness and enables man to see his way, so Christ, by His teaching and example, removes ignorance and discloses the way of life.

- (a) The light of a Christian is to shine naturally and unavoidably.
 - (b) It is to shine so that it will win praise for the One who kindled it.
- c) The relation of Messianic teaching to Old Testament teaching.
 - (1) Matthew 5:17 forms a fitting preface to this section of the sermon. "Destroy" is used in antithesis to "fulfill." Jesus came to fulfill all the types in the Law of Moses and the predictions of the prophets.
 - (2) A large portion of the sermon from this point on is a development of the righteousness of the kingdom of heaven in contrast with the old dispensation righteousness and the Pharisaic interpretations of it.
 - (a) Jesus first lays out three degrees of criminality or offense as to the sin of anger. After He forbade anger, He proceeded to lay down the course for reconciliation.
 - (b) Regarding adultery, Jesus legislated against the thought which lies in back of the act. He cuts off sin at its lowest root. The essence of all sin is intention.
 - (c) Divorce put a woman into a state of disgrace from which she might seek to free herself by marrying another, thus committing adultery and making her an adulteress.
 - (d) The Jews devised ways of swearing which exempted them of their performance. Jesus showed that all oaths were ultimately accountable to God and that one must keep them.
 - (e) From the "like for like" rule men drew the false inference that revenge was appropriate, and that a man was entitled to it. He uses four illustrations to show that we are not to set ourselves against an evil person who is trying to injure us.
 - (f) The feeling which enables us to deal with an enemy after the manner of the Samaritan (Luke 10:35-37), Jesus (Luke 23:34) or Stephen (Acts 7:60) is the love that is commanded.
- d) Almsgiving, prayer and fasting are to be performed sincerely.
 - (1) Hypocrites use methods to call attention to their gifts and generosity, seeking the praise of men.
 - (2) The command given here does not forbid publicity, but the spirit which desires publicity.
 - (3) Jesus forbids making the number and length of prayers an object of consideration or a source of trust. This command is

particularly violated by the repetitions of the Roman Catholic rosary.

- (4) After pointing out the errors which then characterized prayer, Jesus gave a brief outline as a model in subject, arrangement and purpose.
- e) The security of heavenly treasures contrasted with earthly anxieties.
- (1) In Jesus' time, banks were unknown, so in order to keep money its possessor would bury it, subjecting it to rust and corrosion.
 - (2) Since the heart follows the treasure so that it may dwell with the object of its love, we should place our treasures in heaven.
 - (3) If the heart is single in its love towards God, then one will see the relative importance and value of things temporal and eternal.
 - (4) "Mammon" was a common Chaldean word used in the East to express material riches.
 - (5) The kingdom of heaven should be the real object of our search. It must be sought first both in point of time and of interest, and it must always be kept first in our thoughts after it is found.
 - (6) Serve God today with the strength you used to expend in carrying troubles which you borrowed from the future, and God will order the affairs of tomorrow.
- f) The law concerning judging.
- (1) Here again Jesus lays down a general principle in the form of a universal prohibition. The commandment prohibits rash and unloving judgments, and a fault-finding disposition which condemns without an examination of the evidence.
 - (2) Jesus, having condemned the Pharisees in their manner of praying, now turns to reprove them for their manner of judging.
 - (a) In Matthew and Luke Jesus gives slightly varying applications of the passage concerning the mote and the beam.
 - (b) Luke places it after the words which describe the disastrous effect of being blind leaders of the blind. We ourselves should first see if we are going to teach others to see.
 - (c) Matthew places it after the words concerning unjust judgment where it means that we must judge ourselves before we can judge others.

- (3) We must be judicious enough in our judgment to know not to give what is holy to dogs and swine. Jesus acted on this principle in refusing to answer the Pharisees and the apostles did the same when they turned to the Gentiles (Matthew 21:23-27; Acts 13:46).
- g) The law concerning prayer.
 - (1) Asking is a simple use of voice, seeking is a motion of the body and knocking is an effort to open and pass through obstacles.
 - (2) All God's children who pray rightly are heard and He will give many more good things to those who ask Him.
- h) The golden rule.
 - (1) We are to practice this "rule" because God's divine judgment teaches forbearance, and His goodness teaches kindness.
 - (2) This "rule" is referred to as "golden" because it contains all the precepts of the law with regard to man and all the amplifications of those precepts given by the prophets.
 - (3) Jesus lived the "golden rule" in His conduct toward men and maintained perfect righteousness before God.
- i) The two ways and the false prophets.
 - (1) Prophets were those who teach men about the righteous life God expects from us. The scribes and Pharisees were false teachers, and Christ predicted the coming of others (Matthew 24:5, 24), as did Paul (Acts 20:29).
 - (a) "Sheep's clothing" means that they have a gentle, meek and inoffensive outward demeanor.
 - (b) They use this demeanor as a cloak to hide their real wickedness.
 - (2) Teachers are to be judged by their conduct as men and also by the effect of their teaching.
 - (3) Doing the will of God must be understood, not in the sense of sinless obedience, but by a compliance with the conditions on which sins are forgiven.
 - (4) High place in the visible kingdom is no proof of one's acceptance with God. Neither are mighty works, though successfully wrought in His name. Christ will judge their errors on the judgment day.
- j) Conclusion: The two builders.
 - (1) The word "rock" suggests Christ Himself. No life can be founded upon Christ's teaching unless it be founded also upon faith and trust in Him.
 - (2) Rains, floods, etc., represent collectively the trials, temptations and persecutions which come upon us from without.

V. ***The Spread Of Christ's Influence And The Question From John In Prison***

- A. Jesus heals a centurion's servant at Capernaum (Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10).
1. The presence of the multitudes showed the popularity of Jesus, and also emphasized the fact that the miracles which followed the sermon were wrought in the presence of this multitude.
 2. To reconcile Matthew and Luke, we only have to imagine the centurion coming to the edge of the crowd surrounding Jesus, but modestly refraining from coming into the Lord's immediate presence.
 3. The centurion showed his great faith partly by believing that Jesus could heal by a word as opposed to Him being present, but mainly in his great conception of Jesus as compared with himself.
 4. Jesus predicts the conversion of the Gentiles, and that fact is suggested to Him by the faith of this centurion. The Jews were accustomed to speak of the delights of the Messianic kingdom as a feast with the patriarchs, but lost sight of the fact that Gentiles would share in it also (Isaiah 25:6).
- B. Jesus raises a widow's son at Nain (Luke 7:11-17).
1. As the funeral procession came out of the gate, they met Jesus with His company coming in. Hence, there were many witnesses to what followed.
 2. Coffins, which were common in Babylon and Egypt, were rarely used by the Jews, with the exception of the burial of people of distinction. There was no coffin or bier mentioned in the burial of Lazarus or Jesus.
 3. Here, as in the other instances where Jesus raised the dead, we find that He issues a personal call to the party whose body is before Him. It furnishes us a subtle thought that He has full authority over the unseen and the seen.
 4. Expectation of the return of one of the prophets was widely believed at that time (cf. Luke 9:8, 19). The fact that they considered Him as nothing more than a prophet should not be surprising because even the apostles had not confessed Him as Christ yet.
- C. The message from John the Baptist and the statement of Jesus (Matthew 11:2-19; Luke 7:18-35).
1. Although this has puzzled expositors, the unmistakable inference is that John's faith wavered. The Bible does not represent the saints as free from imperfection. It does not say that inspiration is omniscience, or that visions and miracles remove doubts.
 2. The indirect answer of Jesus, ending with a beatitude, would have taken John back to the prophets (Isaiah 30:5-6; 43:7; 61:1-3). The scribes had stumbled and failed to believe in Jesus because He

did not fulfill their ideal. Jesus seeks to turn John from the same path.

3. After the messengers had departed, Jesus clears John's character from suspicion. One act does not make one's character, and one doubt does not undo it. John was no "reed shaken with the wind."
4. The lowest that stand upon the New Testament dispensation are lifted above the tallest who rest upon the dispensation of Moses. It is interesting to note that Jesus emphasizes baptism as the test as to whether men justify or reject God's counsel.
5. Jesus and John both encouraged the people to prepare for the kingdom of God, but the people sneered at one as being too strict and at the other as being too lenient, and would be convinced by neither.

D. Woes upon the cities of Galilee (Matthew 11:20-30).

1. Tyre and Sidon, pagan cities on the seacoast, would respond to the gospel better than Galilean cities by the Sea of Galilee. Capernaum was the most favored spot on earth, for Jesus had made it His home. He therefore speaks of it figuratively as being exalted to heaven.
2. The favored city of Capernaum, like the self-exalting Babylon, will be brought down "to hell" (i.e., Hades; cf. Isaiah 14:15). Capernaum's fate will be worse than even that of Sodom.
3. God presented the truth in Christ Jesus. The proud despised Him, but the humble received Him. Everything necessary to the full execution of His office was entrusted to Jesus.
4. The dominion which Jesus exercises, the nature which He possesses and the knowledge which He can impart justify Him in inviting men to come to Him. The "labor" and "heavy laden" are the effects which sin imposes and the "rest" which follows is the forgiveness of that sin.

E. The anointing of Christ's feet by a sinful woman (Luke 7:36-50).

1. The motive of the Pharisee was probably pure. He wished, like Nicodemus, to investigate the character and claims of Jesus, and was influenced more by curiosity than by hostility (cf. John 7:45-52).
2. The woman took advantage of the social customs that permitted needy people to visit such a banquet to receive some of the leftovers, but she came specifically to see Jesus. The woman felt the contrast between the sinlessness of Jesus and her own stained life, and could not control her emotions.
3. In the parable that follows, God represents the lender, the woman the big debtor and Simon the little debtor. Simon was, in his own estimation, ten times better off than the woman, yet they were

both in a hopeless case. However, God was willing to forgive them both.

4. Her love was the result, and not the cause, of her forgiveness. Our sins are not forgiven because we love God, but we love God because they are forgiven (1 John 4:19). There is no indication of love on the part of Simon.

VI. ***The Second Tour Of Galilee***

- A. The summary of the second tour of Galilee (Luke 8:1-3).
 1. John had preached repentance as a preparation for the kingdom, but Jesus appears to have preached the kingdom itself, which was to bring good tidings (Romans 14:17).
 2. From this time forth, Capernaum was really no longer the home of Jesus. From now to the end of His ministry, His life was a wandering journey, and He and His apostles were sustained by the generosity of friends.
 3. What is new is the mention of several women who not only accompany Jesus but share in His support. Some of these women had a great debt of love to Jesus, such as Mary Magdalene, who was an object of the power of God in being released from seven demons. "Joanna the wife of Chuza" is otherwise unknown, but she was probably present at the crucifixion (cf. 23:49, 55; 24:10). She is the first person connected with the Herodian household to be mentioned in the gospel of Luke.
 4. It is notable to mention how Jesus began to remove the restrictions of custom which bound women, and brought about a condition of universal, spiritual freedom (Galatians 3:28).
- B. The blasphemous accusation of being in alliance with Beelzebub (Matthew 12:22-37; Mark 3:19-30).
 1. The miracle aroused the hope that Jesus might be the Messiah, the son of David, but their hope is expressed in a cautious way, not only being stated as a question, but as a question which expected a negative answer.
 2. Being unable to deny that a miracle was worked, they sought to explain it in such a way as to negate its power, making it an evidence of diabolical power rather than divine power.
 3. Jesus' argument here is ad hominem. He is saying "your children" (either the Jews in general or people instructed by the Pharisees) cast out demons on occasion and their limited success must be due not to Beelzebub but to God's power. Jesus is even more successful and does even greater damage to Satan's kingdom. Surely, Jesus implies, this is also evidence of God's power.

4. Jesus had entered Satan's house, robbed him of his goods, and proved that, instead of being in league with Satan, He had overpowered him. This put the Pharisees to shame.
 5. Blasphemy against the Son may be a temporary sin, for the one who commits it may be subsequently convinced of his error by the testimony of the Holy Spirit and become a believer. However, blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is, by its nature, an eternal sin, for if one rejects the evidence given by the Spirit and ascribes it to Satan, he rejects the only evidence upon which faith can be based; and without faith there is no forgiveness. The punishment is eternal because the sin is perpetual.
 6. The final judgment must be based upon our character. Our faith forms our character, and our words and works are indications by which we may determine what manner of character we possess.
- C. The scribes and Pharisees demand a sign (Matthew 12:38-45).
1. The Jewish leaders addressed Jesus respectfully and asked for a "sign," not just for another miracle. A "sign" was usually some miraculous token to be fulfilled quickly or at once, in order to confirm a prophecy. The Jews were not asking for just another miracle, since they had already persuaded themselves that at least some of those Jesus had performed were of demonic agency (12:24); they were asking for a "sign" performed on command to remove what seemed to them to be the ambiguity of Jesus' miracles.
 2. Jonah was shown to be a true prophet of God, and Nineveh received him as such because he was rescued from the fish's belly, and Jesus was declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead (Romans 1:4). The "heart of the earth" indicates the actual burial of Christ.
 3. The Ninevites, having improved the lesser advantage or privilege, would condemn the Jews for having neglected the greater. The Son of God's preaching, accompanied by miracles, in which many apostles and evangelists participated, could not produce repentance over a 40 year period.
 4. The queen of Sheba came a great distance to be taught of Solomon, but the Jews rejected the teaching of the Son of God, even though He brought it to them. Furthermore, the teaching of Solomon related mainly to this world, but Christ's teaching related to the world to come.
 5. Verse 44 is essentially a conditional clause to vs. 45. After all the teachings and miracles of Jesus and His disciples, and after all their external reformations -- like the temporary departure of a demon from a man possessed -- yet the nation became worse and worse.

D. Christ's mother and brethren seek Him (Matthew 12:46-50; Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:19-21).

1. Jesus had four brothers (Matthew 13:55). The fact that they came with Mary establishes the strong presumption that they were the children of Mary and Joseph, and therefore the literal brothers of the Lord. This is contrary to the later Catholic dogma of the perpetual virginity of Mary.
2. Jesus' searching question and its remarkable answer in no way diminish His mother and brothers but simply give the priority to His Father and doing His will. Henceforth the disciples are the only "family" Jesus recognizes.
3. Yet we do not make ourselves Jesus' close relatives by doing the will of His heavenly Father; rather, doing that will identifies us as His mother, sisters and brothers (cf. 7:21). The doing of God's will turns on obedience to Jesus and His teaching, for it was Jesus who revealed the will of the Father.
4. It is interesting to note that in the only two instances in which Mary appears in the ministry of Jesus prior to His crucifixion, she is re-proved by Him. This fact not only rebukes those who worship her, but also corrects the false doctrine of her immaculate conception.

VII. ***The First Group Of Parables With The Visit To Gergesa And Nazareth***

A. The first great group of parables (Matthew 13:1-53; Mark 4:1-34; Luke 8:4-18).

1. Introduction (Matthew 13:1-3; Mark 4:1-2; Luke 8:4).
 - a) It is possible that Matthew refers here to the house mentioned in Mark 3:19. If so, all these sections happened on the same day.
 - b) While Jesus had used parables before, this appears to have been the first occasion when He strung them together so as to form a discourse.
 - c) Parable comes from *paraballo*, which means, "I place besides" in order to compare. It is the placing of a narrative describing an ordinary event in natural life beside an implied spiritual narrative for the purpose of illustrating a spiritual application.
2. The parable of the sower (Matthew 13:3-23; Mark 4:3-25; Luke 8:5-18).
 - a) Roads or paths often led through the fields. They are usually trodden hard by centuries of use. Grain falling on them could not take root. This heart is one that is too hard for the word to make any impression. God's word lies on the surface of the heart, and Satan can easily snatch it away.

- b) Other seed fell upon a ledge of rock covered with a very thin coating of soil. Its roots were prevented by the rock from striking down to the moisture, and so under the blazing sun it died. Those of this nature receive the word, but their impulsive, shallow nature does not retain it, and their enthusiasm was as short-lived as it was vigorous.
 - c) Palestine abounded in thorns. Celsius describes sixteen varieties of thorny plants. Porter says that in the Galilee region the thistles grow so tall and thick that a horse cannot push through them. These people begin well, but worldly cares overcome their desire to do good. These today perhaps outnumber all other classes.
 - d) Thirty-fold is a good crop in Palestine. These four conditions of soil may be readily found lying close to each other in the Plain of Gennessaret. Cornelius and the Bereans are good examples of those whose hearts are good and "receive the word gladly" (Acts 2:41).
 - e) Jesus used His final statement to prevent the people from regarding the parable as merely a beautiful description. The saying warned them of a meaning beneath the surface, and encouraged them to seek it.
 - f) "Mysteries" mean that which is not understood because it has not been revealed; however, it is plain as soon as revealed. Bible mysteries are not unraveled by science, but are unfolded by revelation. The Lord gives us a glance into the very hearts of the prophets, and reveals to us their desire to be witnesses of the Messiah's ministry.
3. The parable of the seed growing by itself (Mark 4:26-29).
- a) In God's kingdom, we are co-laborers with God. As preachers, teachers or friends we sow the seed of the kingdom and God brings it to perfection (1 Corinthians 3:6-9). All the farmer can do is plant the seed on suitable ground; he cannot make the seed grow, nor does he understand how it grows. Nevertheless, it does grow and produces grain.
 - b) In the same way, the hidden and somewhat ambiguous kingdom of God will some day burst out in its full glory. The harvest spoken of is the final judgment.
4. The parable of the tares (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43).
- a) "Slept" does not imply that the servants were neglectful, but that the enemy was stealthy and malicious. What he sowed in the field was almost certainly bearded darnel, which is botanically close to wheat and difficult to distinguish from it when the plants are young. The roots of the two plants entangle them-

selves around each other, but when the heads of grain appear on the wheat, there is no doubt which plant is which.

- b) This parable and its explanation are sometimes used as an argument against church discipline. The field is not the church, but the world, and the teaching of the parable is that we are not to attempt to kill evil men. Judgment belongs to God.
 - c) In contrast to the evildoers, "the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (an allusion to Daniel 12:3). These righteous people, once the light of the world (5:13-16), now radiate perfection and experience bliss in the final consummation of their hope.
5. The parables of the mustard seed and leaven (Matthew 13:31-35; Mark 4:30-34).
- a) The mustard seed was the smallest of all seeds but in Palestine it attains the height of ten feet. The kingdom is small in its beginning but achieves great magnitude of growth.
 - b) A piece of leavened dough saved from the last baking is added to the new dough to ferment it. Leaven represents the quickness, quietness and thoroughness with which the gospel spreads itself through human society.
 - c) If there is a distinction between this parable and the last one, it is that the mustard seed suggests extensive growth and the yeast intensive transformation. In both parables it is clear that at present the kingdom of heaven operates, but quietly and from small beginnings.
6. The parables of the treasure, pearl and net (Matthew 13:44-50).
- a) In the absence of banks, men hid their treasures as best they could. The sudden death of the hider often resulted in the loss of all knowledge regarding the whereabouts of the treasure. The focus of the parable is on the value of the treasure, which is worth every sacrifice. The kingdom of heaven is worth much more than the cost of discipleship, and those who know where the treasure lies joyfully abandon everything else to secure it.
 - b) The word "again" ties this parable closely to the preceding one. The connection is the supreme worth of the kingdom. Unlike the man in the last parable, the merchant pays full price. Although he is an expert in pearls, this single find so far surpasses any other pearl he has ever seen that he considers it a fair exchange for everything else he owns. The person whose whole life has been bound up with "pearls" will, on comprehending the true value of the kingdom, gladly exchange all else to follow Him.
 - c) Thematically and structurally, the parable of the net is parallel to the parable of the tares. However, whereas the parable of the

tares focuses on the long period of the reign of God during which tares coexist with wheat and the enemy has influence, this parable describes the situation that exists when the final judgment takes place: the kingdom embraces "good" fish and "bad" fish, and only the final sweep of the net sorts them out.

7. The parable of the householder (Matthew 13:51-53).
 - a) The emphasis in this parable is not that the teacher of the law has been instructed about the kingdom and therefore understands, but that he has become a disciple of the kingdom and therefore his allegiance has been transformed.
 - b) Such a person brings out of his "treasure" (i.e., out of his heart) new things and old. We must not understand this as "new treasures as well as old," suggesting that new kingdom things have been added to the old Jewish ways. Rather, the gospel, though new, takes precedence over the old revelation and is its fulfillment.
 - c) Thus the Old Testament promises of the Messiah and the kingdom have found their fulfillment in Jesus' person, teaching and kingdom; and the teacher of the law who has become a disciple of the kingdom now brings out of himself deep understanding of these matters and their transformed perspective affecting all aspects of life.

B. In crossing the lake, Jesus stills the tempest (Matthew 8:18-27; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25).

1. The scribe had heard the parables concerning the kingdom. He, like all others, expected an earthly kingdom and sought to have a place in it. Jesus replied and corrected this false expectation.
2. The spiritual dead must bury the physical dead. It is not wrong to bury the dead, but it becomes wrong when it is in conflict with a command from Jesus. Our duties toward the Lord supersede those due to our parents.
3. The other boats are probably mentioned to show that a large number of people witnessed this miracle. Because of the suddenness and the fierceness of the storm, the disciples were extremely agitated.
4. When Jesus addressed the winds and waves, He personified them and this emphasized His authority over them. The calm showed the perfection of the miracle, for the waves would continue to roll after the winds have ceased.

C. Beyond the lake Jesus heals the Gergesene demoniac (Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39).

5. The sides of the mountain near the ruins of Gergesa are studded with natural and artificial caves which were used as tombs. One can hardly imagine a worse state to be in than this demoniac.
 6. The demons showed the supremacy of Jesus not only by their cries to be left alone, but by the fact that they made no effort to escape from Him. They ran to Him, knowing it was useless to do otherwise.
 7. "Legion" implies that there were many demons. The "deep" or "abyss" was the proper abode of the demons. It is mentioned nine times in the scripture (Romans 10:7; Revelation 9:1-2, 11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1, 3).
 8. What was done to the swine was done by the demons, and the owners had no more right to complain to Jesus than they would have if the herd had been killed by a flood or some other natural calamity.
 9. Jesus departed, but left behind Him a witness whose body was a living testimony to His compassion and power. Jesus revisited this area several months later (cf. Mark 7:31-37).
- D. The return and the healing of Jairus' daughter (Matthew 9:18-26; Mark 5:21-43; Luke 8:40-56).
1. Jairus was one of the board of elders which governed the synagogue at Capernaum. It was a very lowly act for the ruler of a synagogue to bow before a man of Nazareth.
 2. The nature of the woman's hemorrhage is probably chronic bleeding from the womb, making her perpetually unclean (cf. Leviticus 15:25-33). Moved in part by a superstitious view of Jesus, she struggled through the crowd. He turned to her and indicated that it was her faith that was effective, not her superstition mingled with it nor the garment itself.
 3. The sad news which followed must have severely tested the ruler's faith; however, Jesus revived his faith.
 4. Mourning began at the moment of death and continued without interruption until the burial, which usually took place on the day of the death. The crowd mocked Jesus, perhaps because they thought He was going too far; carried away by His own success, He would try His skill on a corpse and make a fool of Himself.
 5. In such a situation Jesus' words became, in retrospect, all the more profound. Jesus touched the corpse and the body, rather than defiling Him, came to life. They were not to reveal the facts about the miracle. Jesus revealed His Messianic dignity to those who could be entrusted with it, but it was veiled to those (like the raucous mourners) who could not.

- E. Jesus heals two blind men and a dumb demoniac (Matthew 9:27-34).
1. We do not know to whose house Jesus is returning. The place is not important; the house is mentioned to show that the blind men persistently followed Jesus until He stopped.
 2. This is the first time Jesus is called "Son of David," and there can be no doubt that the blind men were confessing Jesus as the Messiah. They may have been blind, but they really "saw" better than many others. If Jesus were really the Messiah, they could expect to receive their sight (cf. Isaiah 35:5-6).
 3. It is likely that the dumbness of the man is caused by the demon, since in some instances they deprived men of reason (Mark 6:15), and in others they threw men into convulsions (Mark 9:18; Luke 13:11, 16).
 4. Nothing has ever been seen like this in Israel; but the same amazement ominously sets the stage for the Pharisees' cynical response. This is not the first intimation of direct opposition to Jesus in Matthew (vss. 3, 11, 14, 24; cf. 5:10-12, 44).
- F. The last visit of Nazareth (Matthew 13:54-58; Mark 6:1-6).
1. Jesus' "hometown" is Nazareth (cf. 2:23; 4:13). That Jesus taught extensively in the synagogues is certain (cf. 4:23; 12:9), but He did not limit Himself to this environment. The people who gathered in the synagogue wondered about the source of Jesus' authority. Does the wisdom and powers of Jesus reflect God's authority or something else (cf. 12:24)?
 2. Obviously some of the questioners' motivation sprang from a serious desire to know whence Jesus derived His authority. The questions are understandable. They knew Jesus had no special education. By their questions the people condemned themselves; they could not doubt the fact of His wisdom and miracles, yet they rejected His claims. "They were offended in him" means they found in Him obstacles to faith, even though the biggest obstacles were in their own hearts.
 3. The proverb in vs. 57 is true: most often a person is better received at home than anywhere else; but if one enjoys an elevated position, the reverse is true. The people's "unbelief" was a source of profound grief and frustration for Jesus rather than something that stripped Him of power.

VIII. *The Third Tour Of Galilee*

- A. The summary of the third tour of Galilee (Matthew 9:35-11:1 Mark 6:6-13; Luke 9:1-6).
1. In the first tour of Galilee some of the twelve accompanied Jesus as disciples. In the second, the twelve were with Him as apostles. In

the third, they are sent forth as evangelists to supplement His work.

2. Matthew 9:36-38 tells us the reason why Jesus sent His apostles among the people. The Galileans had been deeply stirred by the teaching and miracles of Jesus, but they had no direction. The apostles were to help Him in gathering the "sheep" and the "harvest."
 3. Jesus sent His disciples forth in pairs because the Law required two witnesses to establish the truth, and the disciples could supplement each other's work and encourage each other.
 4. This special and limited commission was never intended as a rule under which we are to act in preaching the gospel in other ages and in other lands. Jesus warns them that their experience would not always be pleasant.
 5. In Matthew 10:16, Jesus begins to shift from the limited commission to what we refer to as the "great" or final commission. All the persecutions mentioned were encountered under the latter. The disciples would be hated, not because of any personal faults, but simply because of adherence to Christ. They cannot expect any better treatment than He received.
 6. If Jesus is willing to suffer the full measure of divine displeasure for each of us, then we should be willing to cheerfully follow Him that we might obtain the benefits of His sacrifice. If the light cross of human displeasure deters us from this, then we are not worthy of Christ.
- B. The guilty fear of Herod Antipas in Tiberias (Matthew 14:1-12; Mark 6:14-29; Luke 9:7-9).
1. Jesus did not appear to the people to be the Messiah, but rather the prophet who would usher in the times of the Messiah. There were a number of opinions as to which of the prophets Jesus was, such as Elijah or Jeremiah.
 2. The preaching trip of the twelve disciples probably lasted several weeks, and the beheading of John appears to have been about the time of their return.
 3. Herodias was the daughter of Aristobulus, who was the half brother of Herod Philip and Herod Antipas. Herodias had therefore married her uncle Herod Philip, who was disinherited by Herod the Great and lived as a private citizen in Rome. When Herod Antipas went to Rome on official business, he stayed with his brother Herod Philip, and repaid the hospitality by carrying the wife of his host back with him. The marriage was adulterous and thereby was the reason it was condemned by John the Baptist.

4. Dancing in the East was indecent, and the rashness of the king's promise is characteristic of the folly of sin. Decapitation was contrary to Jewish law, which also forbade execution without trial. So John died, the last of the Old Testament prophets (11:9, 13), who through persecution became models for Jesus' disciples (5:11-12).
5. Mark ends the story with John's disciples coming for the body to give it proper burial. Herod no doubt thought that he was now finished with the righteous prophet. However, this was not to be. The ministry of Jesus stirred up Herod's memories of John, and his fears returned.