



Provided by the Church of the Lutheran Confession - Board of Missions

New Testament Survey

Lesson 4 – Jesus’ First Tour of Galilee

Jesus’ public ministry began at the Jordan River when He was baptized. Then He went to Cana and Capernaum in Galilee, then to Jerusalem for the Passover of 26 AD. (where He talked to Nicodemus); then He spent some time in Judea. He was accompanied by perhaps six disciples during these journeys.

After John the Baptist was imprisoned, Jesus returned to Galilee via Samaria, where he talked to a woman at Jacob’s well near Sychar (the ancient city of Shechem in the Old Testament). When Jesus then began teaching in the synagogues of Galilee, His disciples apparently went back to their work of fishing. Jesus healed an officer’s son in Cana. When Jesus talked in His home synagogue at Nazareth, His neighbors rejected Him and even tried to lynch Him. Then Jesus left Nazareth and made His home in Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee, where He gathered His disciples once more and made them His permanent helpers and **“fishers of men”** (Matthew 4:19; Mark 1:17).

Around Capernaum Jesus talked about the good news of the kingdom in synagogues and on the seashore, He drove evil spirits out of many people, He healed many sick, and He attracted great crowds of people. When He boldly forgave the sins of a paralyzed man lowered from the roof, the Pharisees and teachers of the Law began to persecute Him and call Him a blasphemer. Their opposition to Him grew when Jesus called Matthew, a tax collector, to be His disciple; when Jesus ate with other tax collectors; when He failed to fast as the Pharisees did; when He healed the sick on the Sabbath (as He did in Jerusalem when He went there for a festival during this time); and when His disciples ate grain from the field on the Sabbath. Finally, the Pharisees made plans with Herod’s men to kill Jesus. Jesus then went away to a hill near the Sea of Galilee. But the crowds kept following Him wherever He went.

This whole period of Jesus’ ministry is well summed up by the apostle Peter in his sermon in the home of Cornelius recorded in Acts 10:38: **“God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.”**

These things probably happened from the summer of 27 AD to the summer of 28 AD. We do not know the exact order of all these events, but the following order is probably close to the order in which they took place.

Read the listed passages as you study each of the events below:

The Samaritan woman (John 4:3-42)

The Samaritans were despised as half-breeds by the Jews. Their religion was partly false, because they accepted only the five books of Moses as their Bible. They worshiped on Mt. Gerizim rather than at Jerusalem. The origin of the Samaritans is explained in 2 Kings 17:24-41.

Normally Jews would cross to the east side of the Jordan river so they would not have to go through Samaria. Jesus, on the other hand, did not avoid the Samaritans, **“but He needed to go through Samaria”** (John 4:4) as He was sent to save all mankind.

Jesus asked this woman for a drink of water and then offered her a drink of LIVING WATER. He then pointed out her sin, told her about the true worship of God, and revealed Himself to her as the Messiah. She then told the good news to the villagers, and they believed in Jesus as the Savior of the world.

Jesus returns to Galilee (Matthew 4:12, 17; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 4:14-15; John 4:43-45)

Jesus' message: **“The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel”** (Mark 1:15).

An officer's son (John 4:46-54)

Jesus gave the officer from Capernaum a word only. He believed Him and his son was healed.

Nazareth rejects Jesus (Luke 4:16-30; John 4:44)

This was a typical synagogue Sabbath service and Jesus was the guest speaker. Standing, Jesus read from the book of Isaiah. He then sat down to explain that He was the fulfillment of this prophecy. The people were impressed by His words, but they ended up rejecting His message and even trying to lynch Him.

At home in Capernaum (Matthew 4:13-16; Luke 4:31)

Jesus moved from Nazareth to Capernaum, which became the center of His activities.

“Follow Me” (Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20)

Jesus found four of His friends and invited them to become **“fishers of men”** (Matthew 4:19; Mark 1:17). At least three of these men had been disciples of John the Baptist: Andrew, Peter, John. Perhaps also James.

Jesus drives out a devil (Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:31-37)

In those days there were many people, some of them believers, who were bodily possessed by the devil or evil spirits. Perhaps the devil was trying to imitate Jesus, who became flesh. Jesus always drove out these evil spirits.

Peter's mother-in-law (Matthew 8:14-17; Mark 1:29-34; Luke 4:38-41)

Jesus did a lot of healing on this very busy day.

Preaching in Galilee (Matthew 4:23-24; Mark 1:35-39; Luke 4:42-44)

Although Jesus was surrounded by crowds of people, He still took the time to go off by himself and pray. He then preached the good news of the kingdom in all the villages of Galilee.

Note that Jesus did not stay in Capernaum to pursue a healing ministry, but he said to his disciples: **“Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth”** (Mark 1:38) and **“I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent”** (Luke 4:43). Healing was not Jesus’ purpose but preaching the Gospel. The healings simply bore witness to the truth of Jesus’ words.

Fishers of men (Luke 5:1-11)

Jesus didn’t need a church building; He preached from a boat near the shore. Although Peter had caught nothing during the night, he now went fishing because Jesus told him to. Jesus’ word gave Peter a catch of many fish; Jesus’ word also has the power to catch men.

Jesus heals a leper (Matthew 8:2-4; Mark 1:40-45; Luke 5:12-16)

Leprosy was a terrible incurable skin disease. In Old Testament times Miriam, Moses’ sister, was leprous for a time. Naaman, the Syrian general, was a leper until he was cured by the Lord through the prophet Elisha. Lepers had to live separately from everyone else and they had to cry: **“Unclean, unclean!”** when anyone came near to them so a healthy person would not get too close (see Leviticus 13-14). When lepers were somehow healed, they had to show themselves to the priests, who would then thoroughly examine them and declare them clean.

Jesus forgives sins (Matthew 9:1-8; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26)

When Jesus returned to Capernaum, a crowd gathered immediately. Four friends lowered a paralyzed man from the roof. Jesus took care of the needs of his soul before He took care of the needs of his body, that is, Jesus forgave his sins. When the Pharisees questioned Jesus’ authority to forgive sins and accused Him of blasphemy, Jesus healed the man to show He had authority to both heal physically and spiritually.

Matthew becomes a disciple (Matthew 9:9-13; Mark 2:13-17; Luke 5:27-32)

Matthew was a publican, that is, a tax collector. The Jews despised the tax collectors because they gathered money for the hated Roman Emperor and very often they cheated the people by collecting more than a person owed and pocketing the rest. When Jesus was invited to Matthew’s house for a feast together with other publicans, the

Pharisees criticized Him for eating with sinners. Jesus' answer: **"Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick"** (Matthew 9:12; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:32).

The Bridegroom (Matthew 9:14-17; Mark 2:18-22; Luke 5:33-39)

Jesus teaches why His disciples do not fast like the Pharisees and the disciples of John the Baptist. Can the friends of the Bridegroom fast when their Bridegroom is with them? When He is taken away from them, then it is fitting to fast.

Sick for 38 years (John 5:1-15)

The Bible does not say what festival this was in Jerusalem. Perhaps it was the Passover of 28 AD. The Jewish leaders criticized Jesus because He healed this sick man on the Sabbath. This is the first of many times that Jesus was criticized for breaking the Jewish Sabbath laws which were not part of God's original commandment, but laws that the Jews had added to God's word.

The Son of God (John 5:16-47)

Jesus speaks profound words to the Jews. He spoke about Himself as the Son of God. He spoke about the spiritual resurrection that comes through the Son's Word. He spoke about the physical resurrection at the last day. He talks about the testimony of John the Baptist concerning the Messiah. And He talked about the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament and the fact that they spoke about Him.

The Lord of the Sabbath (Matthew 12:1-9; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-5)

Jesus responds to the Pharisees who criticize His disciples for "working" on the Sabbath because they picked the heads of grain as they walked through the fields. How bitter! The Jews already were in opposition to Jesus!

The shriveled hand (Matthew 12:9-15; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11)

Jesus again heals a man on the Sabbath after asking His critics a question that angered them: **"Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil?"** (Mark 3:4; Luke 6:9).

The Herodians were Jews who supported the rule of Herod Antipas in Galilee. Normally the Pharisees, who opposed Roman rule, would have nothing to do with the Herodians, but Jesus, their common enemy, brought them together to plot against Him.

Questions

1. If you have access to a map of the Holy Land at the time of Jesus, locate the following: Jerusalem, the Jordan River, Nazareth, Capernaum, and Cana.
2. In what way did Samaritans differ from Jews in their beliefs?
3. How did Jesus begin His conversation with the Samaritan woman?
4. How did Jesus turn the conversation into a discussion of the spiritual?
5. How did this woman spread the news of Jesus to the community?
6. What was remarkable about the faith of the officer from Capernaum?
7. What led the people in Nazareth to reject Jesus and His teaching?
8. What does it mean to become a fisher of men?
9. Why did Jesus give Peter, James and John such a miraculous catch of fish?
10. Why did the Pharisees accuse Jesus of blasphemy in the healing of the paralyzed man?
11. What two kinds of resurrections does Jesus discuss in John 5:16-47?
12. Why was Jesus accused of breaking the Sabbath laws?