

Last six months in Galilee—7:24-9:50 (beginning of last 12 months)

- 1) Jesus retreats from the opposition, ministry to Gentiles—7:24-8:9
 - a) To the **northwest** (@ 40-45 miles from Capernaum)—7:24-30
 - i) Christ retires to a private home in Tyre of Phoenicia (Lebanon)—7:24
 - (1) Note Jesus' failed attempt at privacy.
 - (2) But He knows the Jewish religious leaders will not follow Him here.
 - ii) Christ heals a demonized Syrophenician girl—7:25-30
 - (1) Remember 1 Kings 17:9ff.
 - (2) It's the little things: [-ion ending on these words]
 - (a) a little girl (7:25), the little dogs (7:27-28) [in a Gentile home], the little crumbs under the table (7:28), and the little children (7:28)
 - (3) The woman is identified in several ways. (7:24-26)
 - In this story we see Jesus crossing a variety of boundaries—geographical, ethnic, gender, theological. (Ben Witherington)
 - (a) A mother
 - (i) The mother of a pre-teen girl:
 - (ii) The desperate mother of a demonized (unclean spirit) girl:
 - (b) A non-Jewish woman
 - (i) Generally: Gentile, a non-Jewish woman (cf. Acts 17:12)
 1. Matthew calls her a Canaanite woman. (15:22)
 - (ii) Specifically: Syrophenician, distinguished from the Libyo-Phoenicians of North Africa. This distinction is a Roman thing.
 - (c) A persistent woman: she kept asking (7:26)
 - (i) Jesus has already ministered in this region. (cf. 3:7-12)
 - (4) Jesus states the priority of Jews first. (7:27-28)
 - (a) This was a test and a stimulation of her faith. Will she humbly admit her need, respectfully submit to Jesus, and demonstrate genuine faith?
 - (b) Paul restates this. (Rom. 1:16)
 - (c) This is the only time in Mark where someone calls Jesus "Lord."
 - (d) In one sense, Jesus loses the debate with her.
 - (5) Jesus heals her daughter from a distance. (7:29-30)
 - (a) When she left Jesus, she had to take His word that her daughter was healed. She wouldn't find out for sure until she got home.
 - (b) Matthew records that Jesus recognized her great faith. (15:28)
 - iii) The Twelve need to learn this lesson for their later ministries.
 - b) To the **east**—7:31-8:9
 - i) In Decapolis, Christ heals a man who is both deaf and has a speech-impediment—7:31-37
 - None of the other Gospel accounts contain this story.
 - (1) He initially heads **north** from Tyre to Sidon (@ 20 miles), and **east/southeast** (@ 30 miles), and then **south/east** to Decapolis (@ 30 miles). (7:31)
 - (a) This allows for more training of The Twelve, away from the crowds.

- (2) He shows compassion for this man. (7:32-35)
 - (a) Mark uses a word [*mogilalos*] used only here (7:32) and in Is. 35:6 (Greek OT/LXX, in a kingdom context) to describe this man's condition.
 - (b) Mark shows Jesus touched the man's ears and mouth. (7:33)
 - (c) Mark translates the Aramaic [*ephphatha*] for his Gentile readers. (7:34)
 - (i) But what about this "deep sigh/groan"? Normally it is associated with deep concern, effort, or stress. Here it relates to prayer.
 - (ii) Jesus gives a command that the man is unable to hear.
- (3) The people disobey Jesus. (7:36-37)
 - (a) What He did met their approval ("done all things well").
- ii) Christ feeds 4,000—8:1-9
 - (1) This is assumed to take place in Decapolis as well.
 - (2) Note that this is not merely a re-telling of an earlier feeding miracle.
 - (a) The word "again" in 8:1 is significant.
 - (b) Jesus Himself distinguishes between the two miracles. (8:18-21)
 - (3) Jesus demonstrates *compassion* (8:2-3), *authority* (8:2-6, 9), and *power* (8:6-8).
 - (4) We naturally assume The Twelve should have learned something a few months earlier in 6:30-44.
 - (a) Uncomfortable question: How quickly do we learn our spiritual lessons?
 - (b) Despite their failure, Jesus does not rebuke them in this account or quit trying to teach them.
- 2) Jesus re-engages the Jewish opposition—8:10-26
 - a) On the **west** side of the Sea of Galilee—8:10-13
 - i) Christ goes back to Galilee—8:10
 - (1) Dalmanutha was on the west shore of the Sea of Galilee. Magadan (Matt. 15:39) was in the neighborhood, just north of Tiberius; perhaps near Magdala.
 - ii) The Pharisees demand a sign (for the third time)—8:11-12
 - (1) They demand a sign from Him as a means of testing Him. (8:11)
 - (a) Cf. John 2:18 two years earlier
 - (b) Cf. Matt. 12:38-39 a few months earlier
 - (2) Jesus sighs [*anastenazo*]. (8:12a)
 - (a) Cf. 7:34 [*stenazo*]
 - (3) Jesus refuses to give a sign to those who have committed the unpardonable sin (cf. 3:28-30). (8:12b)
 - b) On the **north-northeast** side of the Sea of Galilee—8:13-26
 - i) Jesus rebukes His disciples—8:13-21
 - (1) On the way to Bethsaida, "the other side" of the Sea of Galilee. (8:13)

- (2) The Twelve are *distracted* (forgot to take food, pita bread) and *lack spiritual discernment* (they didn't grasp Jesus' teaching). (8:13-21)
- (a) Jesus asks them a series of eight questions
- The first three challenge their lack of spiritual insight.
 - The fourth relates to Scripture. (Ezek. 12:2)
 - The fifth, sixth, and seventh relate to previous miracles.
 - The eighth challenges their lack of spiritual insight.
- (b) Jesus warns them:
- (i) Of *theological* danger (Pharisees & Sadducees) (cf. Matt. 16:6)
- (ii) Of *political* danger (Herod Antipas)
- ii) In Bethsaida, Jesus heals a blind man—8:22-26
- This healing miracle is not recorded in the other Gospel accounts.
- (1) This appears to be the only healing miracle of Jesus that took place in two stages (with five steps total).
- Spitting on his eyes, placed His hands on him, partial sight restoration, placing His hands on his eyes, full sight restoration
- (2) Perhaps the man's initial, incomplete sight restoration could be compared to the vision understood of newborn babies.
- 3) Jesus reveals His upcoming death and resurrection—8:27-9:50
- This is @ halfway through Mark's book.
 - In 8:27–10:52 there are three passion predictions of Jesus (8:31; 9:31; 10:33).
- a) Near Caesarea Philippi, @ 25 miles north of the Sea of Galilee
- i) Peter's confession of Christ—8:27-30
- (1) Caesarea Philippi (aka Paneas) is at the SW base of Mt. Hermon.
- (a) This is distinguished from Caesarea Maritima, built on the coast by Herod the Great in 20-10 BC.
- (b) It is in the territory ruled by Herod Philip (who rebuilt the village in 3 BC), the half-brother of Herod Antipas. Thus, it is a safer place for Jesus and The Twelve.
- (c) It was a center for the worship of various false gods, particular Pan (the god of wild places).
- (2) Jesus asks them two questions about His identity.
- (a) Popular view: Who do the people say that I am?
- (i) Flattering, but inadequate answers: the resurrected John the Baptizer, the returned Elijah, or merely one of the prophets. (Cf. Mark 6:14-15)
- (ii) Common misconceptions about Messiah:
1. He will be a *political* deliverer, but not a *spiritual* Savior.
 2. He will be the *Jews'* deliverer, and only of those *Gentiles* who publicly identify with Israel.
 3. He will deliver only His people, so one needs to prove you belong to His people. Then you are guaranteed.
- (b) Contrasting view: But who do you disciples say that I am?

- (i) Peter's answer: You are the Christ. (cf. Mark 1:1)
 - 1. Peter has inaccurate ideas about the Messiah that still need to be corrected. (cf. 8:32-33)
- (3) Jesus authoritatively commands them to not tell anyone.
 - (a) Because they would be teaching distorted ideas about Jesus
 - (b) They need to learn correct theology first.
- ii) Christ's **first foretelling (of three)** of His Passion—8:31-9:1
 - What does it really mean to be the Messiah, and what does it really mean to be a genuine follower of Messiah?
 - (1) The following items are clearly stated/predicted by Jesus. (8:31-33)
 - (a) The "Son of Man" reference to Dan. 7:13-14.
 - (i) This title is used 12x from here to the end of Mark. (8:31, 38; 9:9, 12, 31; 10:33, 45; 13:26; 14:21 [2x], 41, 62)
 - 1. It has only been used twice before this. (2:10, 28)
 - (b) The necessity ("must") of the upcoming events.
 - (i) Cf. Is. 52:13-53:12
 - (ii) None of what happens in the future surprises Jesus.
 - (c) The opposition of the Sanhedrin: the elders, chief priests, and scribes.
 - (d) The sequence of four events (suffer, rejected, killed, rise again).
 - (i) Cf. Psalm 118:22
 - (e) The failure of Peter to think rightly about these truths. (cf. 8:29-30)
 - (i) Peter rebukes Jesus in front of everyone (Matt. 16:22).
 - (ii) "*Get behind Me*" indicates one of two things.
 - 1. Peter has stopped being a follower of Jesus and is trying to be Jesus' leader. In other words, "Get back to your proper place, Peter."
 - 2. Peter (his line of thought) must be banished from Jesus
 - (iii) The problem was not with Jesus' **clear** (emphatic in 8:32) teaching, nor did Peter misunderstand Jesus' teaching. Rather, Peter refuses to agree with/accept what he had heard.
 - (iv) Peter's authoritative rebuke of Jesus aligns with Satan's temptations earlier. "You can have the crown without the cross." (cf. Mt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13; Mk. 1:12-13)
 - (2) Jesus applies the truths about the future to the present time. (8:34-9:1)
 - (a) Three things are necessary to follow Jesus. (8:34)
 - (i) Deny your autonomous self-orientation, be willing to be exposed to shame and humiliating ridicule, and devotedly follow Jesus
 - (ii) This is the first use of "cross" in Mark.
 - (b) Reason # 1: comparison between selfward and Godward mindset. (8:35-37)
 - (i) Rhetorical questions about the value of the human soul.
 - (ii) Selfish attempts at self-protection lead to self-destruction.
 - (c) Reason # 2: potential denial. (8:38)

- (i) Who? Repudiation by Christ of those who show no allegiance to Christ.
- (ii) When? When Christ comes in the Father's glory with the angels.
- (d) In summary of vv. 34–38, why should you deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Jesus? (1) Because you will save your life for eternity even though you lose it now. Here is a savings account with better returns than you ever dreamed of (v 35). (2) Because your life is much more valuable than the whole world; so do not be gulled into making a foolish deal (v 36). (3) Because once you have lost your life, there is no buying it back, no matter how much you offer. The opportunity to invest in futures is now; do not let it slip by (v 37). (4) Because when the tables are turned on this hostile world, when the glorious Son of man comes with the approval of God his Father and with the holy angels as his army, you will want to be on his side, not on the world's side. (Robert Gundry)
- (e) Some will get a temporary glimpse of that glory soon. (9:1)
- iii) Christ transfigured—9:2-8 [September 32 AD?]
 - Two primary reasons for this event (Bookman)
 - To reinforce the faith of the apostles in the Messiahship of Jesus considering His recent announcement that He is going to die.
 - It allows the inner three disciples to become eyewitnesses for a moment to the physical glory which will belong to Jesus when He reigns as Messiah upon the earth.
 - To encourage Jesus as He anticipates the cross.
 - (1) Jesus limits those He takes with Him, probably to Mt. Hermon, 12 miles northeast of Caesarea Philippi. (9:2)
 - (a) The three disciples fall asleep. (Luke 9:32)
 - (2) Jesus is changed by the Father [passive form of *metamorphoo*], causing His clothes to be intensely radiant. (9:2-3)
 - (a) This is not Jesus' self-revelation, but a revelation of the Son by the Father. (Mark Strauss)
 - (b) Gleaming like bleached wool, the sun or lightning. (cf. Matt. 17:2; Luke 9:29)
 - (3) Two OT saints become visible and verbally interact with Jesus. (9:4)
 - (a) Perhaps because both had encountered God on Mt. Sinai, or because both are simply Jewish heroes. Or perhaps Moses represents the Law and Elijah the prophets, or Moses represents the prophets and Elijah represents the last days.
 - (4) Peter responds and speaks out of extreme fear: (9:5-6)
 - (a) An ignorance of Jesus: merely "*Rabbi*"
 - (b) An evaluation of the event: "*it is good*"
 - (c) A response to the event: "*let us build*"
 - Perhaps a reference to the Feast of Tabernacles.
 - Perhaps Peter sees this as a fulfilment of Zech. 14:16.

- Perhaps Peter wrongly sees all three as equals.
- (d) An ignorance of the event: “*he did not know*”
- (5) God the Father speaks to them from the (Shekinah glory?) cloud: (9:7)
 - (a) He is God: this One is My Son (cf. Ps. 2:7)
 - (b) He is unique: this One is My Beloved Son (cf. Gen. 22:2; Mark 1:11)
 - (c) He is authoritative: have the habit of listening obediently (cf. Deut. 18:15)
 - (i) More so than to Moses and Elijah
 - (ii) Especially when He speaks of His suffering and what it means to follow Him. (cf. 8:31-38)
- (6) The Father’s cloud and the two OT saints disappear. (9:8)
- (7) Cf. 2 Peter 1:16-21
- b) Question concerning Elijah—9:9-13
 - i) Postpone the news of His glory until Messiah’s resurrection. (9:9)
 - (1) A time of proclamation will follow the period of silence. (John Grassmick)
 - (2) Here, moreover, a premature publicizing of the Transfiguration would counteract both the teaching that the Son of man must suffer and the general summons to cross-taking (8:31–38). (Robert Gundry)
 - (3) They obeyed His command. (cf. Luke 9:36)
 - ii) They don’t understand the resurrection. (9:10)
 - iii) They don’t understand the Law-experts’ incomplete teaching about Elijah’s role related to Messiah. Jesus responds: (9:11-13)
 - (1) With a statement about the future. (cf. Mal. 3:1-4; 4:5-6; Matt. 17:11)
 - (2) With a question His own suffering. (cf. Ps. 22:1-18; 69:1-21; Is. 52:13-53:12)
 - (a) The path to restoration will be much more difficult than the Law-experts imagined.
 - (b) Everything must take place in God’s timeline, not man’s.
 - (3) With a statement about the past. (cf. Mark 6:14-29)
 - (a) The Law-experts had already rejected God’s purpose for them. (cf. Luke 7:30)
- c) Christ heals a demonized, suicidal boy—9:14-29
 - This is the last exorcism in Mark’s book.
 - i) Jesus regathers The Twelve. (9:14-15)
 - (1) This takes place near predominantly Gentile Caesarea Philippi.
 - ii) Jesus asks a series of questions. (9:16-24)
 - (1) What are you talking about? (9:16-18)
 - (a) The failure of the nine who stayed behind.
 - (2) What hinders you? (9:19-20)
 - (3) How long has this been going on? (9:21-22)
 - (4) If I can? (9:23-24)
 - (a) Imperfect and insufficient faith is the best any of us can give.
 - iii) Jesus heals the boy in stages. (9:25-27)

- (1) Spiritual first
 - (2) Physical second
- iv) Jesus answers the question of The Twelve. (9:28-29)
- (1) They have previously been able to cast out demons. (cf. Luke 10:17)
 - (2) Past “success” is no guarantee of automatic “success” in the future.
 - (3) Most Greek manuscripts include “... and fasting” and “prayer.”
- d) Christ returns to the southwest through northeastern Galilee; **second foretelling** of His death and resurrection—9:30-32
- Therefore, the cluster of [six] impf. vbs. in 9:30–32 leaves the impression that Mark is describing an ongoing journey and summarizing what Jesus taught and how the disciples reacted on a number of occasions during that time. (Joel Williams)
- i) The private teaching of The Twelve was more important than His own public celebrity. (9:30-31)
- (1) For the most part, His public ministry in Galilee was over.
 - (a) This is an example of how Jesus could neglect one opportunity to take another, without feeling spiritually guilty. (Alan Cole)
 - (2) “Delivered” is most likely by God the Father (“into the hands of men”), not Judas, the religious leaders, or Pilate. (9:31)
 - (3) This prediction will be fulfilled in @ six months.
 - ii) Mark does not tell us what exactly The Twelve feared. (9:32)
 - (1) God keeps this teaching hidden from them. (cf. Luke 9:45)
 - (2) The Twelve are very sad about this revelation. (cf. Matt. 17:23)
 - (3) Instead of asking Jesus about His impending suffering, they choose to occupy themselves with arguing about who was the greatest among them (cf. 9:33-37). (Walter Wessel)
- e) Christ teaches on humility in Capernaum—9:33-37
- This is the last event associated with Capernaum. His Galilean ministry begins and ends here.
- i) His pointed question. (9:33-34)
- (1) Apparently, he walked somewhat separate from The Twelve on the way to Capernaum.
 - (2) Possible reasons:
 - (a) Perhaps the selection of the three to accompany Jesus to the transfiguration fueled their competitive fires. (Lou Barbieri)
 - (b) Perhaps it was jealousy over Jesus’ miraculous provision of Peter’s temple tax was the occasion. (Arnold Fruchtenbaum)
 - (3) Their silence betrays their guilt.
- ii) His living object lesson. (9:35-37)
- (1) This shows Jesus’ knowledge of humanity and their thoughts.
 - (2) In the first century, children had no social status, no claim to power or influence. To accept them, i.e., to treat them as significant and as deserving of attention and honor, would have involved taking a position below the lowest in society. (Joel Williams)

- (3) To “receive” that person is to offer one’s service to the king himself.
Those who serve the weakest and least significant of Jesus’ followers are serving Jesus and in turn the one who sent him. (Mark Strauss)
 - iii) Positions in the kingdom will be determined by the degree of submission to Christ and the service of the disciple for Christ. (J. Dwight Pentecost)
 - f) Christ teaches John about allegiance to Jesus—9:38-50
 - i) Jesus rebukes him for his sectarian competitive zeal. (9:39-42)
 - (1) Perhaps this was an attempt by John at diverting Jesus’ attention?
 - (2) There is no neutrality concerning the person of Jesus.
 - (a) The man was effective (unlike the nine in 9:14-18) and submissive to Jesus.
 - (3) Both the exciting and the common are ways of serving Christ.
 - ii) Jesus teaches about the seriousness of sin and allegiance. (9:43-48)
 - (1) Causing ourselves to lessen our allegiance to Jesus.
 - (2) Jesus is NOT teaching literal self-mutilation.
 - iii) Jesus teaches about purifying fires of persecution. (9:49-50)
 - (1) 9:49 has no parallel in the rest of Scripture. It is notoriously difficult to interpret.
- 4) Beginning of last six months [September through March 33 AD]
 - a) Matthew 18:15-35; 8:19-22
 - b) Luke 9:51-18:14
 - c) John 7:2-11:54