

text) coupled with the ability to even raise dead people. What more could you want, if you were in their place? The "great society" was but an affirmative answer away!

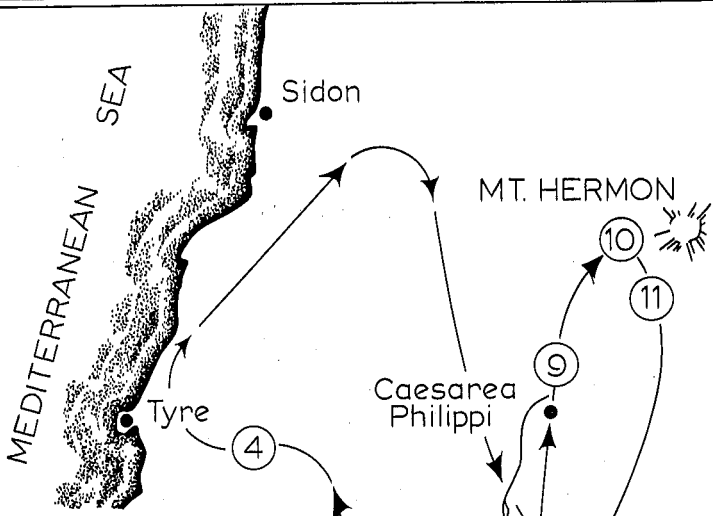
## THIRD YEAR OF MINISTRY

### RETIREMENTS AND TRAVEL WITH THE TWELVE (about 6 months)

*Sea of Galilee*—Matt. 14:22-33; Mk. 6:45-52;  
Jn. 6:15-21

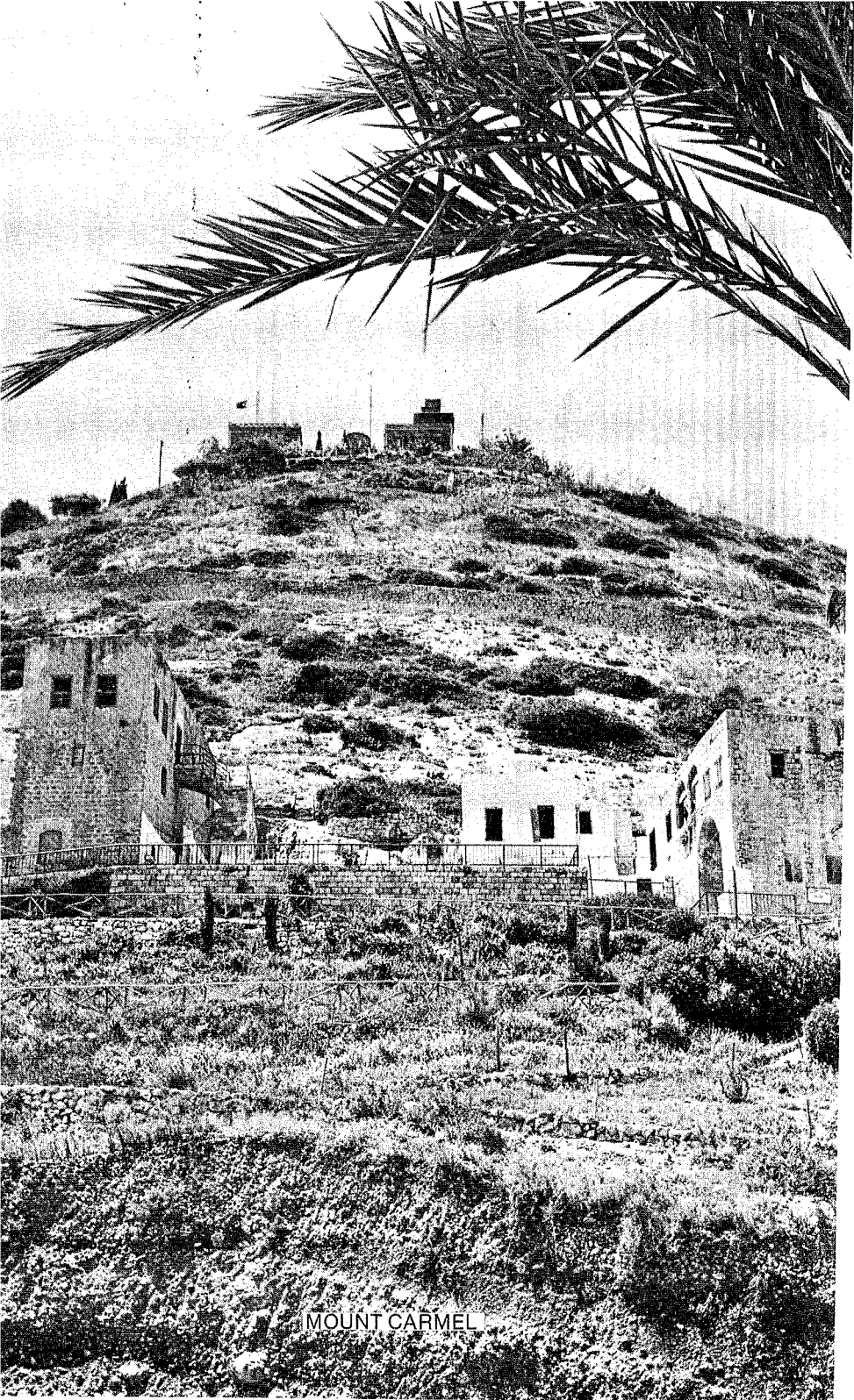
Toward morning Jesus returned to the disciples for they had a problem. The tempestuous wind and sea had completely thwarted their efforts (though they were probably used to boats) to arrive at land. Walking toward them on the water, Jesus brought to light again their unbelief. They had been *tormented* by the wind and waves (the Greek word conveys the idea of tortured like slaves) but at the sight of Jesus they became completely undone. So afraid were they that He had to speak to them that their fear might be overcome.

Peter provides the example of a man whose mind is divided. James reminds us that such a man is unstable in all his ways, 1:6-8. The point is that indecision in one area of life if continually practiced soon permeates all our thought processes, and we become as a tossed wave: subject to the elements about us, and no longer in control of self. Jesus gave Peter the privilege of walking on water, but Peter could not keep his mind as it was when he first stepped overboard. So he began to take on some water, and shouted for help. Jesus pointed out that his doubt caused the water to give way under his feet. Mark records that the hard hearts of them all caused their fear. They simply refused to admit what the feeding of the 5,000 really proved about Jesus!



**MAP NO. 4—LATER GALILEAN MINISTRY  
THIRD YEAR**

1. Bethsaida Julius—walks on water of Sea—still's tempest, Mt. 14; Mk. 6; Jn. 6
2. Plain of Gennesaret—many miracles, Mt. 14; Mk. 6
3. Capernaum—Sermon on Bread of Life—questions on washings, Mt. 15; Mk. 7; Jn. 6
4. Phoenicia—Retires—heals Syro—Phoenician woman's daughter, Mt. 15; Mk. 7
5. Decapolis—preaches and heals, Mt. 15; Mk. 7
6. Near Sea of Galilee—feeding of 4000, Mt. 15; Mk. 8
7. Magadan—Jews demand sign—no sign given but of Jonah, Mt. 15; Mk. 8
8. Crossing Sea—warns against leaven of Jewish leaders, Mt. 16; Mk. 8
9. Caesarea Philippi—Jesus's identity, Peter's confession, Jesus predicts His death, Mt. 16; Mk. 8; Lk. 9
10. High Mountain (Hermon?)—The Transfiguration, Mt. 17; Mk. 9; Lk. 9
11. Heals epileptic boy, Mt. 17; Mk. 9; Lk. 9
12. Capernaum—Peter & temple tax, Mt. 17; Discussion as to who is greatest, Mt. 18; Mk. 9; Lk. 9
13. Samaria—on way to Feast of Tabernacles Samaritans reject Jesus—Sons of Thunder would call down fire from heaven, Lk. 9



MOUNT CARMEL

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What does this episode mean to you? If Jesus bid you to come to Him on water, would you grab a life preserver, just in case? Let us learn at least these lessons from the feeding and the events surrounding it: 1) Jesus is not limited necessarily by our inadequacy. 2) He has absolute dominion over all things. 3) Our troubles are often caused by our unbelief. Doubt brings disaster! 4) Unwillingness to accept the facts about Jesus and grow in faith causes hearts to become hard. The disciples refused to acknowledge Jesus' deity displayed in the miracle. God can and does feed many more than that every day, but the *way He did it* that one day should have produced different results than it did in the disciples' lives.

#### *Gennesaret—Matt. 14:34-36; Mk. 6:53-56*

This land is not named by John, but we assume the text in 6:21 speaks of the same place as Matt. 14:34, Mk. 6:53. Jesus constantly helped those who honestly desired it, and it was so here. Mark's account seemingly describes a general tour, though of what length we know not. However, this small area around the northwest side of the Sea of Galilee would bring them close to Magadan, and other small towns there, as well as upper Galilee in general. Perhaps this would get the immediate attention of the people in that area who would already know Jesus.

#### *Capernaum (1)—Jn. 6:22-71*

John's gospel has provided some information about Jesus' ministry since the feeding of the 5,000, which was the first time that all four accounts treated the same subject. Generally the Synoptics describe ministry in Galilee or other places than Jerusalem and Judea.. Luke's account though will soon take us back to Judea, and will also describe (almost exclusively in respect to the other three

accounts, chapters 10-18) work done there and in Perea. John's account centers in Judea, with chapters 12-20 given over to events in the last week around Jerusalem. The sixth chapter gives us the only lengthy account by John of ministry away from Judea prior to Jesus' death. It recounts for us a major address in Capernaum by Jesus, and the subsequent unfavorable reaction of most of His auditors. As John 5 had recorded the rejection of Jesus by people in Judea, so John 6 recorded a rejection of Jesus in Galilee.

The second year of ministry was marked by great crowds, and is often called the year of popularity. This third year of ministry is often termed the year of opposition. We would generally agree with these thoughts. However, let us point out that *opposition* has already been noticed several times, even beginning in John 2. Luke's account will definitely describe *large crowds* following Jesus. The text in 12:1 says the people were so "thick" they stepped on one another. Consider also the "large multitudes" of 14:25. This six months of private ministry and/or the whole year was anything but private, and/or without following. Within the six months (possibly three or four) Jesus will feed 4,000 men plus women and children. Jesus always had people around Him who wanted to hear.

Everyone who heard was not always pleased however. We might label Chapter 6 of John, "The Mistaken Search." The people thought the teaching was hard, v. 60. So disappointed in what Jesus said were they that they left Him. Only the disciples (expressed in Peter's response) considered that the teaching of Jesus was the word of life. Jesus called Himself the "Bread of Life." As you read this sermon, ask yourself, "For what do I hunger? Is it after righteousness?" (Matt. 5:16). Those who turned away hungered only for physical things. I John 2:17 says

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that things of a material nature perish with the using. As you finish reading it, ask in first person, "Will I also go away?" How we need to heed Jesus' injunction in v. 27, "Quit laboring for the things that perish. Instead, labor for the eternal things."

Works cannot save us! Repeatedly one reads that in current commentaries. Ephesians 2:8-10 is quickly cited to prove the affirmation. If one asks those who proclaim this to define "work" they will often reply with "baptism is a work; therefore, baptism cannot save." Other than citing I Peter 3:21 which affirms rather plain that baptism does save (who am I to argue with an inspired apostle?), we agree in part. However if asked if they think that faith saves, almost invariably the answer is affirmative. In this light read verses 28-29 of John 6. The people asked what they could do to "work God's works." Jesus Himself replied that the work God wants is to believe in Jesus. The conclusion seems clear enough, and Jesus says it, that faith is a work. Now, does faith save or does it not? Do works save or do they not? Peter remarks in Acts 2:41 that we are to save ourselves. Paul writes in Gal. 5:6 that faith works. We have never read a text where God calls baptism a work. Have you? We must speak as the Bible speaks, or we speak in error.

The feeding of 5,000 plus might have sent people away with full stomachs, but it seemingly did as little for their thinking as it did for the disciples'. These people wanted to see a sign! As if feeding a multitude were not a sign! They wanted to see something done like Moses giving the manna in the wilderness, Ex. 16. It took only a moment for Jesus to tell them than everyone died who ate that bread. Besides, Jesus pointed out that God gave it, not Moses. Then He taught that He is to spiritual life what bread is to physical life. God's will is that all who

continually seek such a "fare" will always have life that lasts time eternal in heaven.

The listening crowd then discussed among themselves how Jesus could say this, since they knew both Joseph (and Mary). (By the way, does this teach anything about Joseph still being alive? Has the Scripture ever told us Joseph had died?) Their conclusion: "Jesus, your claim is false!" They measured by human standards though, and disregarded other truth that was given. They were wrong. May we ever consider all the truth, and not cut ourselves off from that which would produce life eternal in us if we accept it. The teaching of Jesus is to a spiritual end unto life, v. 63. Participation in Christ will bring a quality of life ever satisfying, v. 51, 58. He is to be considered from a different perspective than flesh (or bread) and its inevitable decease. What He teaches is from a "spirit" point of view, with "life" the end in view, v. 63.

This conclusion is based upon the fact that to believe on Him is to have the true bread, the true "Moses," the true source of life, and the true word of life. Jesus shows how important He is to all who come to Him, vv. 37-40 (acceptance, security, and resurrection), who come through being taught, vv. 44-46, and who find the imperatives for spiritual life, vv. 49-58. In connection with this whole text, note Col. 3:4; Gal. 5:16ff.; Heb. 10:20; I Pet. 2:2; Rom. 8:1-16; Isa. 55:1-11.

We are persuaded that this text has nothing to do with communion at all. It directly and specifically teaches that Jesus is the means of life, for life is in the Son, I John 5. One might enhance his spiritual life during communion, but it would not necessarily come about because of the emblems taken into the body. If those who teach such doctrine really believed that it was so, they should make every effort to have every child of God partake every Sunday (why not every day, since it is quite possible

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that Acts 2:46 teaches a daily communion was practiced in the early church), even to those who do not come to services. Otherwise, as some teach, those who do not partake have no life in them—until they do. This really becomes a law system, quite unlike a faith system. It actually boils down to a week-by-week in Christ or out of Christ for everyone who claims to be a Christian. That the Bible does not so teach the faith-life is our persuasion.

#### *Capernaum—Matt. 15:1-20; Mk. 7:1-23*

While at Capernaum, the confrontation of Jesus with some Pharisees and scribes took place, Matt. 15; Mk. 7. These men had actually found ways of circumventing the command with promise (the fifth) by use of tradition. Jesus taught that such misuse of tradition actually voided God's word which they were ostensibly upholding. Such "doings" were defiling to a man, Matt. vv. 18-19, and were rather to be avoided than what was being taught as important (like washing one's hands before eating), which was not defiling.

Are we so busy holding on to tradition that we actually let go of God's Word? We might paraphrase verse 9 of Mark's gospel thus: "It is really wonderful to see how you set aside God's laws for the sake of your own." How ironical! Jesus taught that we became defiled by such action as this. What cesspools our minds can become once we begin to lead double lives, Matt. vv. 7-9. We are the "thing unclean" rather than some other thing. Immorality always defiles! and that is a grave issue!

Jesus had little patience with people who knew God's will but refused to do it. He had no patience at all with tradition—one could take it or leave it. Much of our "worship services" is but tradition. You will not find any order of service in the N.T. Such things as the



invitation hymn are non-biblical, as well as church boards and revival meetings. Do these things become a law in themselves? If they do, they are wrong. The only thing that honors (is blasphemy the opposite of honor?) God is a pure motive and obedience to His will. Anything else makes us a subject of Isaiah 29:13.

The issue then is, as hinted at above, the thing(s) we do and our motives for so doing. There is nothing wrong with *thought*, but wrong thought is evil. Society has the right to enforce justice even to the death penalty, but taking the law in one's own hands and killing someone is wrong. Sex relationships between husband and wife are ordained of God, Heb. 13:4, but any others are wrong. These are ways we defile self: by making "rules" where God has not. When we keep what we think is right (our rules) and ignore God's, we become defiled and are wrong. We are the only moral creation God made. Therefore we alone can be morally defiled, in the making of wrong choices. As stated in Mk. 7:19, nothing is unclean in itself in a religious sense, but its misuse can make the user unclean. See Romans 14:14, 20. The only true religion is from God: get it and keep it!

### *Phoenicia—Matt. 15:21-28; Mk. 7:24-30*

This country was along the coast, beginning at the Gulf of Acco, just north of Mt. Carmel, and probably extending some two hundred miles north to Ras Shamra-Ugaret. The Lebanon Mountains on the east, and the Mediterranean Sea on the west completed its boundaries.

The peoples were likely Semites who came during the second millenium B.C. These people were also known as Canaanites, and were probably originally descendants of Ham, Gen. 10:6-20.

The people could not sustain themselves easily on the

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small amount of land available, and as good harbors were available, the nation became sea-faring, and grew to be a nation known for its sailing ships and sailors. The nation became associated with its cities (as Greek cities were) rather than any definite area of land. Tyre and Sidon especially appear in ancient records as notable, with Acco and Dor less often mentioned.

The Egyptians under Thutmose III conquered the land around 1471 B.C. Egyptian influence waxed and waned for the next several hundred years. During David's reign (1010-970 B.C.), an alliance developed which continued and included trade during the days of Solomon. When the kingdom split under Rehoboam, Phoenicia sided with Israel. So it is not strange that Ahab took Jezebel to wife, and the prophets of Baal along with her.

We are then introduced to worship of Baal and Ash-toroth in the nation of Israel, and subsequently to Elijah's contest with priests of Baal in I Kings 17.

The centuries that followed saw the land invaded by such as Ashurnasirpal (884-860 B.C.), Tiglathpileser III (745-727 B.C.), Sennacherib (705-681 B.C.) and Nebuchadnezzar (604-552 B.C.). Finally, the Greeks under Alexander took the land (ca. 330 B.C.) and fulfilled the prophecy of Ezekiel 26-28.

The division of Alexander's kingdom at his death saw the land first under the Ptolemies, and after 197 B.C., under the Seleucids of Syria. The reference in our text to the woman's nationality (Canaanite woman, Matt. v. 22, a Greek, a Syrophenician by birth, Mk. v. 26) reflects a century and a half of Syrian rule.

Why Jesus went to this country is but a guess. It was apparently the only time He left the land of Palestine (as we think of it) during His ministry, though the journey to Caesarea Philippi during this same six month span should be noted.

As usual, Jesus could not be hidden. People from this area had probably been to hear Him before, Matt. 4:24, and this doubtless brought Him to their attention.

Faith is invariably rewarded, especially when motivated by love. The woman who captures our attention exhibits both. The disciples tried to thwart her efforts, and Jesus even seemed to refuse her request for help. But she did not turn loose (cf. Jacob in Genesis 32) and the "crumbs" were hers! May we observe that whatever the tragedy in our life, faith and love yet should be manifest to all who see us.

### *Decapolis—Matt. 15:29-39; Mk. 7:31—8:10*

Leaving Phoenicia, the group journeyed to the Decapolis area east of the Jordan identified as Transjordan. Continuance of the healing ministry by Jesus brought great crowds again, and glorification of "the God of Israel" was the result. Might our ministry, whatever we are, whatever we do, be aimed at the same result. We, like these people, need to see Jesus as the One Who "has done everything well," and tell others so.

The crowds stayed with Jesus, and on one occasion as day two passed into day three, Jesus decided to provide for their physical needs. We can hardly imagine the reply of the disciples (Mk. v. 4) after thousands had been miraculously fed some three to four months earlier, yet they are aghast at the suggestion of Jesus. The place was not close to any inhabited area (the word "desert" in the Bible means a place uninhabited by people, but not in the sense of arid, barren, etc.) and they seemed not to recall the past. But Jesus soon displayed His compassion and all were fed. Seven large baskets were gathered of the broken pieces remaining. Compare the discussion under point 36 for other information about the baskets.

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#### *Magadan—Matt. 16:1-4; Mk. 8:11-13*

This region (also known as Dalmanutha) on the northwest side of the Sea of Galilee has been visited before by Jesus, with some ministry there. This time, however, Pharisees and Sadducees (what strange bed-fellows these people are! But Jesus was a common object of their hate) came to ask for a sign. They were not unlike others (cf. John 2, 6). Undoubtedly, when Jesus finished with them, they wished they had never bothered to ask. He detected a false motive (Mark's gospel, v. 11, uses a Greek word which means 'to dispute') and rebuked them by showing they were adept enough at "seeing" some things. The same discerning ability could have been used to perceive the lessons from other signs He had done. Jesus refused to be put on trial, though He again spoke about the greatest sign of all to be given later (ref. Matt. 12).

#### *Sea of Galilee—Matt. 16:5-12; Mk. 8:14-21*

Under the discussion of points # 36, 37 and also John 6, we pointed out that the disciples did not grasp the significance of the miracle in the feeding of the 5,000. They did not even after Jesus pointed out their unbelief. Now they again are so materialistic in thinking that they give evidence of the same kind of unbelief as among Israel in general. Jesus asked rather pointed questions to get their thoughts back on the track—like "are you guilty of a hard heart, too?" and "why do you not yet understand?" (Mk. v. 17, 21).

Perhaps it is as true with us as with them! How very often we do not think God's thoughts, or express the life of godliness. Paul had to admonish Christians to "Think like your Lord," Phil. 2:1-11, and, "Be ever conscious of heavenly things," Col. 2:20—3:4. The reason:

Christ is our source of life, and none else, Col. 3:4. We must ever watch for the corrupting influence of false teachers. Leaven is a fitting symbol for anything (whether good or bad) that gradually but surely affects other things.

False teaching will as surely lead us astray as true teaching leads us to Christ. Neither teaching will do it in a moment, but either will ultimately produce, if we provide a place for the "leaven" to work, or (to change metaphors) a seedbed for the seed. Do we understand that the danger in life is not from starvation physically but starvation spiritually? If we listen to false teachers, we will inevitably separate ourselves from the only source of life: Jesus, the bread of life. We too could listen to "Pharisees" in our day, who promote a facsimile of religion (Lk. 12:1) but deny the power of it, or "Sadducees" who make this life the sum total of existence.

### *Bethsaida—Mk. 8:22-26*

"Jesus never fails!" says the song writer. "And the blind came seeing" aptly describes the text at hand. The man had apparently lost his sight, but not his friends. They brought him to Jesus for help. The healing provides an interesting variation to the way Jesus normally healed. Why He chose to heal the man by stages is not stated, and speculation is useless. The man was healed, and that is definite. We cannot decide why Jesus forbid him to go into Bethsaida (Julias). Perhaps Jesus did not want any more attention at the moment.

*Caesarea Philippi—Matt. 16:13-28; Mk. 8:27—9:1;  
Lk. 9:18-27*

Caesar! I believe that . . . ! First among equals!  
Mystery disclosed! Such are among the interesting items

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brought to our attention by this text. These four items are chosen out of others (that definitely might be helpful) because of space.

Caesarea Philippi was in a district called Paneas in N.T. times. It is at the north end of the Jordan Valley some 1,150 feet above sea level. Mt. Hermon towers above it at 9,100 feet. In O.T. times, it may have been the Baal-gad of Joshua 12:7. For centuries, it was the place of worship of the heathen god "Pan," whence its name. It is known as Banias today. The eastern most source of the Jordan River flows out of a cave nearby, with a second source some two miles west near the ancient city of Dan, Judges 18:20; Ezek. 27:19; I Sam. 3:20; I Kings 12.

Caesar Augustus had presented this whole area to Herod the Great, who built a temple there in Caesar's honor. The area became the inheritance of Philip (the tetrarch) of Iturea who married Salome, his grandniece, born of Herodias (who had first been married to Herod Philip, a half-brother) and Herod Antipas (half-brother to Philip and Herod Philip and an uncle to Herodias). Herod Antipas (Antipater) was called the "fox" by Jesus, Lk. 13:32, and the one to whom Jesus refused to speak, Lk. 23:6-12. He and Herodias together killed John (see point # 35). Philip was seemingly unlike his father, or some of his brothers, and his reign was much different. He beautified the town of Paneas, renamed it *Caesarea* in honor of Tiberius, and *Philippi* for himself. The city later came under the rule of Herod Agrippa I (who died in A.D. 44, Acts 12) and his son, Herod Agrippa II (Acts 25 and 26), who changed the name of Caesarea Philippi to *Neronias*, in honor of Nero.

"I believe that You are the Messiah (Christ) the Son of the living God." "Peter, you are correct. This truth will be the authority for founding a new age, the age springing from a new covenant from God with people.

The fact of Who I Am precludes any defeat of the church, whether by powers, or things present or death or whatever (cf. Rom. 8:29-39). It has been revealed to you even from my Father."

Thus it seems to us is the gist of Peter's "confession" and the reply of Jesus to it. The confession is most important in many respects, because it spells out exactly what must be believed by a "would-be" follower of Jesus. It will not do to think of Jesus as being anyone (or anything) else. A prophet will not do for our sins. We must have a perfect sacrifice (Heb. 10:1ff.). Jesus is that sacrifice. Again, to suggest that Jesus was but a prophet is to miss the whole emphasis of the N.T., and to avoid what Jesus considered indispensable. We must get these two facts together, and believe it is so, that 1) Jesus of Nazareth is 2) the Christ, the Son of God. Nothing else will suffice. No one else can save us from our sins or has the authority to say and do what Jesus said and did.

This confession is so easy to say, but it takes a lifetime to comprehend. A Christian is forever learning what that simple statement means. The whole Bible is the background for understanding it. The exact and full comprehension of how God became flesh (Phil. 2, John 1, etc.) has eluded the greatest of thinkers, and yet does. Yet this fact of who Jesus is must be the point which we try to impress upon unbelievers. This they must believe before being able to change their mind (for acceptance of Jesus' authority as Lord is a requisite to bring a change of will and life, i.e., repentance), and be immersed into Him. Otherwise, immersion is a farce. We are not persuaded that this fact needs to be stated before immersion, though that is all right, but it surely must be believed. The believer's life is a continual "confession" of this truth about Jesus, Matt. 10:32.

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First among equals! Jesus taught many things, and the Holy Spirit came to teach many more things, John 16:7-15, etc., but you will read in vain for a scripture that says Peter was considered first among equals. The Catholics teach this, but not because they find it in their Bibles. The rest of the disciples did not understand Jesus to say this, in our text, or any place else. Consider to what purpose would the disciples argue who was greatest among them (Matt. 18:1ff.; 20:20ff.; Lk. 22:24ff.; and note I Cor. 3:7; Gal. 3:1-21, etc.) if Jesus had so spoken? If Peter were first, why did Jesus not say so in Mt. 18 when they were discussing it? Jesus was speaking to Peter here, but consider the texts in Matt. 18:15ff., and John 20:23. All are told about their personal relationship between God and sinful men. The relationship is identical for each of them. Truly, these men (and us, too!) were the "missing link" between Jesus and sinners.

The religion we know as Christianity is *a mystery revealed* as Jesus teaches many times, as in Matt. 11:25ff.; our text; I Cor. 2; Gal. 1:6-9, etc. We do not have a religion dreamed up, or experienced and told, but a God-given covenant, Heb. 8:8-13; Jude 3. We have no power to alter it, nor do aught but proclaim it, for the message brings salvation, I Cor. 1:18ff.; 15:1ff.; Rom. 1:16-17; 10:17; etc. This is one reason we must adhere to the written word, since anything else is man's idea. God spoke to us through His Son, Heb. 1:1ff., and He has the words of eternal life, Matt. 7:24-29; John 6:68-69. The religion is a propositional religion, in that it presents something to be accepted or rejected. The basic proposition is, of course, that which Jesus asked of the disciples: "Who do you say I am?" It is thus a system of truth (implying other systems are false.) Jesus is the truth, so no one else is, for all are imposters. He is the way, and implied is that all others are not. Life is only found in Him, and



all others bring only death. Christianity is thus a system built upon antithesis: right-wrong, truth-error, good-evil, Jesus-imposters, God-no god, etc. It is a religion of rationality, not irrationality. Peter (and everyone else) had to hear facts, come to understand their relationships to Jesus, and conclude that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of God. He accepted this as *the truth*. All other systems were false. So it is with us. We act on faith, the trust we have in Jesus, about Whom we have learned. We reject all other religions as being wrong, as error, evil, etc.

Many religions of our day are non-rational, such as any existential religion. Simply put, they teach that when one "feels" like one is saved, one is. The Bible never states that one time as being so. Rather, facts about Jesus proclaimed, and accepted as true, then acted upon make one a Christian. Nothing else does.

Verse 19 teaches a revealed religion. The words of Jesus should be understood as follows: God will direct your preaching, so that His will for men is expressed by you. Whatever God decides is binding, you will bind upon men. Whatever He decides should be freed, you will indicate the same to men. The result will be that men will know exactly what God wants of them, and they will know it through your proclamation of it.

The point is this: some take the verse (note Mt. 18:18-19; and see Jn. 20:23) to say that whatever the apostles preached to men, God was obligated to honor. That idea is exactly opposite of the truth. Many times the apostles made mention of the fact (as did Jesus) that what they taught was God's Word and the message had not originated with them. (See Jn. 12:44-50; Acts 26:22-23; I Thess. 2:13; Heb. 1:1-2; 2:1-4, etc.)

We note that Jesus yet had few who believed in His deity, though many would acknowledge God's presence

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in His life (cf. Mt. 21:9-11; Mk. 7:37; Lk. 7:16; Jn. 3:2). An immense difference exists though between asserting what Peter did (and what we must) and what "some" others were (and are today). The difference is heaven or hell. Such has God revealed.

Peter was not different than many others. When Jesus began to speak about His forthcoming mistreatment and death, Peter attempted to order things differently as expressed in Mt. 16:21-23. His ideas surely did not agree with God's. In fact, they expressed Satan's. But God's ways are best. So Jesus rebuked Peter promptly, not only to show that man's thinking is only good insofar as it reflects God's, but to reject a subtle temptation from the devil. Certainly the cross was not a *logical* necessity. God doubtless could have saved sinners other ways. But He had determined to do it by the cross. So Jesus' death was a *moral* necessity, Lk. 12:50; Heb. 10:7; I Pet. 1:11.

So a leader to the rear! This is always a problem in the church. Note Paul's advice to Timothy, 1:3-11; and John's remarks about Diotrephes, III John vv. 9-11. To counteract such in our lives, we must decide to follow Jesus *daily*, denying self *daily*, being proud and not ashamed of Jesus and His teaching *daily*. In this way we can avoid "giving orders" and be willing to take them.

*A Mountain Unknown—Matt. 17:1-20;  
Mk. 9:2-32; Lk. 9:28-45*

Our attention has been held by the picture of Jesus, a remarkable picture drawn of Him by Peter and then by Himself, as God's Son, coming in glory and triumph in the kingdom. How marvelous are the things God did for Peter and the disciples. But a greater event yet: the verification of what they believed to be true about Jesus.

The transfiguration of Jesus surely was the climax of all, and how timely in view of what it taught about Jesus' relationship to God. Jesus transformed in their presence, the obvious lesson in Moses and Elijah, God's voice in acclaim and command: all these served to validate the truth in the confession they had just made. God does things up right!

The location of the high mountain is unknown, but it is possibly Mt. Hermon. However, it may have been another mountain of the area.

Why Jesus only took Peter, James and John along is also unknown. Seemingly the presence of the group was known, since a crowd gathered where the other disciples were, though perhaps they might have gone into a village where people would become conscious of their presence.

"Born to die" is the word about Jesus. Moses and Elijah, perhaps symbolic of the law and prophets, spoke with Jesus, not about His birth, or boyhood, or pre-incarnate glory, but about His "exodus" soon to be made. Certainly Jesus' death occupies a prominent place for these men to be conversing about it! But how far-fetched and unthinkable for the listening disciples. They could not picture a "suffering servant" being the promised Messiah. How very often they avoided the truth or rejected it. See the reaction again in Mt. 16:21ff., and here in 17:9; in 17:22-23; and Lk. 18:31-34. The fact was also presented in Lk. 17:25 and Mt. 26:1-2, even before the events of the last supper and the prediction there. Lk. 24:13ff. depicts clearly how little of His teaching His followers really understood or accepted. The expression of Peter in our text is typical. Do we ever get above the world in which we live?

Law and prophecy became grace. This is a good way to understand what the whole event portrayed—and why

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the suggestion to build three tabernacles was out of place. Moses and Elijah are not equal to Jesus (cf. Heb. 3:1-6; I Pet. 1:11-12; Heb. 11:39-40; then 12:1-2). We are to "keep hearing God's Son (only)." The law and the prophets fulfilled their purpose, Gal. 3:24ff.; John 1:45; Lk. 24:44-46; Rom. 3:21; as did John, Mal. 3:1; 4:4-6; John 5:33-36a; Mt. 17:10-13. Jesus is our theme now!

Jesus came to serve, not to be served. The text of Mt. 17:14-20 concerning the healing of the demonized epileptic boy, and the assurance given to his father is a thrilling display of this truth. The nine disciples could not perform the task. The reason: lack of faith (in God). They did not ask God's help. They were perverted (turned from God) was the reason they did not ask. We may be sure of a complete failure when faith grows small. We are never static in respect to God.

The boy, possessed by a deaf and dumb spirit (demon), was promptly healed in answer to his father's request. We like the thought expressed by Jesus in verse 23, "If I can?" As with the leper in Mt. 8:2, the issue is not dependent on God (or Christ), but on us. We need to be like Paul in Phil. 4:13. Let us have a "sense of the possible!" The man's statement in verse 24b is so human—how well he expresses what is so often true of our lives. We have so very little to commend God's help. But God wants to do for us, so let us ask!

Consider in passing that the boy, who was the one healed, was not asked by Jesus to have faith. He may not even have known what was taking place. Those who always blame a "healing failure" on the faithlessness of the person involved are not like Jesus. He blamed the disciples who should have been able to heal the boy. The subject of demons has been discussed under point # 24 (2).

*Capernaum*—*Matt.* 17:22—18:35; *Mk.* 9:33-50;  
*Lk.* 9:46-50; *Jn.* 7:1-9

"Let's go fishing!" Many times that expression had been uttered by Peter, we suppose, but one fishing trip, as recounted in our text, undoubtedly was unique. Of all the fish he had ever caught, probably none of them was like the fish this time—for it had money in its mouth, a shekel (Greek 'stater', equal to a shekel) to be exact. One can not help but wonder what sort of a "fish story" he told—or if he told it at all. (Who would believe such a story?)

It all started over a discussion by Peter and the collectors for the temple tax. They ask him if Jesus paid it. Every Jew over twenty years of age was to pay this as stated in Exodus 30:11-16. Joash had enforced it after the death of Athaliah for the rebuilding and refurnishing of the temple, as recorded in II Chron. 24:5-14. Peter had answered in the affirmative. Jesus, with His ability to know all, asked Peter a seemingly unrelated question, or at least a question without explaining why it was asked. To Peter's reply, Jesus drew a logical conclusion that taxes were only exacted from subjects of kings. The obvious implication: Jesus was God's son, and not liable for taxation. But as in all of His life, Jesus subjected Himself to the law, if not for any other reason, just to set a godly example.

"Childlike, not childish!" Discipleship is a many-splendored thing, and ever a challenge. The men who followed Jesus vividly illustrate the "dos" and "don'ts" of being a learner in the school of Jesus.

As stated under point # 45, the disciples did not understand Jesus to have designated Peter "first among equals." Therefore, they found occasion to discuss the subject of relative greatness on the way from Caesarea

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Philippi to Capernaum. Seemingly, Jesus did not hear (they did not want Him to hear) the discussion, but upon arriving in "the" house (Mark v. 33—more than likely Jesus' house, as the Greek article is sometimes used like our possessive "his"), He asked them about the discussion. No answer was forthcoming (they were ashamed). Jesus gave them the illustration of true greatness: a child. The follower of Jesus is not to mimic all of a child's traits, but some are of value. Humility is one of these. In contrast to adults, children are "insignificant." The disciple must consider himself with *true standards* of measure (Rom. 12:3 "soberly") and not *over-evaluate* as the disciples were doing. James 2:1-13 and Luke 22:24-27 point our thinking in the proper channel in this regard. We must see things from God's point of view, Mark v. 37. Any other action might result in being a stumblingblock (see discussion under point # 61 (4)) and the consequences of that are "worse" than being drowned in the sea.

One can draw the "circle of fellowship" too tightly, and eliminate some who are *for* the same goals. Perhaps the cause of such drawing is thinking of self too highly. The disciples were guilty of this. Jesus had to point out that all the facts must be considered before fellowship is determined. The end result of a work is the criterion for inclusion. Even a small cup of water is to be considered.

One should then be careful not to despise (it means to 'think around' or 'ignore') those whom God accepts. Drastic measures should be taken if one tends to do these things. The disciple of Jesus must be the example that preserves the right attitude among brethren especially and the world in general. No one else is salt! God has sought and found many *lost sheep*: the disciple does not dare be the cause of the sheep becoming lost again.

Hence, every effort must be made to keep the group intact—especially in the area of forgiveness of others (see Mt. 6:14-15). The disciple then must forgive even as God does—God does not “keep track” of times forgiven. Love does not *add up* evil, I Cor. 13:5b (the Greek word means ‘reckon up’ or ‘keep track of’). Only after diligent steps are taken is a person to be “written out.” A personal effort, alone and then with others, and a third attempt—all are to be done in an effort not to be a stumbling block or to wrongly act against another *brother* (or *sister*). The reason? the brother is to be gained, if at all possible. He is the object of concern. Our forgiveness must be unlimited if repentance is forthcoming. Again, God is our model.

The last section of text brings the advice of the brothers of Jesus to our attention. They thought like most worldly people: greatness is accomplished by much acclaim—so go where you can be noticed by many. God’s ways are not man’s ways (remember Mt. 4:5-7?), so Jesus did not follow their advice. They seem to have at least misunderstood Him so much as to not be believers in Him until after the resurrection, Acts 1:14. Perhaps this is the reason at the cross Jesus committed his mother to John, His cousin and her nephew. He apparently waited to go up to the Feast of Tabernacles until they had gone.

### *Samaria—Lk. 9:51-56*

Paradoxes are considered by some to be akin to a “charley horse” between the ears. Be that as it may, Luke’s brief account about a night’s lodging denied for Jesus and His disciples certainly presents a paradox in the “sons of thunder.” One seldom thinks of John as anything but a man lovely and loved, kind, concerned, helpful. Yet in our text, he would have cheerfully (?) destroyed a whole

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village of people, simply because they were born on the "wrong side of the tracks." How ceaselessly interesting it is to behold the change in someone through allegiance to Jesus. Bruce's *The Training of the Twelve* shows how Jesus molded and made His followers into new men, not physically, but mentally. Jesus and Satan are ever in conflict for control of the mind—because a man's thinking determines his action. Convince a man he is but an animal, and he will act like one. Get him to believe that he is of a superior race, he may want to destroy a city. The Bible does not speak idly about believing the truth or believing a lie, II Thess. 2:11-12. John changed, and became the apostle of love. Jesus brought about that change—have you tried Him? He never fails, if you are willing.

### LATER JUDEAN MINISTRY (about 3 months)

#### *Jerusalem—John 7:10—10:21*

(1) and (2). God made man by nature gregarious. Fellowship is thus a major interest in man's thinking and especially of God's people. He gave the Israelites three major feasts to help keep the nation of the Jews aware of each other. Notice how quickly Jeroboam changed feasts and locations when he became king over the ten northern tribes, I Kings 12:25-33. Fellowship and consequent strengthening of ties with those in the south had to go! One can hardly suppose the word "fellowship" in Acts 2:42 speaks of the union all believers had in Christ. There is no point in mentioning such an idea in the context of things believers do, such as prayer. The thing in question was association together, as in the worship and preaching, etc. See Heb. 10:25 for this idea.

The Feast of Tabernacles was held in the fall at the conclusion of the harvest season. It was a feast of thanks-