

**NOTES**

**UNIT 11: Jesus' "Retirement" Year**

**I. THE 1<sup>st</sup> WITHDRAWAL OF JESUS FROM GALILEE**

A. Understanding the "Pieces" on the Board

*And when Peter saw it he addressed the people: "Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we have made him walk? The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him." — Acts 3:12, 13*

1. The "Christ"

- a. Jesus' identity, which was the focal point of conflict in Jerusalem earlier, begins to be an issue in Galilee.
- b. Who Jesus truly *is* will determine what various people will expect him to *do*.
- c. For some, this has to do with expectations, for others with fears.

2. The "Crowns"

- a. There are two political figures at work in this drama:
  - (1) Herod Antipas – the representative of Rome in the region where Jesus spends most of his time (i.e. Galilee).
  - (2) Pontius Pilate – the representative of Rome in the city which is the "heart" of Judaism in the world.

3. The "Crowds"

- a. Range from those who are confused and uncommitted to those who are angry and disillusioned (Jn. 6:60,66).
- b. The "swing voters" among the Jews in Syro-Palestine.
- c. This is the peasant majority.

4. The "Conspirators"

- a. The recently formed confederacy of Jerusalemite Jews united only by their shared enmity towards Jesus.
- b. This includes the Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, scribes, elders and priests. (Matt. 15:1; 16:1; Mk. 3:6)
- c. This is the aristocratic minority.

5. The "Core"

- a. Those who are willing to constantly readjust their theology to align with that of Jesus. (Matt. 16:13-20)
- b. This is the "Church" yet unborn.

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- B. Understanding What Was “Moving” the Pieces
  - 1. The death of John the Baptizer was a cataclysmic, not merely unfortunate event.
  - 2. Jesus growing resistance to accommodate popular expectations was reducing his following, from “the ground up.”
  - 3. Jesus growing clarity of teaching about his identity and the decayed state of Judaism was increasing the hostility “from the top down.”
  - 4. Jesus’ response to this was to spend six months “beneath the radar” of the “crowds” and the “crowns”:
    - a. He withdraws to “the other side” of the Sea of Galilee.
    - b. He withdraws to the Gentile boundaries of Israel.
    - c. He withdraws into Phoenicia and the Decapolis.
    - d. He withdraws to Caesarea Philippi.
  - 5. All of these journeys kept him away from Tiberius and Herod Antipas.
- C. The First Withdrawal Key Events: (Mt. 14:13-15:20; Mk. 6:30-7:23; Lk. 9:10-17; Jn. 6:1-7:1)
  - 1. Death of the Baptizer
  - 2. “The Twelve” return from their ministry in pairs.
  - 3. Jesus feeds the 5,000.
  - 4. Jesus shuns attempts to make him king.
  - 5. Jesus “walks on the water.”
  - 6. Healing ministry at Genneseret.
  - 7. Bread of Life sermon at Capernaum.
  - 8. Jesus confronts Jerusalem scribes on a “spy” mission.
- D. The Feeding of the 5,000 — The World *Behind* the Text
  - 1. This is the first and only *miracle* other than the resurrection, that is recorded in all four Gospels!

E V E N T	Ministry Segment
<b>Feeding of the 5,000</b>	Withdrawals
Triumphal Entry (“Palm Sunday”)	Passion Week
Jesus identifies Judas as the betrayer	Passion Week
Jesus predicts Peter’s denial	Passion Week
Jesus’ arrest in Gethsemane	Passion Week
Jesus before the Sanhedrin	Passion Week
Peter’s denial	Passion Week
Jesus’ 1st appearance before Pilate	Passion Week
Jesus 2nd appearance before Pilate	Passion Week
Journey to Golgotha (Good Friday)	Passion Week
Crucifixion and 1st three hours on cross (Good Friday)	Passion Week
Darkness from noon-3pm (Good Friday)	Passion Week
Joseph of Arimathea requests and obtains body	Passion Week
Joseph buries Jesus	Passion Week
<b>Women at empty tomb &amp; angelic announcement</b>	Post Resurrection

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2. The total numbered “served” could have been as high as 10,000.
  - a. This is the seating capacity of the theater at Ephesus!
  - b. It is four times the seating capacity of the theater at Sephoris.
  - c. From John we learn that *“the time of the Passover was at hand...”* which would account for the enormous number in this crowd (Jn. 6:4).
  - d. This is substantiated by a tiny comment made only by Mark:
 

*Then he commanded them all to sit down in groups on the green grass. — Mark 6:39*
  
3. Matthew’s account has apparent contradictions about the time of day:
 

*Now when it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a desolate place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves.” (14:15)*

*And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. **When evening came**, he was there alone, (14:23)*

  - a. The Jews had two “evenings” that they reckoned in a 24-hour period.
  - b. The “1<sup>st</sup> evening” began with the decline of the sun, and lasted until around 3 pm.
  - c. The second began with the appearance of the first star and lasted until the appearance of the 3<sup>rd</sup> star.
  - d. The “night,” from which the following day was reckoned, began after the second evening.
  
- E. The Feeding of the 5,000 — The World Of the Text
  1. John bursts into the story with the most detail and insight about this incident of all the Gospels (this is his first entry since early in the Galilean ministry!); Jn. 6:15
    - a. John leaves out important details that the Synoptics provide:
      - (1) Jesus had sought to “get away” with the Twelve after their mission trip (Mk 6:30-31).
      - (2) Jesus had spent the entire day teaching and healing prior to the feeding miracle (Mt. 14:14; Mk. 6:34; Lk. 8:10-11).
      - (3) That the feeding took place “in the evening.”
    - b. John uses three Imperfect tense verbs to tell us the intensity of the following Jesus was accumulating: *“following him,” “saw”* and *“doing.”*
    - c. From John we learn very important details about this “meal”:
      - (1) The loaves were “barley” loaves, the grain of the very poor.
      - (2) The Greek word John uses for “fish” is the Greek word, *opsarion*, not *ichthus*, the normal word for a “fish.”

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- (3) *Opsarion* is the word for a small, salted fish similar to our sardines. A snack more than a meal!
- (4) This adds credibility to the story, because it contains the detailed knowledge of a skilled fishermen.
- (5) But, this is the identical word for the “fishes” that Jesus served the apostles after the resurrection, on the shores of Galilee (contrasted to the 153 *ichthon megothon*, “large fishes” in their nets!)
- (6) John calls this miracle a “sign,” which in his Gospel always points to Jesus’ identity more than his power.
- (7) John alone tells us why Matthew and Mark’s account has Jesus hurrying the disciples to get into the boat and leave:

*When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, “This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!” Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself. When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, — John 6:14-16*

- (8) John alone tells us that this miracle was the basis of Jesus’ sermon in Capernaum that “tanked” his popularity (cf. Jn. 6:22-7:1)
    - d. The Greek word for “basket” used by all four writers is the word, *kophinos*, the bread-bag of the poor. (This is likely the reason there were twelve!)
    - e. The solitude Jesus sought for them was real, he took it himself!
- F. Walking on the Water — The World Of the Text
1. Luke omits this incident from his Gospel completely!
  2. Matthew *alone* records the detail about Peter’s short adventure on the water.
  3. Matthew alone also records the response of “*those in the boat*” (most likely *not* the Twelve) as “worship” (Mt. 14:33).
    - a. There are only 5 instances of Jesus being worshipped in the Gospels:
      - (1) The magi (Mt. 2:2,11)
      - (2) The “man born blind” (Jn. 9:37-38).
      - (3) “*Those in the boat*” (Mt. 14:33).
      - (4) Disciples at his ascension into heaven (Mt. 28:9,17; Lk. 24:52).
  4. This was their *second* trial of faith with Jesus on the Sea of Galilee.
    - a. In the first one, he was asleep in the boat (Mk. 4:35-41).
    - b. In this one, he is in prayer on the shore (Mk. 6:47-52).
    - c. In both cases, they were convinced that they were on their own.

## NOTES

### G The World *Before* the Text

1. How much of my commitment to the Christian faith is a product of its popularity and safety?
2. When I'm on the "seas," do I think about the fact that Jesus is praying on the shore, if I don't sense him with me in the boat?
3. How often do I "*dismiss the crowds*"?

## I. THE WITHDRAWALS OF JESUS FROM GALILEE (cont'd)

### A. Syro-Phoenecia: The Word *Behind* the Text

1. Israel's long history with these "neighbors" was long and unpleasant.
  - a. Syria (aka Aram) had been an enemy of Israel from the time of the Judges to the post exilic period.
  - b. Phoenicia was the region from which Jezebel, Ahab's wicked wife had come:

*And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD, more than all who were before him. And as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, he took for his wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and went and served Baal and worshiped him.*

— 1 Kings 16:30, 31

- c. Syro-Phoenicia was the region where Elijah hid from Ahab, and from which Naaman came to be healed of leprosy by Elisha.
  - d. Jesus' first mention of ministry in this area nearly cost him his life in Nazareth (Lk. 4:16-30).
2. Jesus already had disciples in this Gentile area (Mk. 3:7-12).
  - a. Residents of Tyre and Sidon had actually *seen* Jesus heal and cast out demons.
  - b. Likely, one of these people is whose home Jesus stayed in (Mk. 7:24).
3. Weaving this tale of wonder together
  - a. Luke does not even mention this segment of ministry.
  - b. Mark informs us that her daughter is *not* with her (Mk. 7:30)
  - c. Matthew tells us that she believed Jesus to be the Jewish Messiah (e.g. "son of David" in 15:22).

Of the 16 times "son of David" appears in the Gospels, 14 of them are in a messianic context.

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B. Syro-Phoenicia: The World Of The Text

1. This was an on-going drama, not an event:
  - a. The woman's "crying," the disciples "urging," and her *falling before him...* are all *Imperfect* tenses in Greek.
  - b. Jesus' treatment of *her* is unusual (cf. Caiphas, Pilate, Herod), but also similar to his treatment of the Twelve!
  - c. The word for "dog," (*kunarion*) is a house pet, *not* the stray, savage "dog" (*kuon*) of the street (cf. Matt. 7:4; 1 Kgs. 21:23).
  - d. This story is the only place in our NT where the word, *kunarion* is used.
  - e. There is at least the possibility that this whole ordeal was for the benefit of the Twelve as much as the woman.

C. From Tyre to the Decapolis: The World *Behind* The Text

1. Jesus' Gentile ministry may have been as prophetic as it was compassionate:
  - a. Jesus' path of travel *may* have been predicted by Isaiah 700 years earlier:

*But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. — Isaiah 9:1*

D. From Tyre to the Decapolis: The World Of The Text

1. Luke omits this segment of ministry from his account.
2. Mark indicates that he was in this area for a while, "In those days..." (Mk. 8:1)
3. Matthew implies that Jesus' healing and exorcism ministry was mostly to Gentiles:
 

*so that the crowd wondered, when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled healthy, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And **they glorified the God of Israel.** — Matthew 15:31*
4. The "feeding of the 4,000" is *not* a reinterpretation of a prior event:
  - a. The word for "basket" (*spuris*) here is a large "hamper," big enough for Paul to escape a walled city in one (Acts. 9:25).
  - b. Jesus specifically refers to two separate miraculous feedings, to make a point (Mk. 8:19-20).
5. The contrast in responses by people in this account is chilling.
  - a. Those "in the dark" (Gentiles):

*And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak." — Mark 7:37*

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- b. Those “in the light” (religious leaders):

*The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven to test him. And he sighed deeply in his spirit and said, “Why does this generation seek a sign? Truly, I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation.” And he left them, got into the boat again, and went to the other side.*

—Mark 8:11-13

D. Caesarea Philippi: The World *Behind* The Text

1. This region has a rich history...all of it pagan!

- a. It was known as Baal-Hermon during the Old Testament era (Jdg. 3:3; 1 Chron 5:23).
- b. It’s name was changed to Paneas in Hellenistic times (c. 200 BC) in honor of the goat-man god of fertility, Pan.
- c. The remains of a temple to Pan are still visible today.
- d. Herod’s son, Philip, built an administrative center there and changed its name to Caesarea Philippi.
- e. It did not become a true “city” until AD 54, during the days of Herod Agrippa II.
- f. When Jesus visited this area, it was largely pagan and *not* an actual city:

*Now when Jesus came into the **district** of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” —Matthew 16:13*

- g. The highest mountain in Israel, Mount Hermon is in this area (9,232 ft.).
- h. The events in this region mark a indisputable turning point in the ministry and mission of Jesus.

E. Caesarea Philippi: The World *Of* The Text

1. Matthew gives us the fullest account (cf. Mt. 16:13-20; Mk. 8:27-30; Lk. 9:18-20)

- a. “*You are the Christ, the son of the living God.*”
- b. Simon’s name is *officially* changed to “Peter” here, and he is to be a central leader (cf. Jn 1:42 and Mt. 16:18).
- c. Jesus speaks of a new group, the *ekklesia* (church) that belongs to *Jesus*, who is its “builder.”
- d. The rulers and authorities (e.g. “gates”) in spiritual realms will *not* be able to stop what is coming.
- e. Peter’s confession is emphatic: there are four Greek articles in a sentence of only ten words!

*“You are [the] Christ, [the] son of [the] living [the] God.”*

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2. Jesus' question is strategic:
  - a. The Greek plural pronoun, "you" appears first in the sentence.
  - b. The verb, "say" is in the present tense.
  - c. Jesus is at the beginning of a progression that will end shortly on Mount Hermon:
    - "Who do men say that I am?"
    - "Who do you say that I am?"
    - "Who do I say that I am?"
    - "Who does Yahweh say that I am?"
    - "Who do you NOW say that I am?"
  - d. Jesus shifts their focus from function (a prophet) to identity (the Son of God).
  - e. From this point on, *everything* will focus on the *second* half of Jesus' stated mission:

*For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.* — **Mark 10:45**
  - f. From this point on, Jesus begins to speak of suffering and death, both his and theirs (Lk. 9:21-23).
  - g. Peter's rejection of Jesus' suffering is *not* a denial of Jesus' Messiahship. It is a reflection of bad *theology*, not weak faith.

### F. Mount Hermon: The World *Behind* the Text

1. Luke provides the fullest setting:
  - a. Jesus went up on the mountain to *pray* (9:28).
  - b. This "transfiguration" occurred while *he* was praying and Peter, James and John were *sleeping!* (9:29,32)
  - c. The cloud *enveloped them*, and God spoke to them *in* the cloud (9:34-35).
  - d. Elijah and Moses were talking with Jesus about his "departure (*Gk* - *exodus*) which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem." (9:30)
2. Re-Examining the Obvious
  - a. Jesus' glory was *inherent*, not reflected.
  - b. Moses had been through this before (Ex. 34:29).
  - c. This was Moses' first visit to the Promised Land.
  - d. Elijah had no "experience" with death.
  - e. Both of these men already knew the eternal Son of God.
3. Explaining the Odious
  - a. It was *after* this event that the posturing over being "the greatest" began (cf. Mt. 18:1-5; Mk. 9:33-34; Lk. 9:46).
  - b. Their experience was unprecedented in all of the Bible:



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- (1) They were hand-picked out of an already elect group (9 others did *not* have this experience!)
  - (2) They were eye-witnesses of the glory of the Son of God (no one else living saw this).
  - (3) They were eye-witnesses of the conversation between Jesus, Elijah and Moses.
  - (4) They *met* Elijah and Moses!
  - (5) Yahweh *spoke* to them! (They did not “overhear” Him speaking to Jesus.)
  - (6) Jesus makes them swear to secrecy until *after* the resurrection. (This is similar to Paul’s thorn in the flesh.)
4. A Permanent Lesson
- a. When Jesus revisits the theme of his coming suffering right after this, Peter is silent (Mt. 19:9-13).
  - b. Both Peter and John write of this event near the end of their lives (cf. Jn. 1:14; 2 Pet. 1:16).
  - c. Peter, James and John *knew* Jesus was not the enemy of Moses or the Law after this event! (cf. Jn. 9:28-31).
- G. The World *Before* The Text
1. The Syro-Phoenician woman is an excellent example of the heart of prayer. She first prayed for her daughter, then, in exasperation, she said, “Help *me!*” How attached to the pain am I of those I pray for?
  2. The “Jesus on the mountain” is the Jesus of the Second Coming. Do I think of him in those terms?
  3. The apostles battle with “greatness” was always relative to others rather than Jesus. To whom do I cast my comparative glances?