

## CHAPTER 7

### THE GREAT GALILEAN MINISTRY

[*Harmony*, pp. 55-102]

#### Part 6: The Ministry of Christ in Galilee

##### Opposition at Home and a New Headquarters

###### ***Sec. 37: Nature of the Galilean ministry***

The Synoptics set the tone of widespread preaching and popularity throughout Galilee.

###### ***Sec. 38: Child at Capernaum healed by Jesus while at Cana***

This miracle is recorded only in John. It is his second “sign,” showing Jesus to be the powerful Son of God, able to heal even at a distance when not present. This was a great comfort to Christians after Jesus’ ascension.

###### ***Sec. 39: Ministry and rejection at Nazareth***

This account in Luke shows how Jesus’ home town did not accept him. Jesus attended the regular synagogue service (a good example for us!). He interpreted Isaiah 61:1-2 as being fulfilled in his ministry, but stopped quoting at the point when the focus changes to his second coming.

Jesus’ message that God’s grace was given to non-Jews instead of to Jews in the OT brought the hatred of the people there, who tried unsuccessfully to kill him.

### **Sec. 40: Move to Capernaum**

Matthew records how Jesus then changed his base of operations to Capernaum, on the northern shore of the Lake of Galilee. He quotes Isa 9:1-2 as being fulfilled by Jesus' ministry there.

## **Disciples Called and Ministry Throughout Galilee**

### **Sec. 41: Call of the four**

The Synoptics relate how Jesus called his first four permanent disciples near the Lake of Galilee, associated with the miracle of the great catch of fish. This occurred later and at a different place than the call of the earliest disciples from John the Baptist, recorded in John.

Peter and Andrew, sons of Jonah, and James and John, sons of Zebedee, were all fishermen, and remained among Jesus' closest disciples. If Salome, mother of James and John, was sister to Mary, Jesus' mother, then James and John would have been cousins of Jesus, and would therefore naturally have been close to him.

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## **Harmonistic Problem #5: Calling the Disciples**

[*Harmony*, pp. 57-58, 243; cf. 70, 98]

### ***The problem***

John 1:35-51 mentions the call of five disciples immediately following Jesus' baptism, and taking place in Judea.

vv. 35-39	(John) & Andrew
vv. 41-42	Simon Peter
vv. 43-44	Philip
vv. 44-45	Nathanael

Compare these with John 21:2—

- Simon Peter
- Thomas
- Nathanael
- sons of Zebedee (James & John)
- two others (phps. Andrew & Philip)

These disciples traveled with Jesus up into Galilee, to Jerusalem, and back into Galilee (John 2:2, 12, 13, 17; 3:22; 4:1-2, 3, 8, 27). He is spoken of by himself in Galilee (John 4:43-45), and the disciples are not mentioned again until John 6:3.

Yet the Synoptic Gospels have Jesus calling the first disciples not in Judea, but in Capernaum, later in the year, Matt 4:18-22 = Mark 1:16-20 = Luke 5:1-11 (miraculous draught of fish; cf. *Harmony*, 57-58).

Two brothers:	Simon Peter Andrew
Brothers, sons of Zebedee:	James John

### ***The solution***

It is apparent that John and the Synoptics do not describe the same event. There are different people involved, different times in Jesus' ministry, different places, and different circumstances. For example, James was not among the first called in John 1. In addition, only four are called in Matt 4, two sets of brothers.

Probably, the original five that Jesus called in Judea broke up soon after Jesus reached Galilee in John 4, and returned to their work (as they did on another occasion, in John 21:3). Jesus simply rounded them up later. The account is expanded in Luke 5.

The official call of the twelve apostles occurred later, Matt 10:1-4 = Mark 3:13-19 = Luke 6:12-16 (cf. *Harmony*, 70, 98); cf. John 6:67-71 (cf. *Harmony*, 109).

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### ***Sec. 42: Teaching in the synagogue of Capernaum authenticated by healing a demoniac***

Both Mark and Luke mention the authority of Jesus' teaching, and the people's amazement at it; Matthew makes this point after recording the Sermon on the Mount. Note how people in Capernaum received Jesus' word more readily than those of his home town of Nazareth had.

Healing the demoniac confirmed the preaching of Jesus. Again the people were amazed. Note how the demon gives recognition to Jesus as "the Holy One of God." Jesus did not accept this testimony from the demon, not because it was false, but because he did not want the testimony of his messiahship to come from Satan's emissary.

### ***Sec. 43: Peter's mother-in-law and others healed***

Peter lived in Capernaum with his family. Paul later mentioned that Peter was married (1 Cor 9:5). Jesus healed his mother-in-law from a serious fever. After healing other sick and demon-possessed people, Jesus again forbade the demons to say he was "the Son of God." Matthew, as he frequently does, sees in Jesus' actions in Capernaum a fulfillment of the OT—Isa 53:4; he took upon himself our infirmities and diseases.

### ***Sec. 44: Tour of Galilee with Simon and others***

As the crowds developed, Jesus went away to a solitary place to pray, a frequent custom of his public ministry. He then announced to Peter and the others that he intended to go on a preaching tour of the other villages in the region. This tour was marked by preaching the good news of the kingdom, healing, and casting out demons. Great crowds from various distances came to see and hear Jesus.

Thomas and Gundry differ from Robertson in their opinion that at this point the disciples returned to their fishing until Jesus again called them in Luke 5:1-11. However, the *Harmony* follows Robertson's order, and assumes that Luke is recording the same event as is found in Matthew and Mark (see note on p. 57)

### ***Sec. 45: Cleansing of a man with leprosy, followed by much publicity***

The leper, in one of the villages in Galilee, had faith to believe Jesus could heal him, as he had so many others. After healing him Jesus told him not to tell others about what happened, but to inform the priests, as was commanded in the OT (Lev 14). Jesus also added the words, "as a testimony to them." The priests should have recognized Jesus as the Messiah and led the nation to accept him. This was the type of recognition Jesus deserved. Yet the leper did not obey Jesus: he told others about him, but it is not recorded that he went to the priests.

The “messianic secret” is a theme throughout the Synoptic gospels, especially Mark. The critic Wilhelm Wrede made this theme famous in NT studies (esp. his *Das Messianus Geheimnis* [*The Messianic Secret*], 1901), claiming that it was a concept developed by the early church to explain why these miracles were not widely known in the church (assuming they did not actually happen). [See a detailed review of the 1971 English translation of Wrede’s book by John Battle in the *Reformation Review* 21:3 (April 1974) 185-188]. The better explanation is that Jesus desired his messiahship to be announced in the proper manner by the lawful authorities.

#### ***Sec. 46: Forgiving and healing of a paralytic***

As Jesus continued his Galilean tour, his fame and popularity increased. It is easy to see how James Stalker could title this year “The Year of Public Favor.” In this memorable account, recorded in all three Synoptics, a paralytic was lowered through the roof of a house to Jesus. Jesus first declared his sins forgiven, which immediately brought a negative reaction from Pharisees and teachers of the law who were present. He then confirmed his authority to forgive sins by raising up the paralytic, who joyfully picked up his mat and went home. Jesus had told the onlookers that this miracle proved that “the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.”

#### ***Sec. 47: Call of Matthew, Banquet at Matthew’s house***

Matthew is called Matthew in his own gospel; Mark and Luke call him Levi, another name, indicating his tribe. Tax collectors were despised by the Jews, but Jesus called him, and he did so. Luke notes that he “left everything and followed him.” The love of Christ drives out the love of money.

Matthew immediately organized a dinner party at his house for his friends and associates, including many tax collectors and “sinners.” Self-respecting, upright Jews would find such company distressing. But Jesus and his disciples joined in, “eating and drinking” with them. Jesus replied that he came to save not the righteous, but sinners. To be saved, we must recognized our own sinfulness.

In the Greek, Matthew’s gospel does not identify the owner of the house as Matthew, as Mark and Luke do. This can be seen in the KJV. The NIV supplies his name (Matt 9:10) for clarity. However, in this case it might be better to leave it out; perhaps Matthew did not mention his own name because of his modesty.

#### ***Sec. 48: Jesus defends his disciples for feasting instead of fasting with three parables***

Jesus' lifestyle and that of his disciples was far freer and more celebratory than was John the Baptist's. This confused John's disciples, and they asked Jesus about it; they were joined by the Pharisees, who had a more critical purpose. Jesus answered that his and John's situations were different. The three similarities he used were the guests of the bridegroom, the new patch on a garment, and the new patch on the wineskin.

## **Sabbath Controversies and Withdrawals**

### ***Sec. 49: Jesus heals an invalid on the Sabbath, Effort to kill Jesus for breaking the Sabbath and saying he was equal with God, Discourse demonstrating the Son's equality with the Father***

While the Synoptic gospels emphasize Jesus' Galilean ministry, John's gospel emphasizes his ministry in Judea and Jerusalem. Thus, only John records this trip to Jerusalem and the controversy there that led the Jewish leaders already to seek his life. Soon this animosity spread back to Galilee (see *Harmony*, 66, note t).

John says Jesus went to Jerusalem for "a feast of the Jews"; in our chronology we have treated this feast as the Passover of A.D. 28. In Jerusalem at the pool of Bethesda Jesus saw an elderly invalid. The original text says he was lying there waiting for the stirring of the water; the explanation in the KJV about the angel coming down and the first one into the water being healed is a much later textual addition.

Jesus healed this man, and it was on the Sabbath. This led to a tremendous controversy with the Jerusalem authorities. In the ensuing argument Jesus claimed to be doing the work of his Father. Now the Jewish leaders had two reasons to kill him: desecrating the Sabbath and blasphemy ("making himself equal with God"). Jesus responded by proving that he was equal with the Father, and that he was doing what his Father had commanded him to do. He brought forth his witnesses: John the Baptist, the work he himself was doing, the Father himself (as, for example, when he spoke at Jesus' baptism), and the OT Scriptures (Moses in particular).

In this discourse Jesus made tremendous claims, including his preexistence, his intimate communion with the Father, his authority to raise the dead, his judging all people at the last day, and his ability to give life to those of his choice.

### ***Sec. 50: Controversy over disciples' picking grain on the Sabbath***

After the feast in Jerusalem Jesus returned to Galilee, to continue his great ministry there. At this point John's gospel drops out and the Synoptics continue their narrative.

The Sabbath controversy that exploded in Jerusalem now followed Jesus to Galilee. In the fields in Galilee Jesus' disciple picked some grain, rubbed off the chaff, and ate it. Being criticized for this, Jesus responded by pointing to the example of David's eating the consecrated bread and the priests laboring in the temple on the Sabbath, both being examples of works of necessity. He also gave two general principles about the Sabbath: "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath," and "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

### ***Sec. 51: Healing of a man's shriveled hand on the Sabbath***

While the previous controversy was held outdoors, this one took place in a Galilean synagogue. Jesus here healed a man with a shriveled hand on the Sabbath. Before doing that, he asked the people present if it would be lawful to do so. They refused to answer, and Mark tells us Jesus "looked around at them in anger" and was "deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts." Mark often is the gospel that tells of Jesus' emotions; while they were human emotions, they were perfectly righteous in those circumstances.

After this confrontation, Mark points out that from that time the Pharisees joined with their customary enemies, the Herodians, to try to kill Jesus.

### ***Sec. 52: Withdrawal to the Sea of Galilee with large crowds from many places***

Because of the great crowds and the threat to his life, Jesus retired to the shore of the Sea of Galilee with his disciples, but still crowds followed him, forcing him to get into a small boat. He continued to heal the sick and cast out demons. According to both Matthew and Mark, Jesus again told the people not to spread the word of his miracles. Matthew gave the reason that Jesus was fulfilling the prophecy of the Servant of the Lord, who would not lift up his own name (Isa 42:1-4); Jesus was waiting for the national religious leaders to recognize him.

## **Appointment of the Twelve and Sermon on the Mount**

### ***Sec. 53: Twelve apostles chosen***

Mark and Luke record the appointment of the twelve apostles at this point. Luke says he spent the night on the mountain praying to God first. He called them "apostles," since they were to be his emissaries, giving the official message of the Son of Man. Matthew records their names later in the narrative, in the context of Jesus' discourse to them when sending them out to preach (Matt 10:2-4). Luke records their names again in Acts 1:13.

<i>Matthew 10:2-4</i>	<i>Mark 3:16-19</i>	<i>Luke 6:14-16</i>	<i>Acts 1:13</i>
Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Simon Peter
Andrew	James	Andrew	James
James	John	James	John
John	Andrew	John	Andrew
Philip	Philip	Philip	Philip
Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Thomas
Thomas	Matthew	Matthew	Bartholomew
Matthew	Thomas	Thomas	Matthew
James son of Alpheus	James son of Alpheus	James son of Alpheus	James son of Alpheus
Thaddeus	Thaddeus	Simon the Zealot	Simon the Zealot
Simon the Zealot	Simon the Zealot	Judas bro. of James	Judas bro. of James
Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	—

Note that Thaddeus (Matt and Mark) is the same person as Judas brother of James (Luke and Acts).

### **Sec. 54: *The Sermon on the Mount***

This mountain was probably near the Sea of Galilee. The traditional site is just to the north, near Capernaum. This famous sermon is summarized by Matthew and Luke.

#### **54a. Setting of the sermon**

[For harmonizing Matthew’s “up on a mountainside” with Luke’s “on a level place” (often, “plain”), see the harmonistic discussion below.]

#### **54b. Blessings to those who inherit the kingdom and woes to those who do not**

The Beatitudes link to the OT kingdom promises, and contrast the present and future ages. Luke’s account emphasizes the more material considerations and Matthew the spiritual, but both are true and were represented in the teaching of Jesus.

#### **54c. Responsibility while awaiting the kingdom**

—the famous portion about being the salt and light of the world

#### **54d. Law, righteousness, and the kingdom**

Jesus taught the continuing relevance of the OT law, especially the moral law (as the next section indicates). His reference to the “jot and tittle” (“the smallest letter, the least stroke of a pen”) confirm the doctrine of the verbal inspiration of Scripture.

#### **54e. Six contrasts in interpreting the law**

Jesus contrasted the Pharisaic interpretation of the OT laws with the true interpretation. It is important to note that Jesus did not reinterpret the law; he merely restored to it its intended meaning.

The six areas:

1. Do not murder.
2. Do not commit adultery.
3. Give a certificate for divorce.
4. Do not break your oath.
5. Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.
6. Love your neighbor and hate your enemy (the last command not Scriptural)

He concluded with the general command to “be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

#### **54f. Three hypocritical “acts of righteousness” to be avoided**

In this section Jesus warned against doing activities just to be seen by other people. These included giving charitable gifts, praying, and fasting. A common theme is that what is done to be seen by people receives its full reward—being seen by people. The Greek verb used in Matt 6:2, 5 (*ἀπέχω apecho*) was a commonly used business term meaning “I have received in full”; it has been found in business documents and receipts from that time. Jesus thus implied that they would receive no further reward from God.

Included in the section on praying is the Lord’s Prayer (Matt 6:9-13). Note that the common ending we use is not in the best texts, but apparently was inserted in later texts, based on ecclesiastical liturgy. The liturgical ending to the prayer comes from 1 Chr 29:11-13.

#### **54g. Three prohibitions against avarice, harsh judgment, and unwise exposure of sacred things**

Jesus warned us to avoid greed and love of the world. Anxiety about these things is lack of faith in God. Likewise we are not judge each other, but to look first to our own sins. This does not mean we are not to discern right and wrong; Jesus often warned his followers to “judge righteous judgment” in these cases. Matthew notes that Jesus warned also against giving the word to “dogs” and “pigs,” unclean animals standing for those who disregard sacred things.

#### **54h. Application and conclusion**

Jesus concluded by encouraging us to find our real needs met in God, to enter the narrow gate of truth and service for God, and to beware of false teachers and hypocrites. Note Jesus’ claim for great authority in Matt 7:21—he is the one who will judge all people in the last day. Those who build their lives on Jesus’ teaching will truly be building on the rock.

#### **54i. Reaction of the crowds**

Matthew here records the crowd’s reaction as deep wonderment at Jesus’ authority as a preacher. The teachers of the law contented themselves with quoting the often contradictory opinions of famous rabbis. Jesus spoke from certainty of the truth. The growing crowds followed him.

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### **Harmonistic Problem #6: The Sermon on the Mount**

[*Harmony*, 70-78]

#### ***The problem***

Matthew 5-7 presents a summary of Jesus’ sermon as given on a mountain (Matt 5:1-2; 7:28 - 8:1). Yet many parts of this sermon are found in other Synoptics in different settings (see Aland):

The “Sermon on the Plain,” recorded in Luke 6:17-49, is placed by Luke later in his ministry, after the choosing of the twelve and the calling of Matthew (cf. Matt 9). This sermon has many similar passages:

Beatitudes  
Love of enemies

Judging (speck of sawdust in eye)  
Golden Rule  
Knowing by fruits  
Houses on sand and rock

Other parts of the Sermon on the Mount are found elsewhere in the other Synoptics:

Salt of earth	Mark 9:49-50	Luke 14:34-35
Light of world	Mark 4:21	Luke 8:16
Law & prophets		Luke 16:16-17
Murder & wrath		Luke 12:57-59
Adultery & divorce	Mark 9:43-48	Luke 16:18
Lord's Prayer	(Mark 11:25-26)	Luke 11:1-4
Treasures		Luke 12:33-34
Sound eye		Luke 11:34-36
Two masters		Luke 16:13
Anxiety		Luke 12:22-32
Answers to prayer		Luke 11:9-13
Broad & narrow ways		Luke 13:23-24

### ***The solution***

These accounts probably are all summaries of what Jesus said, in the words of Jesus and of the authors. Matthew 5-7 seems to be parallel to Luke 6; the “plain” of Luke 6:17 is simply a “level place” (NASB, NIV), and could be a level place on the mountain. The time of the call of Matthew is not definite, even though it is recorded after the Sermon in Matthew (Matt 9) and prior to the Sermon in Luke (Luke 5); see Robertson, *Harmony*, Note #9.

Jesus probably taught the various sayings in the Sermon on the Mount many times in various places, or even to the same group by way of review. His disciples would have learned them well, thus accounting for the similar wording. These many occasions would explain the scattered references in Mark and Luke to many of these sayings.

This same approach should be used with all the spoken material in the Gospels.

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## **Growing Fame and Emphasis on Repentance**

Jesus was now to enter the phase of his ministry with the greatest popularity. Vast crowds followed him all over Galilee. Yet at the same time there was growing opposition, and the crowds themselves did not truly understand what Jesus was requiring of them. They wanted the benefits of the promised kingdom, without the repentance that the covenants required.

### ***Sec. 55: A centurion's faith and the healing of his servant***

The Roman centurion had greater faith in Jesus than many of the Jews themselves. He told Jesus that he did not have to come to his house to heal his servant—he only need speak the word from a distance. Jesus healed the servant, and praised his faith.

Jesus taught that the kingdom of God was yet in the future, involving the active participation of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, ostensibly after the resurrection (Matt 8:11).

### ***Sec. 56: A widow's son raised at Nain***

Luke alone records this miracle; he often emphasizes women and children. Earlier critics said this was not a miracle, that Jesus simply realized that the young man about to be buried was not dead; however, critics today reject such rationalism; now they just say the event never happened, but was made up later.

The people concluded that Jesus was “a great prophet.” The news of this miracle reached even to Judea.

### ***Sec. 57: John the Baptist's relationship to the kingdom***

Matthew and Luke record the interesting transaction between Jesus and John the Baptist (now a prisoner of Herod Antipas in the Machaerus fortress). John, waiting for Jesus to manifest himself sent messengers to get assurance that he was indeed the Messiah. Jesus reassured John, referring him to all the miracles he was performing and to his message, fulfillments of Isa 35:5-6 and 61:1.

Jesus then explained to his onlookers the true importance of John in the coming kingdom of God. He was the greatest of the OT prophets; if the people had accepted his message, he would have been the promised Elijah (Mal 3:1). As it was, both John and Jesus were rejected.

This section has two passages that are difficult exegetically, and are discussed often:

- Matt 11:11 = Luke 7:28 – John is less than the least in the Kingdom
- Matt 11:12 – Is the Kingdom advancing (NIV), or is it suffering violence (ESV; seems better; cf. v. 14)?

***Sec. 58: Woes upon Korazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum for failure to repent***

Bethsaida was on the northern shore of the Lake of Galilee, and Korazin was about three miles farther to the north. These villages had seen much from Jesus, but still mainly did not believe in him. Jesus teaches that their sin is more heinous than that of Tyre and Sidon, and even than Sodom; those heathen cities would not be judged as harshly by God in the judgment.

Jesus also taught that God is sovereign in election and salvation, yet the invitation goes out to all for salvation (Matt 11:27-29).

***Sec. 59: Christ's feet anointed by a sinful but contrite woman***

Luke alone records this anointing; he emphasized women and outcasts. This woman is not named in Scripture; she is not to be identified with Mary Magdalene, as often is done. Her faith and love are contrasted with that of Jesus' host, the Pharisee Simon. As in the case of the paralytic, Jesus declared her sins forgiven.

**First Public Rejection by Jewish Leaders**

Up to this point the gospels have recorded the opposition and plots of the Jewish leaders who wanted to do away with Jesus. Now their opposition was to become public and official. They accused him of blasphemy and being in league with the devil.

***Sec. 60: A tour with the Twelve and other followers***

Luke alone records the women who helped Jesus with his expenses and other needs during this tour of Galilee. Here Mary Magdalene is introduced; her previous state is described not as being a notoriously immoral woman, but as being possessed by seven demons.

***Sec. 61: Blasphemous accusation by the teachers of the law and Pharisees***

Matthew and Mark record this first accusation from the Pharisees that Jesus performed his miracles by the power of Satan. Jesus answered that Satan will not drive out himself, but rather that the kingdom of God is being demonstrated. He defines the unforgivable sin as blaspheming the Holy Spirit—rejecting all the Spirit’s witness and attributing it to Satan. There would be no other avenue open for salvation.

Note that Jesus’ mother and brothers come to take him home, thinking he is out of his mind (Mark 3:21). Later, when they arrive, Jesus speaks words appropriate for this situation (Mark 3:31-35, Sec. 63).

### ***Sec. 62: Request for a sign refused***

When the Pharisees and lawyers asked for a sign from Jesus, he replied that the request was wicked, as they already determined not to believe in him. He will give them the sign of the prophet Jonah—his resurrection. “This generation,” in the persons of its leaders, had rejected him, and now would suffer a worse fate than Nineveh and the Queen of Sheba.

The teaching of the seven demons replacing the one may describe the earlier experience of Mary Magdalene, out of whom Jesus had cast seven demons.

### ***Sec. 63: Announcements of new spiritual kinship***

While his earthly family was seeking to take him away (Mark 3:21), Jesus declared his new spiritual family, all those who “hear God’s word and put it into practice.” This significant break with his family is recorded in all the Synoptics.

## **Secrets about the Kingdom Given in Parables**

### ***Sec. 64: The kingdom parables***

The three Synoptics at this point record many of Jesus’ parables about the kingdom of God. These are especially prominent in Matthew 13, which gospel emphasizes his kingship. The parables and explanations were delivered in two locations, by the sea and in the house.

*--To the Crowds by the Sea—*

#### **64a. The setting of the parables**

The three Synoptics place this discourse by the Lake of Galilee, with a large crowd. Matthew and Mark say he spoke from a boat.

#### **64b. The parable of the soils**

(All three Synoptics). After relating the familiar parable of the sower throwing seed into different kinds of soil, Jesus explained to his disciples why he used parables—to hide the truth from the non-elect (Isa 6:9-10) and to explain it to the elect. He then explained the figures used in this parable. Mark and Luke continue with his figure of the lamp on a lampstand, which was used also in the Sermon on the Mount as recorded by Matthew.

#### **64c. The parable of the seed's spontaneous growth**

Mark notes his comments about seeds' growing by themselves once planted. The kingdom of God will grow, once the gospel message goes out.

#### **64d. The parable of the weeds**

(In Matthew). There will be enemies mixed with true believers in the world; at the judgment they will be weeded out. This parable does not say we should allow unbelievers to remain in the church, as some would interpret it (cf. Matt 13:38).

#### **64e. The parable of the mustard tree**

(In Matthew and Mark). As with the seed growing by itself, so the kingdom of God will spread from a very small and disregarded beginning to fill the earth.

#### **64f. The parable of the leavened loaf**

Matthew adds the similar parable of yeast spreading through dough. Then both Matthew and Mark comment on the frequency with which Jesus used parables.

*--To the Disciples in the House—*

Matthew relates how Jesus explained one parable privately to his disciples in the house, and gave them other similar parables besides.

**64g. The parable of the weeds explained**

Here we have Jesus' official explanation of this parable, relating it to the last days.

**64h. The parable of the hidden treasure**

**64i. The parable of the valuable pearl**

These two parables illustrate the vast, all-important priority of seeking the kingdom of God over all other concerns.

**64j. The parable of the net**

This parable is similar to that of the weeds; there will be a division at the final judgment between the true children of the kingdom and the rest.

**64k. The parable of the house owner**

The true believer has rich stores of understanding—truths long understood, and truths newly revealed.

## **Continuing Opposition**

As time went on, it became clearer to the Jewish leaders that Jesus was preaching something different and, to them, dangerous. The level of their opposition increased, becoming more vocal and constant. This is seen throughout the rest of his great Galilean campaign.

***Sec. 65: Crossing the lake and calming the storm***

Jesus continued the training of his disciples by this experience and miracle on the Sea of Galilee. After sleeping during the storm (his human nature could tire!), he awoke to miraculously quiet the fierce storm. The disciples were amazed at this power over nature itself.

### **Sec. 66: Healing the Gerasene demoniacs and resultant opposition**

This remarkable exorcism was performed in the Decapolis, the self-ruled Gentile region on the east of the Jordan. The demon-possessed men were released, and the demons sent to the pigs, who then rushed into the lake and drowned. When the people heard, they wanted Jesus to leave.

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## **Harmonistic Problem #7: The Gadarene Demoniacs**

[*Harmony*, pp. 92-94]

### ***The problem***

Comparison of the Synoptic Gospels shows that all three record the same event, Matt 8:28-34 = Mark 5:1-20 = Luke 8:26-39.

Yet there are differences. Matthew says there were two demoniacs, while Mark and Luke record only one.

Matthew says it occurred in the country of the Gadarenes (UBS {C} rating; other MSS read Gergesenes), while Mark and Luke say it occurred in the country of the Gerasenes (UBS {C} in Mark, {C} in Luke; other MSS read Gadarenes or Gergesenes). Cf. Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, pp. 23-24. Gadara and Gerasa are about 25 miles apart; for locations, see student map #12-4.

### ***The solution***

Probably one demoniac took the lead in the actions and speeches with Jesus. Mark and Luke do not say only one demoniac. Cf. Matt 20:30 (healing two blind men) and Mark 10:46 and Luke 18:35 (healing one blind man, Bartimaeus); see *Harmony*, p. 92, n. k., and p. 166, n. c.

Gadara and Gerasa were both cities of the Decapolis, in the same direction from the Sea of Galilee (southeast). The location of Gergesa is unknown. Gerasa (modern name Jerash, 26 miles north of Amman), though about 30 miles away, headed a district whose influence may have reached as far as the Sea of Galilee (*IDB* 2:383a). Gadara was about five miles southeast of the Sea of Galilee. Its territory included hot springs north of the Yarmuk; and coins show shipping interests, indicating that its influence also extended to the lake (*IDB* 2:335). All the Synoptics refer to “the country (*chora*) of the Gadarenes/Gerasenes”; since the place by the lake was under the influence of both cities, there is no error or contradiction. The nearby town (Matt 8:33 and parallels) is not named in the text.

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### ***Sec. 67: Return to Galilee, healing of woman who touched Jesus’ garment, and raising of Jairus’ daughter***

As soon as Jesus reached the western shore of the lake, again he was surrounded by a great crowd. All three Synoptic gospels record the following miracle sequence. On his way to see the very ill daughter of Jairus the synagogue ruler, Jesus was delayed by the healing of the woman afflicted by bleeding. Her faith brought her to Jesus, and although she was ceremonially unclean, Jesus’ power overcame that to bring cleansing to her. During the delay the child died, but Jesus raised her from the dead. Mark records Jesus’ Aramaic words to her and their translation. Again, Jesus told the parents not to tell what happened, but word got out anyway.

### ***Sec. 68: Three miracles of healing and another blasphemous accusation***

Matthew records the next miracles: healing two blind men and a dumb demon-possessed man. Again Jesus warned the blind men not to tell what happened, and again the Pharisees accused Jesus of working with Satan.

### ***Sec. 69: Final visit to unbelieving Nazareth***

Matthew and Mark relate this final visit to Nazareth, about a year later than the previous visit, when they had tried to kill him. The people there still do not believe in him. “Familiarity breeds contempt.” Their unbelief reduced the number of miracles Jesus could do there.

In this passage both Matthew and Mark relate their comments about Jesus’ family being known to them. Here he is called a carpenter (in Mark) and the son of a carpenter (in Matthew); his mother Mary is named; his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas are named; and his sisters are mentioned but not named. Apparently by this time his father Joseph had died.

## **Final Galilean Campaign**

Before retiring from Galilee, Jesus made one more concerted push to evangelize the area, sending out his twelve apostles with the message of the kingdom. They were to preach and perform miracles as a witness all throughout Galilee.

### ***Sec. 70: Shortage of workers, Commissioning of the Twelve, Workers sent out***

Matthew notes Jesus' compassion for the people of Galilee, "like sheep without a shepherd" (Matt 9:36). He asked them to pray that God would send out workers. After they prayed, they found out that they were the workers to be sent out!

Before sending out the twelve, Jesus gave them their instructions. Mark and Luke more briefly and Matthew at length relate Jesus' commissioning speech to them. In Matthew 10 this discourse begins with the apostles' own day, and leads into future years and even to the end of the age. It is worded in such a way that the end could have come quickly, or over many centuries. Jesus predicted difficulties and persecutions for his ministers, but promised them the help of God and a reward in the coming kingdom.

"When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another. I tell you the truth, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes" (Matt 10:23). Albert Schweitzer and many critics after him have used this verse to show that Jesus mistakenly believed the eschatological last day would come immediately. It is much better to interpret this verse as a self-designation as the promised "son of man" and as a simple substitute for "I." So he simply is saying, "You will not finish going through the cities of Israel before I come," meaning that he would meet them soon.

When the apostles went out into Galilee, they found that they had power to preach, to heal, and to cast out demons.

### ***Sec. 71: Antipas' mistaken identification of Jesus, Earlier imprisonment and beheading of John the Baptist***

This sudden multiplication of Jesus' influence through his apostles' preaching and miracles awakened the concern of the governor, Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee and Perea. He said that this must be John the Baptist, risen from the dead. It is not clear from the text

whether he said this in sincerity, or in sarcasm. Matthew and Mark go on to explain how Herod had ordered the death of John, to please his wife Herodias and her daughter Salome.