

The Ministry of Christ, Part 4

We are starting the year of Christ's popularity. Many phenomenal events occur during this period of His ministry that testify of Christ's divinity and mission. It is important to note that each of the Gospel writers gave a report of the life of Christ from their own point of view and with specific audiences in mind. They made no attempt to exactly trace the chronology of the life of Jesus or to cover all of the events of His life and ministry.

John 21:25 NKJV And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.

With this in mind, we continue to embark on a survey of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ as presented in the Gospels.

Rejected at Nazareth — Luke 4:28-30

Jesus ended the year of introduction after being rejected by the people of Nazareth.

The people in the synagogue refused to accept Him and His declaration that the prophecy of Isaiah was being fulfilled before their eyes, Luke 4:16-21.

Although they marveled at His gracious words, they refused to accept Him as the Messiah.

Luke 4:23-24 NKJV He said to them, "You will surely say this proverb to Me, 'Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in Your country.' " Then He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country.

To reinforce His message, He spoke of Elijah and the widow of Zarephath in the region of Sidon and Elisha cleansing Naaman the Syrian. Why did the widow from Zarephath and Naaman the leper from Syrian receive miracles and the needy people and lepers in Israel be by-passed? During the time of Elijah and Elisha's ministry, there was widespread unfaithfulness to God. The only people receiving miracles during their time were Gentiles. His words offended them and pointed out their unbelief and unfaithfulness to the word of God. Jesus' miracles and signs are not for the skeptic and unbelievers, but for those who trust and believe.

Luke 4:28-29 NKJV So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff.

Luke 4:30 NKJV Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way.

Removal from Capernaum — Matthew 4:13-16; Luke 4:31-32

Luke 4:31-32 NKJV Then He went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and was teaching them on the Sabbaths. And they were astonished at His teaching, for His word was with authority.

This is a demonstration of Christ's authority both in His teaching and actions. The authority of His teaching and word is one of the things that astonished the crowds. His authority came directly from the Father and was supported by the power of the Holy Spirit. It should not be considered strange that the living Word (Jesus) would speak with authority. There is a major difference in Jesus' authority and that of the Scribes, Pharisees, and Priests. Another sign of His authority is what happened when Jesus confronted demons. Mark's gospel records the confrontation with the demon or evil spirit immediately after the next four disciples were called.

Four Disciples Called – Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:8-11

In the first year of Jesus' ministry, five disciples began following Jesus, (John 1:35-49). They had been influenced by the ministry of John the Baptist until Jesus was introduced to them. They followed Jesus to the wedding feast in Cana of Galilee and saw the response of the Samaritans. They also witnessed what happened to the nobleman's son. Now, Jesus officially called them to be His disciples.

Matthew 4:18–20 NKJV And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, **Simon called Peter**, and **Andrew** his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." They immediately left their nets and followed Him.

Matthew 4:21–22 NKJV Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, **James** the son of Zebedee, and **John** his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.

Matthew and Mark give the same account of this event and Luke records additional information that begins at Luke 5:1.

Draught of Fishes

Luke 5:1–2 NKJV So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing their nets.

Luke 5:3 NKJV Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat.

Multitudes of people were following Him. They pressed about Him to hear the word of God spoken with authority and to see what He would do.

Luke 5:4-5 NKJV When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net."

It is important to remember that the first five disciples started following Jesus

in His first year of ministry. As a result of what they had witnessed, Simon was somewhat familiar with Jesus' authority and power, and in faith he did what Jesus commanded him to do. He said, "Nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net."

Luke 5:6-7 NKJV And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink.

Luke 5:8-9 NKJV When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken;

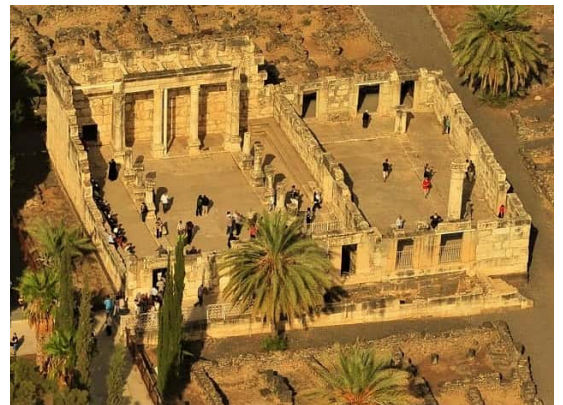
Why would he be afraid and say "*depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord?*" Peter was already beginning to realize Who Jesus was. Everyone present was astonished.

Luke 5:10-11 NKJV and so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men." So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.

This miracle was done in front of the multitudes that had heard Jesus speak from Simon's boat. The Lord knows how to lead you to the right place at the right time. Even fish obey His command. What can happen if we listen to Jesus and respond? Everything is possible with God.

Demoniac Healed – Mark 1:23-28; Luke 4:33-37

Mark says the healing of the demon possessed occurred immediately after Jesus called the four. Mark and Luke tell us they went into Capernaum where Jesus entered the synagogue and taught on the Sabbaths. While Jesus was teaching, a man who had an unclean demonic spirit cried out. This is the first time a deliverance from demon possession is recorded. This deliverance happened while they were in the synagogue.



CAPERNAUM SYNAGOGUE

Mark 1:23-24 NKJV Now there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, saying, "Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!"

Why would an unclean spirit react in that manner to the presence of Jesus? Do not think it strange that demons and the devil recognize Jesus Christ the Son of God.

Mark 1:25–26 NKJV But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be quiet, and come out of him!” And when the unclean spirit had convulsed him and cried out with a loud voice, he came out of him.

All of the spirit world knows Who Jesus really is. These unclean spirits are the fallen angels that are at work in this present world. Jesus has power and authority over the spirit world. Why did Jesus rebuke the unclean spirit and tell him to “Be quiet, and come out of him?” All of the spirit world knows that Jesus is the Son of God and the Lord does not need or want the testimony of evil spirits.

Mark 1:27–28 NKJV Then they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, “What is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him.” And immediately His fame spread throughout all the region around Galilee.

What Jesus did amazed the people in the Synagogue because Jesus spoke with authority and even the unclean spirits obeyed Him. He spoke with the authority of God.

Peter’s Mother-in-Law Healed – Matthew 8:14-15; Mark 1:29-31; Luke 4:38-39

Mark 1:29 NKJV Now as soon as they had come out of the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.

Mark 1:30–31 NKJV But Simon’s wife’s mother lay sick with a fever, and they told Him about her at once. So He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her. And she served them.

Matthew 8:15 says, “He touched her hand, and the fever left her.”

Luke 4:39 says, “So He stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. And immediately she arose and served them.”

It is always important to watch what happens around Jesus, especially when signs, wonders, and miracles happen. What did Jesus do? Jesus entered the room, took her by the hand, and lifted her up. Notice how quickly she recovered from the fever. Immediately after Jesus did what He did, the fever left and she served them. Why would she do that? First, she was completely healed and then she had guests in her house.

Many Healings – Mark 1:32-37; Matthew 8:16-17; Luke 4:40-44

That same evening many miracles happened.

Mark 1:32–33 NKJV At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. And the whole city was gathered together at the door.

Mark 1:34 NKJV Then He healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew Him.

Luke 4:40-41 NKJV When the sun was setting, all those who had any that were

sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them. And demons also came out of many, crying out and saying, “You are the Christ, the Son of God!”

Matthew 8:16-17 When the evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: “He Himself took our infirmities And bore our sicknesses.”

How did Jesus heal them and cast out evil spirits? At this time, Jesus laid hands on all who were sick and He spoke “a word” to cast out the evil spirits. Notice the diversity in the manner in which Jesus healed and cast out evil spirits.

Jesus' Prayer Life

Mark 1:35-37 NKJV Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed. And Simon and those who were with Him searched for Him. When they found Him, they said to Him, “Everyone is looking for You.”

Before daylight, He went into a deserted place, and there He prayed. We are given several references to Jesus' praying, (Matthew 26:39, 44; Mark 6:46; Luke 5:16; 6:12; 9:28, 29; Hebrews 5:7-8). Jesus' prayer life raises many questions. Why would Jesus go to a solitary place to pray? Why did He pray and why did He pray so often? Hebrews 5:7-8 gives some answers. With loud cries and tears, He prayed to the one who could save him from death, and God heard His prayers because of His deep reverence to God. Jesus prayed because He enjoyed the Father's presence and submitted to the Father's will. At the same time, Jesus was leaving us an example so that we should follow His steps, (1 Peter 2:19). While Jesus was praying, everyone was looking for Him. The demands of everyday life did not stop because He prayed.

Later Galilean Ministry – Matthew 4:23-25;

Mark 1:38-39; Luke 4:43-44

Mark 1:38-39 NKJV But He said to them, “Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth.” And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons.

Jesus left Capernaum and Peter's mother-in-law's house to go to other cities in Galilee. Everywhere He went He healed the sick and cast out demons.

