

Jesus' Sabbath Ministry, part 1

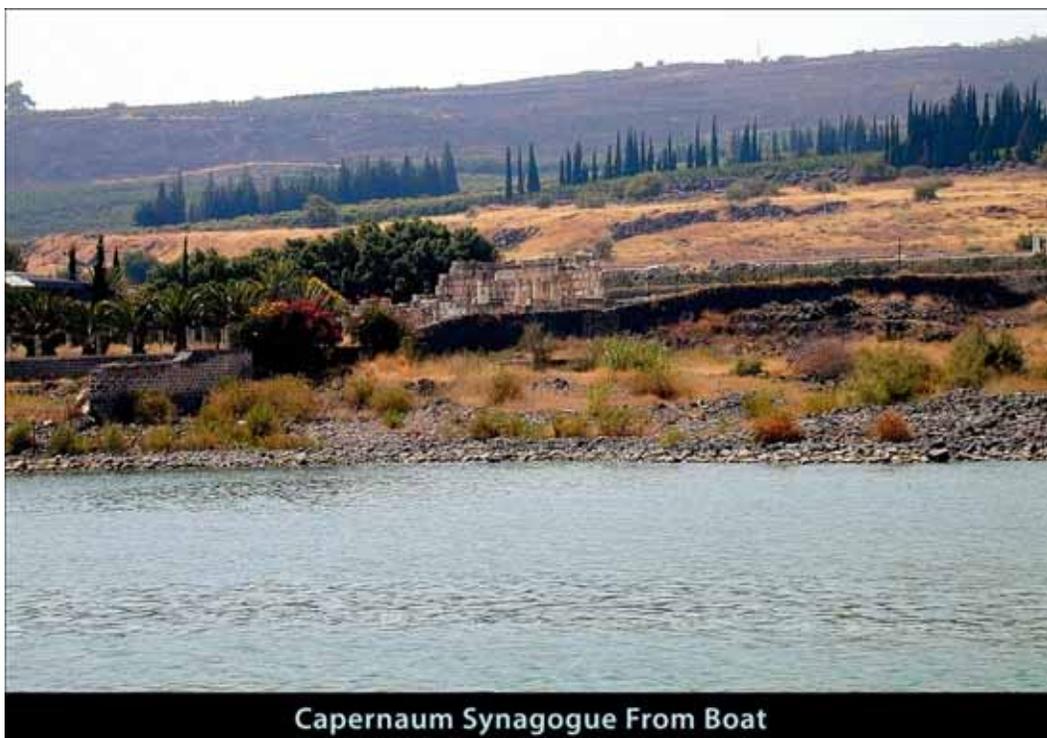
The words that Jesus spoke in our last study are still occupying my thoughts, “Follow Me! And I will make you fishers of men.” Notice that Jesus did not start with, “I will make you fishers of men!” How often we forget that we cannot become fishers of men unless we are first following Him. Have you ever tried to go fishing with only a fishing pole, some bait, but forgot to bring along the hook that was needed to catch the fish? If we go fishing for the souls of men and women without following Jesus, we have forgotten the “hook.” We must submit ourselves to Jesus first if we want to catch the souls of men and women. Jesus is our God and the authority in every aspect of life, and we need Him!

THEME OF OUR STUDY. The same theme continues into our study which is found in Mark 1:21-28 and Luke 4:31-37. In our last study we saw Jesus walking along the Sea of Galilee and eventually found Peter, Andrew, James, and John. It is these men to whom He commanded, “Follow Me!” When we come to the first verse in the Mark passage, we discover that Jesus and the four men had gone into Capernaum. On the Sabbath day they entered the synagogue. Jesus did not go alone. Jesus and His four disciples went together. Every true disciple follows the Master.

[They went into Capernaum; and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and began to teach. \(NASB\) Mark 1:21](#)

In this verse, we are reminded once again of two patterns of life that were true of Jesus. Jesus attended the synagogue on the Sabbath and He taught others.

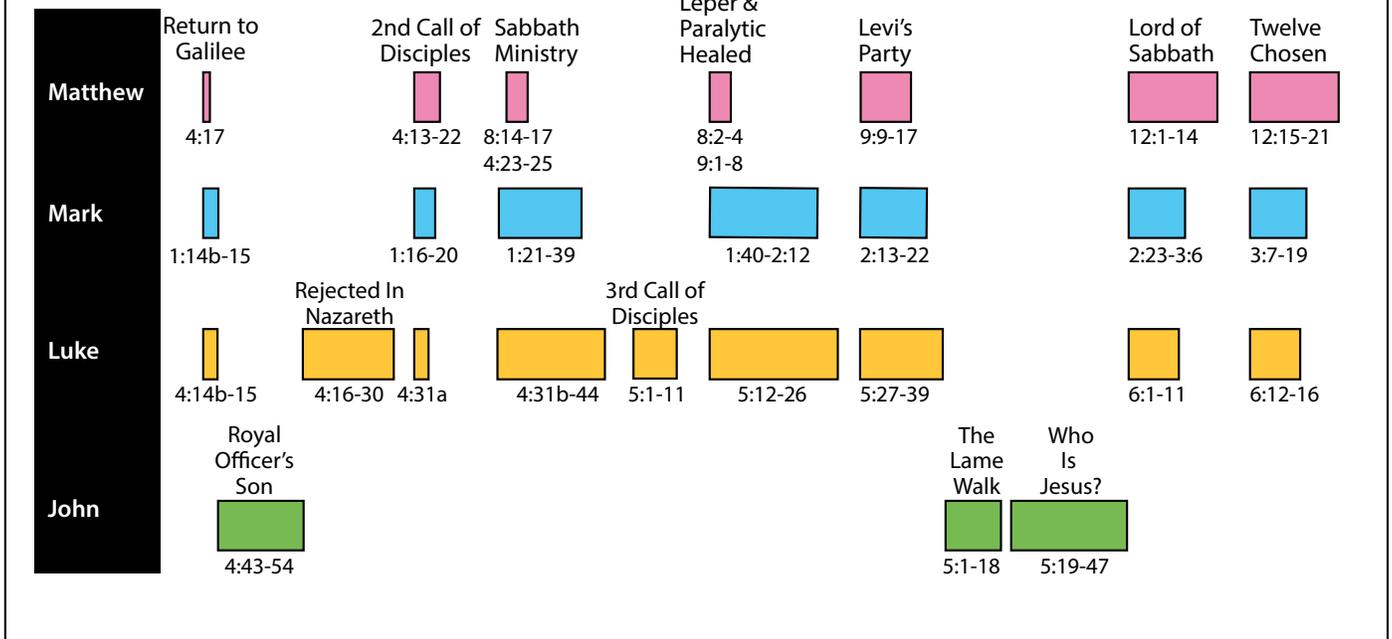
The gospel of Luke tells us that Jesus was constantly teaching. The implication is that Jesus was teaching for a long time. In many countries around the world today there are Christians who are eager to hear the Word taught and



Capernaum Synagogue From Boat

Life and Heart of Jesus

Jesus' Ministry in Galilee (Mid A.D. 31)



eagerly sit for a long time in order to hear more. These folks were also eager to listen because they were amazed at what they heard.

They were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. (NASB) Mark 1:22

When teachers and preachers are empowered by the Holy Spirit, wonderful things began to happen - the Word of God becomes alive. This is an important truth. Today, some are teaching and/or preaching who have not been spiritually gifted by the Holy Spirit and are not spiritually growing. It is obvious because the listeners are bored. Jesus was dynamic and He spoke with authority.

The people in the Capernaum synagogue were amazed, and the people who attended the synagogue worship service in Nazareth (Luke 4:22) were thrilled with what they heard Jesus teach. Jesus was eloquent and dynamic. He was an incredibly wonderful teacher.

SPEAKING WITH AUTHORITY. The scribes in Jesus' day were the professors of the Mosaic Law and the sacred

writings. They were the official interpreters of scripture - the teachers of the day. A casual look at the Talmud reveals that they quoted one author after another. Their teachings were almost an intellectual discussion. The authority of scripture appears not to have been sufficient for them since they depended upon the authority of others.

When I first started teaching adults, I started with the book of 1 Timothy. I will never forget that Sunday School class because the Lord used it to teach me an important lesson. I had been teaching the class for many weeks. After one session, a dear woman approached me to make a request. Her request was simple, "Next week when you teach, I would like to know what God says about 1 Timothy." I was discouraged at first even though I knew what she was trying to say. I was just like the scribes. I was quoting one author after another rather than showing the people what the Bible had to say. I was telling them what others said it meant. That is exactly what the scribes did.

But not Jesus! He **was** the authority! He did not need to quote anyone. In fact, when we come to the Sermon on the Mount, we will hear Jesus say, "You have heard, but I

say.” Jesus was and is the authority, and He spoke with that authority.

EVEN DEMONS ATTEND CHURCH. Apparently, when Jesus finished teaching, a man broke the silence in the synagogue with a shout.

Just then there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit; and he cried out . . . (NASB) Mark 1:23

The man was possessed by a demon and apparently had been in there while Jesus was speaking. It is obvious that the man

attending a social club or being a member of a sports club. There is nothing beneficial about attending a church service if one’s heart is not open and sensitive to God. God does not think well of us because we attend a church service or give money. He is interested in something else. He is interested in your heart’s response to Himself.

Revelation 2-3 and 3 John 9-10 refer to eight churches that were displeasing to God. Most of them were not submitting to the authority of God. Some of them did not love God very much. The leadership in one of those churches was acting like a bully toward others in the church. Other



Capernaum Synagogue

was not a follower of God, since he had allowed a demon to possess his body. It appears that he wanted to be there, and sat through the entire meeting. Why would a demon possessed man sit and listen to God speak?

Are you surprised that the man and the demon would attend “church”? Some might be surprised that the man would even enter the synagogue. This is an important reminder that anyone can attend a church service without it effecting them. No one receives a spiritual blessing by just attending a meeting at a church. It is not any different than

churches allowed false teaching to occur, and other churches ignored sexual promiscuity and sin. The last church in Rev. 3 was content with its religious activity, and another church praised people for being successful. But God was not happy, because they had a heart problem. They needed spiritual triple-bypass open heart surgery. Their hearts were closed to God just as cholesterol clogs the veins. Attending church does nothing for a person who is not sensitive and open to God. So, it is not surprising that the demon possessed man entered the synagogue and sat down to hear Jesus teach.

At the end of Jesus' message he shouted,

“Let us alone! What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!” (NASB) Luke 4:34

“What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!” (NASB) Mark 1:24

The demon was afraid and as a result he was bold and daring. “Leave us alone!” and then he adds “You are the Holy One of God!” Jesus was quick to respond and command him to be quiet and to come out of the man. The Greek word that Jesus used can be translated as “Muzzle it!” Just like one muzzles a dog. “Muzzle it!” Two words. That is all. But they are words with power - authority. This was conflict between the pit of hell and a holy God, and the people sitting there did not really know what was occurring or who Jesus was.

JEWISH CONCEPT OF DEMONS. During the time of Jesus, the Jews believed that there were lots of demons. They believed that there were demons everywhere. They believed that demons were created on the evening before the first sabbath day, and that they multiplied by having sex with Adam

drink. They believed that a person could determine that demons had been near the house during the night by putting ashes outside the front door to the house. Then, if there were demons around, the foot prints of demons would appear in the ash in the morning.

The Jews believed that they could exorcise a demon if they knew the demon's name. They used special formulae with carefully chosen words to perform the exorcism. They used songs, and the Qumran literature contains poems for driving out demons (B. Nizan, ‘Shirei Shebah mi-Qumran “le-pahad u-lebahel” ruhot-Resha’, Tarbiz, 55 (1986), pp. 19-46). The ancient Jewish author, Flavius Josephus describes the following exorcism,

The manner of the cure was this: — He put a ring that had a root of one of those sorts mentioned by Solomon to the nostrils of the demoniac, after which he drew out the demon through his nostrils; and when the man fell down immediately, he abjured him to return into him no more, making still mention of Solomon, and reciting the incantations which he composed. – Josephus, Flavius, The Antiquities Of The Jews, Book VIII, Chap 2, 5

The Jews believed that demons were real, but their facts were

The Holy Spirit's ministry through a godly man or woman who has a biblical message results in an awesome ministry. When this occurs, mighty things happen and God is glorified.

and Eve. Since the Jews believed that there were male and female demons, they taught that the male demons had sex with Eve and the female demons had sex with Adam before Seth was born.

They taught that there were demons in the air, in the trees, in gardens, vineyards, in ruined buildings, and especially dirty, desolate buildings. They believed that there was great danger in sleeping alone. One rabbi was so afraid that he took a lamb with him even to the bathroom hoping that a demon possess the body of the lamb instead. They thought that demons could enter a person even through food and

wrong. They had ignored the teachings of scripture.

JESUS' AUTHORITY. Jesus did not need poems, songs, chants, or rings to rescue the man from the demon. He simply commanded, “Muzzle it and come out of him!”

And Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be quiet, and come out of him!” (NASB) Mark 1:25

And the demon obeyed his Creator,

Throwing him into convulsions, the unclean spirit cried out with

a loud voice and came out of him. (NASB) Mark 1:26

The gospel of Luke adds,

And when the demon had thrown him down in the midst of the people, he came out of him without doing him any harm. (NASB) Luke 4:35

With one last cry the demon threw the man to the ground just like a little boy having a tantrum. Then he came out. The gospel of Luke adds that the man was not hurt.

They were all amazed, so that they debated among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him." (NASB) Mark 1:27

And the people were amazed. Why? They were amazed because Jesus did not teach like the scribes. He taught with power and authority! Jesus did not use or need poems, songs, chants, or rings to rescue the man from the demon! Jesus had authority in His teaching and over the demons! Jesus was not like anyone they had ever seen or experienced before. Jesus came with authority. He spoke with authority, and they knew it. They saw it. They witnessed it. They knew He had authority such that even the demons obeyed Him. Jesus

was the authority!

Immediately the news about Him spread everywhere into all the surrounding district of Galilee. (NASB) Mark 1:28

So, it is not surprising that the news about Jesus spread like a wild fire across the district of Galilee.

CONCLUSION. But there were some men there that morning in the synagogue whom we have not talked about. They were Jesus' disciples, and they saw all of this. What did they think? How did they react? Jesus had called them several days before to "Follow Me! and I will make you fishers of men." This was their first lesson. It was about His authority. Jesus did not just have authority. He WAS and IS the authority! Follow Me! The impact of those two words had to be strong. They did not yet realize that He was God. But they knew authority when they heard it, saw it, and experienced it.

Jesus is calling you to follow Him too! He is the one that each of us must start with. He is the authority and He says, "Follow Me!" Everything and anything that you might want or do must start with Him. You can try fishing without a hook but you will not enjoy the fishing experience. Jesus is calling for your submission first! Are you willing? Are you following Him?