

Focus 5: The Final Six Months of the Public Ministry of Jesus

I. REVIEW OF THE LORD'S LIFE AND MINISTRY TO THIS POINT.

The outline of the life and ministry of Jesus which we have studied to this point is as follows:

I. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us..." (John 1:14)

The first advent of Jesus: His birth, infancy' and boyhood

II. "He came unto His own . . ." (John 1:1 la)

The emergence of Jesus into public life; a time of relative obscurity [baptism, temptation, 1st miracle]

III. "Jesus came . . . preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God"

Initial crises and ministries in Judea and Samaria; Jesus is gaining the attention of the nation [cleanses temple, Nicodemus, woman at the well]

IV. "The people that sat in darkness saw great light. . ."

Opening the 18 month ministry in Galilee; a time of growing favor with the people [the preaching of the Sermon on the Mount

V. "Great multitudes followed Him . . ."

Completing the great Galilean ministry; a time of great popularity

VI. "Jesus walked in Galilee . . . because the Jews Sought to kill Him"

(Special training for the Twelve: Out of favor and on the move in and around Galilee)

II. Introduction

A. The last period, the "Training of the Twelve" (section VI. above) was brought about because of the clear and total rejection of Jesus by the leaders of the Jews (MT 12:22f.) and the subsequent rejection of Jesus' standards by the people themselves (John 6:60f.).

1. During the period of the "Training of the Twelve," Jesus' strategy had changed from PUBLIC PRESENTATION of Himself as the Messiah (which presentation had been accompanied by a great outpouring of miracles to vindicate His claims) to PRIVATE PREPARATION of His disciples for the time of His death and resurrection and the responsibilities which would be theirs after his ascension.

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2. The period of the "Training of the Twelve" had culminated with the Transfiguration of Christ before the inner three disciples; this event was designed to assure the disciples that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, and that although He was to die the Kingdom which they anticipated was sure to come.

B. Concerning the period now to be considered

1. This period is sometimes known as the "(Later) Perea Ministry," because much of the time was spent in the Transjordan area known as Perea. However, as the travels of Jesus during this time took Him to several other areas as well, the title "Perea Ministry" does not really describe the period accurately.

2. This period covers the last six months of Jesus' life before His passion; it concludes with our Lord secreted in a tiny town on the border of Samaria, awaiting the time when He would return to Jerusalem for the Triumphal Entry, and ultimately for His death and resurrection.

3. The general spirit of this entire period is well reflected in John 7:30.

A general survey of the events and chronology of this period

NOTE: The events of this period, the last six months of Jesus' public ministry, are best understood in relation to 3 trips to Jerusalem (or its environs) made during this time. We must piece together all 4 Gospel accounts to understand the chronology of this period, simply because no one Gospel provides a continuous narrative.

1.) TRIP #1 - TO JERUSALEM FOR THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

--in October

--Luke 9:51 describes His departure for this feast

--John 7:2-10:21 narrates some of the events which occurred while Jesus was in Jerusalem at this time

**After the Feast, Jesus remained in Judea, though He avoided Jerusalem

--Because He is anxious to saturate the area with the message of His Messiah-ship, He dispatches 70 disciples to go out two by two and bear witness to that truth (Luke 10: 1-24)

--During this time, Jesus taught much and openly encountered the Jews on several occasions

2.) TRIP #2 - TO JERUSALEM FOR THE FEAST OF DEDICATION

--in late December --Luke 13:22 describes Jesus' journey toward Jerusalem at this time

--John 10:22-39 describes some of the events that occurred as Jesus was in the city at this time

**After this feast, Jesus journeyed to Perea, beyond the Jordan River --His purpose in this: to escape the murderous hostility of the Jews in Judea (where those enemies are able to move the local Roman official to do their bidding more easily than in Perea)

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--Jesus returns to the place where He had been baptized some 3 years earlier and remains in those regions for several weeks (ca 3~2 months), speaking many parables and continuing the training and preparation of the twelve

3.) TRIP #3 - TO BETHANY (2 MILES FROM JERUSALEM) TO RAISE LAZARUS FROM THE DEAD

--only John records this event; he carefully describes the miracle and its immediate effects -- this miracle had very important and very deliberate influence upon the events of Jesus' life soon to follow, notably the Triumphal Entry

**After this miracle, Jesus finds seclusion in Ephraim, a little town north of Jerusalem some miles. Here He remains with His disciples, hidden from His enemies until He goes for the final time to Jerusalem for the Passover season (John 11:54).

III. "THEY SOUGHT THEREFORE TO TAKE HIM, BUT NO MAN LAID HANDS ON HIM, BECAUSE HIS HOUR WAS NOT YET COME." (Preaching the Gospel and Training the Twelve; the last six months before the Lord's Passion, in Judea, Jerusalem, and Transjordan)

A. In Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles

(Note: This is the FIRST of the 3 trips, which occur during this period)

1. Jesus receives bitter counsel from his unbelieving brothers (John 7:2-9)
2. Jesus goes privately to Jerusalem through Samaria (Luke 9:51-56, John 7:10)
3. The coming of Jesus to the Feast creates a stir - among friends and enemies alike (John 7:1 1-59)
4. An adulteress is brought to Jesus (John 7:53-8:1 1)

Notice that Jesus seized upon this opportunity to proclaim to the multitudes in the city the truth concerning Himself.

There are a number of discourses which Jesus gives to the people at this time.

5. Jesus proclaims Himself the light of the world, the Son of God, and rebukes the denying Jewish leaders as "sons of the devil;" they attempt to stone Him (John 8:12-59)
- 6 A man born blind is healed and converted; the rulers are outwitted and enraged (9:1-41)
7. Jesus' discourse on the Good Shepherd further divides the crowd at the Feast (10:1-21)

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B. Campaigning in Judea outside Jerusalem

Note: After the first trip to Jerusalem, discussed above, Jesus tarried in the region of Judea and ministered there.

However, He avoided the city of Jerusalem itself, simply because that was where the Sanhedrinists had the greatest authority, and those Sanhedrinists had become settled in their hatred of Jesus and their determination to see Him put to death.

Events during this period:

1. The Seventy sent out to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom; they return with great joy over their success (Luke 10: 1 -24)
2. Jesus answers a lawyer's question concerning eternal life; the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)
3. Jesus visits Bethany, where He is a guest in the home of Mary, Martha, & Lazarus for the 1st time (Luke 10:38-42)
4. Jesus again instructs concerning prayer; the parable of the importunate friend (Luke 11 :1-13)
5. A number of open encounters with the Jews
 - The blasphemous accusation of league with Beelzebub is repeated (Luke 11:14-26)
 - Dining with a Pharisee, Jesus denounces empty legalism, excites the anger of the Rulers (Luke 11 :37-54)
 - Speaking to His disciples and to a vast throng, Jesus deals with hypocrisy (leaven of the Pharisees), covetousness (the rich fool), worldly anxieties (repeats sections of the Sermon on the Mount), watchfulness (the waiting servants and the wise steward), and His approaching death (Luke 12:1-59)
 - The command to repent; parable of the fig tree (Luke 13:1-9)
 - Jesus heals a crippled woman on the Sabbath; defends Himself against the Ruler of the synagogue, and repeats the parables of the mustard seed and the leaven (Luke 13:10-21)

C. Back in Jerusalem at the Feast of Dedication

(Note: This is the SECOND of the 3 trips during this period; it occurred in late December)

1. At the Feast, Jesus refuses to openly proclaim Himself Messiah, and some try to stone Him (John 10:22-39)

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D. Ministering in the region beyond Jordan

(Note: Jesus departs from Judea because of the dangers there and tarries in Perea for about 3 1/2 months)

1. The Pereans give Jesus a warm reception (John 10:40-42)

Note: Other than this short summary in John's Gospel, Luke alone provides any report of these weeks in Transjordan.

2. Teaching in Perea, Jesus is warned about Herod by some Pharisees; He rebukes them and laments the hard-heartedness of Jerusalem (Luke 13:22-35)

3. Jesus dines with a chief Pharisee on a Sabbath morning, heals a diseased man, and then defends Himself for doing so; three parables are suggested by the occasion (Luke 14:1 -24)

4. Great crowds follow Jesus, and He warns them to count the cost of discipleship (Luke 14:25-35)

5. Jesus receives great crowds, and the Pharisees murmur against Him; He responds with three parables concerning the lost being found the lost sheep, coin, and song (Luke 15:1-32)

6. Three lessons on stewardship

- To the disciples, the parable of the unjust steward (Luke 16:1-13)
- To the Pharisees, the account of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16: 14-31)
- To the disciples, the parable of the unprofitable servants (17: 1- 10)

E. To Bethany (outside of Jerusalem) for the raising of Lazarus

(Note: This is the THIRD of the 3 trips to Jerusalem or its environs during this period)

Note: By way of introduction to this miracle, the following general observations may be made.

1.) The raising of Lazarus was clearly intended to supply the Jewish nation with one more incontrovertible proof of Jesus' Messianic claims.

2.) The raising of Lazarus was of all our Lord's miracles the most thoroughly credible, supported by ungainsayable evidence.

"The whole story is of a nature calculated to exclude all suspicion of imposture, and to confirm the truth of the miracle. A well known person of Bethany, named Lazarus, falls sick in the absence of Jesus. His sisters send a message to Jesus, announcing it; but while He is yet absent Lazarus dies, is buried, and kept in the tomb for four days, during which Jesus is still absent. Martha, Mary, and all his friends are convinced of his death. Our Lord, while yet remaining in the place where He had been staying, tells His disciples in plain terms that he had been meaning to go to Bethany, to raise Lazarus from the dead that the glory of God may be illustrated and their faith may be confirmed.

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At our Lord's approach, Martha goes to meet Him, and announces her brother's death, laments the absence of Jesus before the event took place, and yet expresses a faint hope that by some means Jesus might render help. Our Lord declares that her brother shall be raised again, and assures her that He has the power to give life to the dead. Mary approaches, accompanied by weeping friends from Jerusalem. Our Lord Himself is moved, and weeps, and goes to the sepulcher, attended by a crowd. The stone is removed. The stench of the corpse is perceived. Our Lord after pouring forth audible prayer to His Father, calls forth Lazarus from the grave, in the hearing of all. The dead man obeys the call, comes forth to public view in the same dress he was buried in, alive and well, and returns home without assistance. All persons present agree that Lazarus was raised to life, and that a great miracle has been worked, though not all believe the Person who worked it to be the Messiah. Some go away and tell the rulers at Jerusalem what Jesus has done. Even these do not doubt the truth of the fact; on the contrary, they confess that our Lord by His works is becoming everyday more famous, and that he was probably to be received as Messiah by the whole nation. And *therefore* the rulers at once take council how they may put to death both Jesus and Lazarus... And the consequence is that by and by, when our Lord comes to Jerusalem, the population goes forth in crowds to meet Him and show Him honor, and chiefly because of His work at Bethany. Now if all these circumstances do not establish the truth of the miracle, there is no truth in history.--Tittman quoted in Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels: John, 2:233*

3.) The raising of Lazarus was the only miracle in the Lord's ministry which was deliberately made more spectacular than it might have been.

4.) The raising of Lazarus was God's way of beginning to prepare the nation for the Triumphant Entry.

1. The miracle (John I 1 : 1-44)

2. The effect of the miracle (John 11:45-53)

a. *The effect on the people (11 :45)*

b. *The effect on the Pharisees (11:46-53)*

c. *The effect on the movements of Jesus (11:54)*

F. Retreat to Ephraim (John 11:54)

Note: At this point the travels of Jesus, with the exception of the final journey to His death at Jerusalem, are at an end. He simply tarries for a time in the little city of Ephraim, awaiting the time when He would go forth to be delivered up to death.