



Road Trip: On the Road with Jesus in Galilee

Week 16: **Jesus and John the Baptist** ~ Luke 7:18-35

Road Trip: On the Road with Jesus in Galilee

We are in the middle of series we started back in Spring of 2017 which is found in Luke 4:14 thru 9:50. Jesus is traveling and ministering with his followers through the region of Israel called “The Galilee.” The question we are asking is...“If you and I had been with Jesus and the disciples during this portion of his ministry, what would we have **seen** and **heard**? More importantly, **what would we have learned from watching Jesus minister to the people of that region?**”

What the disciples have seen and heard on this “Road Trip”:

- Jesus **delivers** a demon-possessed man in the synagogue. (Luke 4:31-37)
- Jesus **heals** Peter’s mother-in-law and many others. (Luke 4:38-39)
- Jesus **heals** every sick person and delivers every demonized person brought to him. (Luke 4:40-41)
- Jesus has a **miraculous** fishing trip with Peter, James, and John. (Luke 5:1-11)
- Jesus **heals** a man with leprosy. (Luke 5:12-16)
- Jesus **heals** the paralyzed man lowered through the roof. (Luke 5:17-26)
- Jesus and the disciples **party** at Matthew’s house. (Luke 5:27-32)
- Jesus **heals** a man’s deformed hand on the Sabbath. (Luke 6:1-11)
- He **chooses** the twelve apostles. (Luke 6:12-16)
- **Teaches** what is called the “Sermon on the Plain.” (Luke 6:17-49)
- Jesus **heals** the centurion’s slave (*from a distance!*). (Luke 7:1-10)
- **Resuscitates** the widow of Nain’s dead son. (Luke 7:11-17)

**“ARE YOU THE MESSIAH WE’VE BEEN EXPECTING,
OR SHOULD WE KEEP LOOKING FOR SOMEONE ELSE?”**

- JESUS, THE MESSIAH

- **What does the word “messiah” mean?** Messiah comes from the Hebrew word, *Mashiach*, meaning “**the anointed one**,” or “**the chosen one**.” In Old Testament times, **prophets, priests, and kings** were anointed by oil when they were set apart for these positions of responsibility. The anointing was a sign that God had chosen them and consecrated them for the work He had given them to do.
- When Andrew, a disciple of John the Baptist, became acquainted with Jesus, the first thing he did was to find his brother, Simon Peter, and tell him about his exciting discovery. He told his brother, “**We have found the Messiah!**”
- **The Gospels repeatedly declare that Jesus is the Messiah...** the One chosen by God and anointed by Him to save His people from their sins (*Matthew 16:16; Luke 4:17-21; John 1:40-49; 4:25, 26*). After Jesus’ resurrection, the

apostle Peter reminded those listening to him how “**God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power.** Then Jesus went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.” (Acts 10:38, 39).

- **Jesus Himself claimed to be the promised Messiah...** When He talked with a woman at a well in Samaria, she said, “ ‘I know that **Messiah** is coming’ (*who is called Christ*). ‘When He comes, He will tell us all things.’ Jesus said to her, ‘**I who speak to you am He**’” (John 4:25, 26).

- **THE FLOW OF THIS VERY CHALLENGING PASSAGE: LUKE 7:18-35**

- **John has questions...**

- ¹⁸ The disciples of John the Baptist told John about everything Jesus was doing. So John called for two of his disciples, ¹⁹ and he sent them to the Lord to ask him, “Are you the Messiah we’ve been expecting, or should we keep looking for someone else?”

²⁰ John’s two disciples found Jesus and said to him, “John the Baptist sent us to ask, ‘Are you the Messiah we’ve been expecting, or should we keep looking for someone else?’”

- Over the past year, John had a ministry of preaching repentance and baptizing in water that had been a **huge success** by any standard.
- John now found himself in prison and in danger of being put to death. Still the kingdom had not come. Thus John was anxious concerning the Messiah. He knew the Old Testament well and knew of the works of the Messiah—**but he did not see the kingdom coming.**
- Some commentators believe that with all that was happening to John, his faith may be slipping a bit and that he need reassurance from Jesus regarding the legitimacy of his ministry. Certainly, **Jesus saw no lack in John’s ministry**, as we will see in verse 28 below.

- **Jesus responds with actions...**

- ²¹ At that very time, Jesus cured many people of their diseases, illnesses, and evil spirits, and he restored sight to many who were blind. ²² Then he told John’s disciples, “**Go back to John and tell him what you have seen and heard—the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is being preached to the poor.** ²³ And tell him, ‘God blesses those who do not turn away because of me.’”

- Jesus isn’t bragging about the miracles he is doing, but pointing John’s disciples to the miracles the prophet Isaiah said would **confirm the coming of the promised Messiah** (Is. 26:19; 29:18-19; 35:5-6; 61:1).
- Jesus wanted John and his disciples to know that the kingdom of God was coming was no longer a future event, but was now unfolding through his ministry here in the Galilee. All these miracles were evidence that Jesus was actually “**pulling the kingdom of God from the future into the present,**” the very thing John had been sent to prepare the way for.
- What Jesus started over 2000 years ago continues to this very day. One contemporary scholar puts it this way, “**You will know the kingdom of God has come when there is an interest and affection for the poor!**”

- **John’s calling and ministry are affirmed...**

- ²⁴ After John’s disciples left, Jesus began talking about him to the crowds. “**What kind of man did you go into the wilderness to see? Was he a weak reed, swayed by every breath of wind?** ²⁵ Or were you expecting to see a man dressed in expensive clothes? No, people who wear beautiful clothes and live in luxury are found in palaces. ²⁶ Were you looking for a prophet? Yes, and he is more than a prophet. ²⁷ John is the man to whom the Scriptures refer when they say, ‘Look, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, and he will prepare your way before you.’” ²⁸

I tell you, of all who have ever lived, none is greater than John. Yet even the least person in the Kingdom of God is greater than he is!"

- In Jesus' eyes, John was someone who **knew who he was** and that he was put on the earth "for such a time as this!"
 - Luke 1:13 But the angel said, "Don't be afraid, Zechariah! God has heard your prayer. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give you a son, and you are to name him John. 14 You will have great joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, 15 for he will be great in the eyes of the Lord. He must never touch wine or other alcoholic drinks. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even before his birth. Luke 1:16 And he will turn many Israelites to the Lord their God. 17 He will be a man with the spirit and power of Elijah. He will prepare the people for the coming of the Lord. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and he will cause those who are rebellious to accept the wisdom of the Godly."
- John's ministry didn't fit anywhere in the cultural norm. His **willingness to be obedient to his spiritual assignment** not only set him apart from his contemporaries, but reminded them more of an OT prophet than any "prophet" seen in the NT. Scholars refer to John the Baptizer as "the last Old Testament prophet."
- The praise of Jesus for John ends with a **real twist**... *"The praise is lavish, but then comes a surprise: even the most insignificant person in the kingdom of God is greater than John, for John lived just on the edge of the era of salvation and did not experience its blessings for himself."*
- **A line is again drawn in the sand concerning sin...**
 - ²⁹ When they heard this, all the people—even the tax collectors—agreed that God's way was right, for they had been baptized by John. ³⁰ But the Pharisees and experts in religious law rejected God's plan for them, for they had refused John's baptism.

³¹ "To what can I compare the people of this generation?" Jesus asked. "How can I describe them? ³² They are like children playing a game in the public square. They complain to their friends, 'We played wedding songs, and you didn't dance, so we played funeral songs, and you didn't weep.' ³³ For John the Baptist didn't spend his time eating bread or drinking wine, and you say, 'He's possessed by a demon.' ³⁴ The Son of Man, on the other hand, feasts and drinks, and you say, 'He's a glutton and a drunkard, and a friend of tax collectors and other sinners!'"

 - The religious leaders had really painted themselves into a corner by refusing John's baptism in water. If they were not willing to admit their **sinfulness**, there was no need for **forgiveness**, or a **Savior**. They put themselves in the position of having to totally abandon God's plan!
 - The attitude the "religious experts" explains why Jesus said that they were like children playing games. When one group of children want to play and dance, the other group refuses to enter in. Yet when the first group suggests playing at funerals instead, the others **still refuse to join in**.
 - The **Jewish leaders** were repulsed by John's ascetic lifestyle, and they bitterly criticized Jesus because he associated with people who did not take religion seriously.
- **The wisdom of God is exalted...**
 - ³⁵ But wisdom is shown to be right by the lives of those who follow it."
 - After all is said and done, what really matters always comes back to the **fruit** that is produced.
 - Jesus knew that the gospel message would seem like foolishness to the self-sufficient, arrogant religious leaders, yet **there would be no way they could deny the fruit**.

- **WHAT'S NEXT? AS A DISCIPLE, HOW WOULD SEEING AND HEARING ALL THESE THINGS HAVE CHANGED YOUR EXPECTATIONS OF THE FUTURE?**

- **So far...**there's no indication that things were going to slow down. Jesus would continue to perform miraculous acts for years to come.
- **So far...**Jesus has healed every sick person, cast out every demon and raised every person from the dead he has ministered to.
- **So far...**none of the religious leaders have been able to slow him down, let alone stop him.
- **So far...**no one but Jesus has prayed for anyone, confronted a demon, or attempted any sort of miracle.
- **So far...**the disciples must be feeling pretty bullet-proof!
- We're halfway through the seventh chapter of Luke and things are looking pretty good for Jesus' crew. Unfortunately for them, **they have no idea what's coming** in chapter nine:
 - Jesus would send out the apostles on their first ministry trip with nothing more than the clothes on their backs and this assignment..."tell everyone about the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick." (v. 2)
 - While they are out ministering, Herod Antipas has John the Baptist beheaded. (v. 9)
 - In verse 21, Jesus drops the bomb, telling his small band of apprentices..."**The Son of Man must suffer many terrible things,**" he said. **"He will be rejected by the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He will be killed, but on the third day he will be raised from the dead."**
 - Wait, it gets even more intense in verse 23..."**If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross daily, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but are yourself lost or destroyed? If anyone is ashamed of me and my message, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when he returns in his glory and in the glory of the Father and the holy angels. I tell you the truth, some standing here right now will not die before they see the Kingdom of God."** (vv. 23-26)
- **Had you seen and heard what the followers of Jesus did that day, what conclusions regarding the future would you have come to?**
 - About the **reality of sin** and the implications of unrepentant sin on your future?
 - Concerning the value of **knowing your "spiritual assignment"** and sticking with it?
 - Regarding who is truly **"great"** in the kingdom of God?