

# Weaving the Word

## *Jesus Moves to Capernaum*

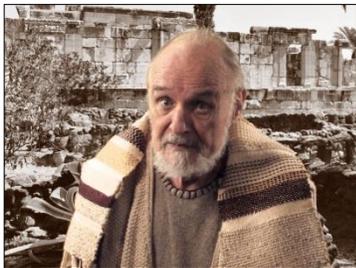
Part 6 – January 26, 2014

We're tracking Jesus' 3½ years, from baptism to resurrection. And, today we follow His big move into Capernaum in Galilee.



We're using the outline in Mark's gospel to the Romans, because it's concise and action packed! And, today we're adding John's voice.

John was in his 90s when he wrote his gospel, more than two decades after Mat, Mark, and Luke; and, **he fills in a lot of never-before-recorded eyewitness details.**



So, Jesus moves to the quiet shores of the peaceful Sea of Galilee in the Jordan Valley. Northern Israel was called Galilee. Capernaum was a fishing village on the north shore at the entrance to the Jordan Valley, which runs all the way down to the Dead Sea. Jesus left Judea, (John 4:3) spoke to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, (John 4:4-42) said goodbye to His boyhood, hillside home of Nazareth, (Mat 4:13) and set up a base of operations in Capernaum.



**After John was put in prison, When Jesus *heard* that John had been put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, he returned to Galilee. After the two days [in Samaria] he left for Galilee. Leaving Nazareth, (Now Jesus himself had pointed out that a prophet has no honor in his own country.) ["That illegitimate boy, who played with my kids, is the what?!"]** – Mark 1:14a; Mat 4:12-13a; John 4:43-44 NIV

**A change of perspective is so difficult;** but the winds of change have come. **Some will reject. Some will accept. All will choose.** The *last voice* of the *First Covenant* has been locked up, awaiting beheading; and **the Bridegroom has forever left His boyhood home.**



**[The Apostle Paul later says]** "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a profound mystery — but I am talking about Christ and the church. – Ephesians 5:31-32 NIV

Jesus' neighborhood was unearthed in 1968, along with a house venerated as Peter's since the mid-1st century, and a synagogue (that was destroyed in 70<sup>AD</sup> and rebuilt in 300<sup>AD</sup>).



**Capernaum means Village of Comfort.** I think His office address would've been: **Prince of Peace, Place of Comfort, Green Pastures of Still Water.** Want to sit on that shore and pray with Jesus? Take a moment, and **let Him know if you *accept* or *reject* His office of authority.** And ask Him to use *His power to change your perspective.* Jesus taught in that synagogue, silenced a *demon* in that synagogue, and healed a servant of the Centurion who *built* that synagogue!<sup>1</sup>



**Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, When he arrived in Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him. and news about him spread through the whole countryside. They had seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, for they also had been there. – Luke 4:14; John 4:45 NIV**

Capernaum's countryside includes the portions of the Promised Land that had once been given to, and taken from, the tribes of **Zebulun** and **Naphtali** (two of Joseph's brothers).



**... he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake [The Sea of Galilee is also called Lake Tiberius] in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah: [Isaiah 9:1-2] "Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, along the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned." – Matthew 4:13b-16 NIV**

Sound familiar? It seems to parallel David's song in Psalm 23.

The Lord is my shepherd, [and the Shepherd *became* the Lamb] I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down [settle] in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, [like the Sea of Galilee] he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the [Jordan] valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. [In the Village of Comfort no less] ... – Psalm 23:1-4 NIV

Isaiah goes on after Matthew's partial quote.

For You have broken the yoke of his burden and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor ... For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. – Isaiah 9:4-7 NKJ

<sup>1</sup> Matthew 4:13; Luke 4:31-37; Mark 1:21-28; Luke 7:1-10

This is the *Good News!* **The One who has come to lead us through the valley of the shadow of death, has walked it and conquered it!** He came to fulfill the *proto-Gospel*, the *very first Gospel*, given when God promised to send the Seed of Eve to crush the serpent's head by exposing His own heel to be struck by its fang. (Gen 3:15)

*This* is what the Prince of Peace set out to do, when He set up His headquarters in Village of Comfort, by the quiet waters, at the entrance of the Valley that led to the Dead Sea, the lowest point of the valley, the lowest shore on earth,<sup>2</sup> just below Jerusalem.

**From that time on Jesus began to preach, proclaiming the good news of God. He taught in their synagogues, "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." Repent and believe the good news!" and everyone praised him. – Mat 4:17; Mark 1:14b-15; Luke 4:15 NIV**

Until they *didn't*; but then, He didn't come to please *man*. **He came to please the Father, by taking the staff upon His shoulders, connected to the rod of His oppressors, driven into the place of the skull, (Mat 27:33) to crush the head of the deceiver, by allowing the metal fang of the serpent to strike His heel.**



To make sure His point wasn't lost on us, **God preserved the heel of Yohanan ben Hagkol** (who was crucified in Jesus' day, at Jerusalem), with the nail still embedded, verifying how the Romans struck the heel.<sup>3</sup>

The Good News, the Gospel, is that **Satan has been crushed, death has been swallowed up, and though our Savior was struck and died, Jesus has risen!**

**The word 'Gospel' was an understood word in Jesus' day; but, it wasn't a religious word. It meant history-making, life-shaping, incredibly good news** (as opposed to just regular good news). When a battle against an oppressor was won, heralds were sent to proclaim the gospel to the people: **victory was theirs, the enemy was defeated, and they were free of their yoke of bondage.**



Caesar Augustus, 63 B.C. – 14 A.D.

About five years before Jesus was *born*, the *gospel of Caesar Augustus* was declared in Rome, and preserved in an inscription.

[Providence] has brought our life to the climax of perfection in giving to us [Caesar Augustus], whom it filled with virtue for the welfare of men, and who, being sent to us and our descendants as a savior, has put an end to war and has set all things in order ... the birthday of [this divine one] has been for the whole world *the beginning of the gospel concerning him.*" – *Inscription from the Provincial Assembly of Asia, 9<sup>BC</sup>* (OGIS 2, 458)

<sup>2</sup> The shore of the Dead Sea is about 1300 feet below sea level.

<sup>3</sup> It was discovered in an ossuary in a cave in northern Jerusalem in 1968, and is now in the Israel Museum.

But, Augustus died August 19, 14<sup>AD</sup> (Jesus was about 18), and **by all accounts he's still dead.** However, this inscription lived on, and was well known in Mark's day. Mark wrote to the Romans; and he wrote what Peter, never afraid of a confrontation, was preaching on the streets of Rome. Thus, Mark writes ...

The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. – Mark 1:1 NIV



It's a well-landed blow on the nose of those who put their faith in man. "How'd that work out for you?" **Isn't it just crazy how those people back then saw political leaders as saviors? Isn't that just the weirdest thing ever?! Caesar can't save you; doesn't matter if it's Caesar Augustus or Obama or Bush or Clinton or Reagan.**



**They can offer advice, though. That's all any religion, and no religion, can offer. Advice. More weight on your shoulders. "You should do these things and not do those things." It might be good advice, but I guarantee it's not good news!** It won't make you feel the way those who heard those heralds felt.



Jesus came to proclaim the *good news* of *His* kingdom. **Christianity isn't advice; it's a proclamation of victory!** That's why it's such a *perversion* to say Jesus was just a good teacher. You might as well say He was just a good *politician*.



**It's all about what Christ has done on our behalf. That's what makes it so different from every other religion and no-religion. Christ conquered the valley of the shadow of death, descended into the Dead Sea, and broke the yoke of slavery to sin.**

**It's not advice; it's incredible news! Repent and believe and it's yours to have, forever, just for the asking. But, you have to repent.** Turn. Reverse engines. Like when they spotted the iceberg on the Titanic. "Repent! Turn! Iceberg, dead ahead!" "Ah-ha!" you say, "it is just advice: do *this* and don't do *that*."

**The focus of repentance isn't on actions but allegiance. If you like your shackles, you're not ready for the Gospel. But, when you finally see that iceberg for what it is, you can't not turn!**

Doesn't mean it's easy. A change of perspective is *difficult*. But, **the Good News comes with the power to change your mind.**

**And when your *mind* is changed, your *actions* will follow.**